

# Convention Planning Guide



April 2001

# TAOM CONVENTION PLANNING GUIDE

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

The TAOM organization has a history of hosting some of the finest magic conventions in the world. Its yearly Labor Day weekend conclave is one of the best gatherings in magic. All who have ever had anything to do with planning a TAOM convention should be proud of these facts.

Of course some conventions have been more successful than others. Factors all the way from convention location, planning, leadership, and even the status of magic in general have influenced convention success. No matter how one evaluates each convention however, there is no doubt that the TAOM conventions are modern extravaganzas of top-notch evening shows, contests, lectures, and special magic events.

#### THE IDEA FOR THIS GUIDE

In the beginning TAOM conventions cost little or nothing to host. They were simply gatherings of magicians who came together for fellowship and fun. Those times have changed of course and while fellowship and fun are still paramount, big budget issues are now a major concern. Back in the late 1980's and early 1990's, TAOM conventions could be hosted for only \$20,000 to \$25,000. In 1988 Fort Worth held a convention that required a \$43,000 budget! In 1997 and 1999, Fort Worth's and Austin's convention budgets both exceeded \$100,000!

With such enormous amounts of money required to put on modern TAOM conventions, liability is no small issue. This concern and others like it sparked the TAOM Board of Directors into action on April 15, 2000 with a monumental TAOM Planning Summit. This historical two-day meeting was held in Austin, Texas and was attended by representatives from most TAOM magic clubs. The weekend unveiled a host of various concerns. It was retrospective, analytical, and sometimes even emotional. Concerns were voiced and best and worst case convention scenarios were examined and solutions were suggested.

One of the conclusions of the summit was the realization that the TAOM has done a very poor job sharing information between host clubs about how to put on a convention. It was the unanimous conclusion of the summit group that a guide be produced on how to plan and execute a successful TAOM magic convention. To this end, TAOM Historian Bruce Chadwick was elected as editor of the "TAOM Convention Planning Guide" project. An Oversight Committee comprised of David Hira, Kent Cummins, and Judy Donaldson was assigned to help with the task.

## INITIAL FORMAT

In 1988 Bruce Chadwick was President of the Texas Association of Magicians and shortly thereafter he compiled a historical account on how the Fort Worth Magicians Club hosted their convention. Ultimately the TAOM Board of Directors had copies of his document distributed to each TAOM club. To get this new TAOM CONVENTION PLANNING GUIDE "jump started," Bruce's 1988 document was instrumental in providing the foundation. Names, dates, and events were have been eliminated from Bruce's original treatise so that only ideas and notations remain.

This guide now also contains materials from an array of other people. Since the guide is intended to be an ongoing project, it will seek year-after-year to glean insights from the Planning Committees of each TAOM convention. All host cities, TAOM members, and other interested persons are encouraged to contribute to the guide, report the successes and failures of their convention, and give suggestions for future conventions.

This guide is available for view and download on our official web site [www.taom.org](http://www.taom.org) and in addition, a few hard copies will be available from the Secretary of the TAOM. Each new edition will contain the information of the previous edition as well as any new contributed information. The editor and oversight committee will eliminate only duplicate and objectionable materials so that the guide will be as concise and helpful as possible.

This guide is intended to be available to anyone at anytime. As Judy Donaldson has written, a copy this guide will be available to any club at any time that just THINKS they might want to sponsor a convention, to give them an idea of what's involved from ground zero. While this document is copyrighted by the Texas Association of Magicians, Bruce Chadwick Editor, it may be may be freely transmitted, copied, and used so long as no compensation is rendered. The TAOM reserves all rights for the sale and monetary gain from the publication of this guide.

## ICONCLUSION

In 1997 Bruce Chadwick also helped the TAOM settle a five-year-old dispute about the TAOM convention numbering sequence. He compiled information about the history of our organization and put it into a treatise called "Excerpts from TAOM History: 50 Years and Counting!" This work is appended to the end of this guide so that future conventions may have historical information for souvenir programs and information on how to **properly number their**

**convention!** This document is copyright and is the sole property of its author Bruce Chadwick.

Use this guide as a book of ideas. Do keep in mind that what works for one club hosting the TAOM convention may not work for another club. Some things are standardized while other things are matter-of-fact and straightforward.

Use this information at your own risk and at your own discretion. The guide's Editor, its Oversight Committee, the TAOM Planning Summit, and the Board of Directors of the TAOM organization will not be held liable for how the information is used. Clubs of the TAOM are must remember that they are independent and autonomous from the TAOM organization as they host conventions. They are solely responsible for their convention's successes and failures, financial and otherwise, as they host TAOM conventions.

It is hoped that this guide will go far in continuing the wonderful reputation of the Texas Association of Magicians. At least now there is written information from which to draw ideas, thoughts, and suggestions.

- April 2001

Oversight Committee:

David Hira

Judy Donaldson

Kent Cummins

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## CHAPTER TWO

### OVERVIEW OF THE 2000 TAOM PLANNING SUMMIT

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TAOM PLANNING SUMMIT - by David Hira

Beginning Saturday morning, April 15th, 2000, a historical two-day meeting was held regarding the Texas Association of Magicians and its future. Twenty-six people including Board Member representatives, past presidents, and club sponsored representatives gathered in Austin to discuss the present status of the TAOM, TAOM's current problems, and the future of the TAOM. Past president David Hira headed the organizing and implementation of the meeting dubbed, "The TAOM Planning Summit Meeting". It was co-organized with the assistance of Judy Donaldson, Kent Cummins, Bob Karlebach, and Bob Ford and Peter Heinrichs.

The meeting opened with the video "50 Years of TAOM Magic" produced for and shown at the 1997 TAOM Convention in Fort Worth. This video gave a historical background to the founding of the TAOM and to those who created it. Past president Kent Cummins then set the tone for the meeting with an incredibly polished keynote address. Kent's hour-long talk led the group into the five areas of thinking that the group pursued from Saturday morning until Sunday afternoon:

- 1.) We must understand what we the TAOM wants to be or become. (Wishes vs. goals)
- 2.) We must figure out what options are available.
- 3.) We must analyze each option carefully.
- 4.) We must choose the best options to achieve our goals.
- 5.) We must make a commitment to making those options actually happen. (Not just what we want, but what we can commit to make happen.)

It is important to understand the process that the group followed during the next two days to see how the conclusions of the summit were derived. David Hira was the workshop leader that led each of the participants through a series of exercises that built trust and teamwork between cities, members, and ideas.

The participants were broken up into four teams that were carefully selected to reflect the diversity of our organization. Each team had one or no more than two members from any given city. These teams were then named, "Hearts", "Diamonds", "Clubs" and "Spades".

Throughout the day, the four teams listened to short presentations on several areas of concern for the TAOM. The concerns were derived from a survey that each participant had completed prior to the summit meeting. After

each presentation, the teams were charged to meet away from the other groups and to find and agree upon one, two, or three solutions to each of the challenges. After each team agreed upon their solutions, they presented their conclusions to the other three teams in open sessions. Each team presented their solutions on chart tablet papers, and then each team's solutions were taped on the walls of the room for later comparison.

NOTE: It is both important and exciting to realize that the results derived from this summit meeting were from the cooperation of members in each team, The teams were made up of members of different cities, who then compared their agreed upon solutions with teams of similar makeup. This is both significant and important when reviewing the results of the summit.

The teams were made accordingly:

**Clubs**

Alex Gutierrez  
Paul Mims  
Fred Donaldson  
Bob Utter  
Doug Kornegay  
Dean Ponton

**Diamonds**

Frank Price  
Kent Cummins  
Dick Olson  
Kevin King  
Ken Foerster  
Jim Cook

**Spades**

Bruce Chadwick  
Bob Ford  
Terry Campagna  
Ed Pietzsch  
Don Stiefel  
David Luther

**Hearts**

Ramon Galindo  
Peter Hinrichs  
Brooks Griffith  
Gary Hansen  
Steve Burton  
Ralph Marcom

David Hira as Workshop Leader and Judy Donaldson as TAOM Secretary were not assigned to teams. Judy Donaldson took careful notes throughout the summit. This report contains most of those notes.

The challenges and presentations are too lengthy to go into detail in this report. However, to give the readers an overall idea of the areas covered, along with the conclusions arrived at by each team, below is a synopsis from each challenge:

**FINANCES**

How do we continue to meet the challenges of the growing costs of producing our conventions?

**Diamonds:**

Auction Profits  
Sponsorships  
Professional Fund-raisers

**Spades:**

State Sponsorships  
Registration Rates  
Tourism Chamber Assistance  
Limit Cost of Acts (Salary Caps)

**Hearts:**

Corporate Advertisers for several years  
Seed Money given from previous convention

**Clubs:**

Program Ads  
Pre-convention show fund-raisers  
Open evening show to public  
Increase & standardize registration rates

CONSISTENCY

"Should we strive to give a consistent product each year to our paying customers?"

**Diamonds:**

Status Quo: 3 against; 5 who wanted to strive for higher level of consistency  
Need strong centralized TAOM leadership

**Spades:**

Maintain Status Quo  
Help small venue cities  
Keep it the same, but with better centralized support structure

**Hearts:**

Do not standardize TAOM  
Need Manual and guidelines to support host club

**Clubs:**

Establish a consistent convention planning schedule  
 TAOM Convention Committee use a qualified talent and convention chairman from year-to-year (a centralized planning committee)  
 TAOM Convention Committee seek dealer, talent, & hotel all at a reasonable rate (centralized)

## FACILITIES

Many of our host cities are finding that they lack proper facilities to host the growing attendance of our conventions. Below is a list of host cities and their present ability to hold the number of conventioners and public audiences:

City	Hotel	Theater
Austin	?	?
Abilene	?	yes
Beaumont	?	yes
Corpus	yes	yes
Dallas	yes	?
Fort Worth	yes	?
Houston	yes	yes
Longview	no	no
Lubbock	yes	yes
San Antonio	yes	yes
Tyler	?	yes

### **Diamonds:**

Central Committee for entire convention  
 Daytime shows of magicians; night for public

### **Hearts:**

Convention registration limits by size of city's facilities  
 Night show not mandatory  
 Limit registrations to members of national magic organizations  
 TAOM one year TAOM "lite" the next

### **Spades:**

Different Cities than host clubs  
 Cities w/o theaters - set up pro stage in hotel  
 Limit Registration

### **Clubs:**

Cities stay the same, but the organizers change  
 Professional stage in hotel

Limit Registration  
Move to Mexico City (editor's note: This was a joke!)

## LIABILITIES

"With \$100,000 plus budgets become the norm and attendance grows, what should be done about the legal and financial liability possibilities should disaster strike, attendance be down, theaters burn down weeks before a convention, etc.?"

### **Diamonds:**

All Local Clubs need to Incorporate  
Legal advice for incorporation  
Standardize contracts - TAOM committee  
Investigate standardized insurance

### **Hearts:**

General Liability Policies furnished by TAOM  
Add "Act of God" clause to all contracts

### **Spades:**

Standardize Contracts  
Incorporate Local Clubs

### **Clubs:**

TAOM corporation become host - not local clubs  
Convention Committee obtain insurance with local clubs insured  
Convention Committee provide contracts with performers and hotels

This concluded the Saturday session, which concluded just after 5:00 p.m. Dinner was "on your own", and many took advantage of the hotel shuttle van to attend the hilarious live show, "Esther's Follies", starring magician Ray Anderson.

Sunday morning began with a breakfast get-together, a review of Saturday's conclusions and results, and then a talk given by David Hira entitled, "What Do We Do Next?" A last project was given to each of the teams to discuss:

## THREE THINGS WE NEED TO DO IMMEDIATELY

### **Diamonds:**

Long-term: Decide whether or not to form central committee  
Immediate Goals: Package materials for local clubs to incorporate and standardize contracts  
Establish committee to explore sponsorship of the auction

**Spades:**

Standardize Contracts  
Incorporate Local Clubs  
Recreate convention guideline manual  
Develop Statewide sponsorship with a professional

**Hearts:**

Provide how-to packet to local clubs for incorporation  
Get general liability policy for TAOM parent  
Standardize contracts by TAOM legal advisors

**Clubs:**

Board of Directors vote on becoming host for the annual convention  
Establish a convention committee to define goals:  
    consistent talent chairman  
    convention contracts for hotel and performers  
    standard schedule  
    appropriate insurance

In general, the group agreed that we want to keep it the way it is, only with more support from TAOM. Lengthy and emotional discussions were held as the group strived to reach a conclusion and consensus to what we had all discussed and agreed upon during this summit. It is thanks to Kevin King of Tyler who was able to solidify the many ideas and suggestions into a fully agreed upon consensus to the question, "What do we do next?"

**CONSENSUS**

Major Project: Create an Updated "Operations Handbook" with Bruce Chadwick voted in unanimously as handbook editor with an oversight committee of David Hira, Kent Cummins, & Judy Donaldson. It was agreed that, in the absence of a centralized TAOM staff and director, that the goal of this group is to produce an operations handbook that is to become the centralized support from the TAOM. Coordinated edited by Bruce Chadwick, the operations handbook will be the compilation of research from TAOM members with expertise and experience in each of the following areas:

Immediate Goals (to be reported on Board in September): How member clubs can become incorporated and Liability Insurance Needs and Possibilities for all host clubs.

Long-term Goals: Hotels - Negotiation, contracts, facility and support needs, etc. Contract Standardization for Theater and Talent

It was further agreed that this handbook will be continually updated and added to for the enjoyment and use by all host clubs of the TAOM.

The meeting was adjourned to the satisfaction of all who participated at Noon on Sunday, April 16th, 2000.

Submitted by: David Hira  
with the detailed notes of Judy Donaldson

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From David Hira  
To Bruce Chadwick

Writing up notes of weekend meetings is NOT my strong suit. Thanks to Judy Donaldson's incredible job of playing secretary at the TAOM Summit, I was finally able to document the whole meeting and it's outcome.

Sunday's morning meeting at the Summit got off to a scary moment. Everyone agreed that a new direction should be taken, but no one could figure out how to get there. Then, in a single stroke of genius, Kevin King of Tyler took all of the loose pieces, and showed us what the puzzle should look like...

Most everyone agreed that they want to keep the TAOM a local endeavor, but with "more support from the TAOM". How was the "TAOM" to deliver the support without an Executive Director or full time staff?!? The answer was like the voice of God... literally! We needed a Bible that would speak to all clubs no matter where they were that would guide them in the ways they should go! All agreed that what was needed was an operations manual that would be kept current for all clubs to use. THIS would be the assistance that was needed, provided by the TAOM (it's membership!).

Our membership is varied enough to have the talent and expertise in the areas where clubs need help. The chapters are to be written by carefully selected members who will contribute their expertise in preparing the text for the chapters.

What is needed is an Editor to coordinate the chapters and produce the Operations Manual. Your name was immediately nominated, voted, and accepted by an unanimous vote! Your first operations manual, created after the '88 Fort Worth convention, was visionary. The manual suggested is merely an expansion of the initial concept that you started.

Because of your training, talent and experience in publishing similar works, the TAOM would like to ask if you would accept this challenge. An oversight committee consisting of Judy Donaldson, Kent Cummins, and myself was suggested and approved. We will be your support staff in helping to get members to participate in a timely fashion to contribute to this project.

If you will take time to read through my report, you will see the beginning scope of the project. We thought that two chapters, even if "rough", could be attained by the next convention. Though much time has already passed, we believe that it is still achievable. Judy has already done most of the work on the chapter on "Incorporating Your Club". The liability insurance possibilities can probably be scoped out by a small committee of members within a few week's time.

Would you be willing take this on? I believe that this contribution will be historical and may well re-energize and preserve TAOM for it's members and their clubs. I hope that you will agree. Please respond to any or all of us on the oversight committee as soon as possible with any questions you might have before letting us know your decision.

Thank you for your consideration of this undertaking. I believe we are at a turning point...

David Hira, Judy Donaldson, Kent Cummins & the Participants of the TAOM Planning Summit Weekend

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TO: TAOM Board of Directors

FROM: "Future of TAOM Idea Summit" Planning Committee: David Hira, Peter Hinrichs, Kent Cummins, Bob Ford, Bob Karlebach, and Judy Donaldson

SUBJECT: Hotel Information - April 15/16 Summit Meeting

#### IMPORTANT MEETING INFORMATION

Please make your reservations right away to assure a comfortable room at the Holiday Inn Austin South for the nights of April 14 and 15, 2000. The number to call is 512-448-2444; mention "Texas Association of Magicians" to secure our preferred rate of \$75.00 per night. If you have any trouble with the reservations clerk, ask for Karen Cavin (pronounced "kay-ven"). We have a block of 25 rooms on hold until March 30 - BE SURE TO CALL BEFORE THAT DATE, otherwise you may not be able to find a hotel room in Austin that weekend, due to other events already in town.

The Holiday Inn South is a full-service hotel, with restaurant, bar, pool, spa, etc. There is more-than-adequate space available for our meeting. We're excited about it! Hope you are planning to come. The hotel is located at the Northeast corner of the intersection of IH-35 and Woodward. From the South, exit IH-35 at Ben White/Woodward; stay on the service road through the Ben White intersection. From the North, exit IH-35 at Woodward, turn right on Woodward across the expressway.

The TAOM treasury will reimburse hotel and travel expenses for the sixteen Board Members who represent member-clubs. Past presidents will receive the usual travel reimbursement. Club-sponsored representatives are eligible for the preferred rate at the hotel, but will be responsible for all expenses. We encourage each member-club to help these representatives with the costs.

Thanks to all who have returned the RSVP and Survey form. If you haven't sent yours yet, please do so before April 1 so the survey results can be compiled.

Please plan to arrive Friday evening, April 14th for an informal get-together about 8 p.m. The first formal agenda item is scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup>. The last session is scheduled to end at noon on Sunday the 16th.

p.s. If you've already indicated you won't be able to attend the meeting, I'm sending this information anyway, in case your plans change.

---

"Future of the TAOM Idea Summit"  
RSVP and Survey Form

Yes, I plan to attend!  No, I cannot attend: \_\_\_\_\_  
(even if you can't come, please complete and submit the form; we value your ideas)

Name: Bruce Chadwick

Club Represented: Fort Worth Magicians Club

Designation: (please circle one)

Member-club Representative to TAOM Board

Past President

Club-appointed Representative

Mailing Address: PO Box 12345, Fort Worth, TX 76110

Telephone: Daytime: 817-927-0581 Evening: same

E-Mail Address: mail@brucechadwick.com

When do you plan to arrive: Date: Friday Time: 5:00 pm

Please help plan the specifics for the meeting by completing the survey below.

Allow yourself ten checks marks; allot them amongst the items list (or added

by you) according to the importance to your club. Any item may be given multiple check marks (or none) to indicate priority, so long as no more than ten check marks are used.

xxx\_\_\_Facilities (hotel & theater)

xxx\_\_\_ Liabilities (financial shortfall, injuries, facility cancellation due to fire, etc.)

\_x\_\_\_ Standardization of Contracts (having centralized legal representation for all)

\_\_xx\_\_\_ Consistency of Conventions

\_\_\_ Sponsor/Underwriter (getting financial help from a statewide sponsor)

\_\_\_ Protecting the Secrets at our Conventions

\_\_x\_\_\_ Other: consistency of backstage management

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

We thank you for your input. It is important to everyone!

Please return this to TAOM Secretary Judy Donaldson by Saturday, April 1st.

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## **Secretary Summary Report Texas Association of Magicians Summit Meeting April 15-16, 2000**

Twenty-seven members of the Association met in Austin at the Holiday Inn South on April 15 and 16, 2000, to discuss the future of the TAOM. Only three of the sixteen member clubs were not represented. No official Board action was taken, but a consensus was reached by those attending for solutions in several areas of concern.

Kent Cummins gave an inspiring opening address that prepared the participants to desire, achieve, and accept success from the conference. David Hira, the driving force behind the idea, planning, and culmination of the summit, very capably moderated and orchestrated the proceedings.

An obvious conclusion one could draw from the discussions is that TAOM conventions do not have to be "bigger and better" every year to accomplish the goal of fellowship and magical camaraderie that tradition dictates.

An updated "Operations Handbook" will assist future convention chairman gain from the hard lessons learned by their predecessors. Bruce Chadwick will compile and edit the handbook, assisted by David Hira, Kent Cummins, and Judy Donaldson. Various members with expertise and experience in specific fields will be asked to contribute.

Results of research on two immediate goals will be presented at the September Board of Directors meeting: 1) incorporation procedures for local clubs and 2) liability insurance needs and possibilities for clubs sponsoring conventions.

Long-term goals of 1) hotel negotiations, contracts, facilities, and services assistance and 2) standardized contracts for theaters and performers will be discussed in September. Experts in these fields will be selected to provide information on these subjects for the handbook.

The general consensus of the entire group was that guidance from those with previous experience will be needed to assure the continuation of the traditions that have made our conventions so successful.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Donaldson  
[TAOMSEC@austin.rr.com](mailto:TAOMSEC@austin.rr.com)

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## CHAPTER THREE

### CHOOSING A CONVENTION SITE AND DETERMINING A CONVENTION SCHEDULE

This chapter contains the following:

1. Hotel
    - a. Selection
    - b. Negotiation
    - c. Contract
  2. Theater
    - a. Selection
    - b. Negotiation
    - c. Contract
  3. Convention Schedule
- 

From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

1. Hotel
  - a. Selection

Determine initially whether you will be using the hotel ballroom for evening shows or if there will be another location for your evening activity. Once known, then you can decide how many banquet rooms you will need to use. Make sure the rooms are clean and acceptable. There should be rooms large enough to accommodate all of the dealer tables and the traffic flow. If there is no room big enough for all the dealer activities, then the smaller rooms should be connected or close enough in proximity for the registrants to flow between the rooms without any trouble finding them.

If possible, it's always best to assure that no other groups will hold their convention(s) during the same weekend. If it's a large hotel, then try to keep all hotel activities in the same general area so registrants feel its intimacy without feeling claustrophobic. Make certain that the hotel is near the theatre (if there is to be an evening show outside the hotel) so as to avoid transportation costs for bussing registrants between the two. If possible, try to have the hotel in or near

dining and shopping establishments so the registrants have choices. Make sure the nearby restaurants know that there is going to be a large convention that weekend and see which of them will remain open during the Labor Day weekend. Put a map to the restaurants and local attractions in the registration packets. These restaurants could also be a good source of revenue for advertising in the Convention Souvenir Program. If there is adequate transportation to these area restaurants/ shopping/ attractions (i.e. rapid transit, buses, trolleys, etc.), then include their schedules in the registration packets.

Union house hotels have many more restrictions on what you can and can't do in the hotel (i.e. whether you may carry boxes into the dealer's room, working with sound, light, and video production people from the hotel, etc.) Find out if there are any plans for renovation or management change in the near future.

#### RECAP

- Need hotel ballroom or not?
- Adequate room for dealers
- Near theatre for evening show
- Try to maintain exclusivity at hotel
- Keep all activities in same general area
- Hotel to be near restaurants and shopping areas that will be open on Labor Day weekend
- Avoid a union house if possible
- Will the hotel be around (and in the same shape) by the time of the convention?

#### b. Negotiation

When negotiating with the hotel, there are several things to remember. First and foremost, remember that you are negotiating from a position of strength. Specifically, Labor Day weekends traditionally have the lowest occupancy of the year: it's the end of the summer, people have concluded their vacations, children are returning to school, emphasis is put on back yard barbecues, etc. So pay no attention to the "rack rate" or the usual convention discounted rates usually offered throughout the rest of the year. Even with other expenses skyrocketing in our economy, this is one area that has traditionally been well below \$100 for decades. Furthermore, it should be noted that the lower rates usually are the same whether one to four people occupy the room. This makes it even more attractive to families.

When negotiating with the hotel, be sure to get the complimentary ("comp") rooms set out up front in the contract. Typically one room night for every forty is usual but subject to negotiation. Also you should be able to get an additional rebate of \$2.00 kicked-back to the hosting club for every occupied

room. This helps add to the income side of your budget. You may be required to make some guarantee on room nights for the hotel for them to justify providing you with the banquet rooms.

You may be able to have the hotel provide complimentary coffee or other services for the registrants if you go over your allotted rooms. After all, you are on the hook if you go over so you should have some incentive if you provide the hotel with more business. You can help the hotel make more money if you encourage them to sell coffee and breakfast foods and box lunches outside the banquet rooms. Remind them that there will be few places to go outside the hotel to dine on Labor Day weekend and that your activity schedule will be so full that it will preclude them from driving too far away. Furthermore, the cart food service outside the banquet rooms will relieve pressure from the hotel restaurant staff during peak times.

When determining the number of hotel nights, keep in mind that it is not a "per night" basis but "total night" basis over the duration of the convention (i.e. one room for three nights is three total nights). The comp rooms you receive should be applied towards your talent first with any leftover rooms going toward your Committee Chairmen. One other thing to note is that if a President's Suite is offered, you may be able to trade it back in for two smaller comp rooms (one for the President and the other for a performer) thus helping to further reduce the costs.

The hotel will be able to provide you with audio/visual equipment but here again you have negotiating leverage. Most organizations have no experience or contacts with A/V so they accept whatever package and rate the hotel offers. As magicians, you should have contacts within your purview that can compete with the rates offered by the hotel. In particular, you should be able to contract outside the hotel for monitors, video cameras, and operators. At the very least, local furniture rental companies may rent you big screen TV's for a nominal cost and may only charge a one day rental since Labor Day falls on a Monday so they won't be due back until Tuesday. The hotel may choose to match or beat your rate, but if not, then go with your outside source.

Here again, if the hotel is union, they may charge you for bringing in outside equipment so be aware of any hidden costs associated with bringing in your own equipment. If none are available through your local club, then consider Richard Neece, All-Occasion Video Production from the Ft. Worth magic club. He was the main A/V man at T.A.O.M. 2000 in Dallas. He can be reached at [rneece@arlington.net](mailto:rneece@arlington.net) or 4101 W. Green Oaks, Suite 544, Arlington, TX 76016.

#### RECAP

- You're negotiating from a position of strength
- Get rates for up to quadruple occupancy for under \$100 (including tax)

- Get the most comp rooms per paid room as possible (no less than one comp room for every 40)
- Get \$2.00 per night rebate
- Offer the hotel the chance to make money through setting up breakfast and box lunch service
- Negotiate the best percentage of total room nights you can (i.e. 75% of lowest expectation) for the guarantee
- Apply comp rooms to your talent first
- Get outside quotes for A/V equipment for comparison with the hotel rates

### c. Contract

Know what you are getting and have any ambiguity defined up front. Know how many banquet rooms you'll be using and which ones they are. Know what hotel convention facilities you will need and have that set out in the contract, too. Make sure there are no "hidden" charges that may creep up on you later (i.e. set-up charges in banquet rooms, setting up additional chairs, extra phone lines, power and Internet cable hook-up fees for computers for registration, etc.)

Determine if the hotel will charge for accepting and/or storing packages. Dealers and performers often send boxes in advance of the convention and some hotels charge for accepting, storing and return shipping on top of regular postal rates. Know what services will be provided and which ones you'll have to pay for (i.e. free easels but charges for printed signs). Find out when the hotel restaurant(s) and bars will be open during your event and how late they will stay open. Make certain that they will be properly staffed. Make it clear up front what type of group the hotel is hosting and that registrants are late night people so there needs to be facilities and staff available to accommodate them.

Remember that you do have options so keep them open. You may have to change hotels before the convention so keep your lines of communication open. Don't be afraid to make drastic changes if you think the final outcome will benefit the good of the masses. Know if you have any financial obligations, charges, or non-refundable deposits that could be lost if you do decide to change venues.

Work closely with your Hotel Sales and Meeting Manager but not to the point of annoyance. In this regard, there should be one person acting as liaison between the T.A.O.M. convention committee and the hotel contact. Parking should be worked out in advance. Make certain that the registrants will get reduced or complimentary hotel parking for the weekend with no "in-and-out" charges. Also, how long will the hotel honor the convention rate and how many

rooms they will let at that rate. Find out how long before and after the event the hotel will honor the convention rate.

## RECAP

- Define everything in the contract from the beginning
- Have as much defined in the contract that you think you will be needing
- Make sure there are no hidden charges
- Identify what you get for free and what you'll have to pay for
- Specify the hours for the hotel bar and restaurant
- Don't worry about having to change hotels before the convention, but remember your negotiating leverage may be drastically reduced
- Be aware of any non-refundable deposits
- Maintain one person as lead contact between the convention committee and the hotel staff
- Get the best parking arrangement you can (free if possible)
- Set out how many rooms they will let at the convention rate and how long the rate is effective

## 2. Theatre

### a. Selection

Determine if your budget will support contracting for hosting the evening shows in the hotel ballroom, a convention center, an auditorium (i.e. high school or college), or a legitimate theatre. Whichever option you decide to use, make sure to contact them as soon as possible to ascertain if they will be available for the Labor Day weekend convention. If your budget will allow, it is always best to host the evening shows in a legitimate theatre for several reasons. First, they are designed for handling people and professional entertainment. Specifically, they are designed acoustically for grand productions. They have the sound, lights, and curtains already in place so it won't be necessary to rent them. They have permanent seats that are comfortable and numbered (making it easier for to assign reserved seating).

Registrants want to see magic presented in its ideal venue as close to Las Vegas as possible and a legitimate theatre will provide that. The theatre staff is well equipped to assist you and your performers and will help avoid any last minute pitfalls. The stage has adequate room to accommodate the illusions and dressing rooms to keep everyone happy. The cost of a legitimate theatre may seem prohibitive, but remember that the registrants remember the evening shows way out of proportion to the rest of the convention activities and their memory and appreciation of your convention rests on the venue for the evening shows.

Your selection of a legitimate theatre will be limited by its seating. Keep in mind how many people you believe will pre-register for the convention then plan on seating at least 10-20% more late registrants. If possible, your theatre should be as close to the hotel as possible so as to avoid additional transportation costs (see Hotel Selection above). Determine what, if any, fire can be used in the theatre. Find out if there are any plans for renovation or management change in the near future.

#### RECAP

- Fit the theatre to your budget but go for the maximum you can afford
- Make sure the theatre is near the hosting hotel
- Make sure the theatre will seat all of the registrants without it being too large so as to eliminate any intimacy
- Can the acts use fire in the theatre?
- Is any change in management or any renovations planned prior to the convention?

#### b. Negotiation

More than likely you will be limited as to choices of legitimate theatres so your negotiation leverage will be nil. If you intend to have shows open to the public, see if the theatre will be available for selling public tickets during daytime hours as a public ticket outlet. Perhaps they may be able to provide tickets cheaper than it will cost you for having them printed. If you plan to host the evening shows in another venue outside the hotel, your leverage will be directly proportionate to the other available venues for the Labor Day weekend. Often times there might be nothing else going on that weekend so you may have a slight upper hand advantage; however, keep in mind that since it is a holiday weekend, holiday labor wages may be higher for union workers. Request that you use your own club members as ushers, security, stage crew, sound & light crew, etc.

#### RECAP

- You may be negotiating from a position of weakness
- Look for opportunities for the theatre to make a profit
- Try to get the theatre to be a ticket outlet for the evening shows
- Remember that you may have to pay union labor wages
- Try to get as many positions at the theatre filled with club members as possible to reduce your costs

#### c. Contract

Make sure there are no hidden charges. Provide the theater with the T.A.O.M. non-profit status, tax-exempt forms. Make sure it's clear if the theatre

will allow you to sell programs, t-shirts, beverages, or any other items without having to pay a percentage to the house. Put in a clause that will allow video taping for archival OR commercial purposes (with performer approval, of course) with no percentage of any profits going to the house. A legitimate theatre will more than likely be a union house that will require union workers to be on site. Define how many hours and how many stagehands they will need for the load-in, move out, evening operations, sound and lights. Find out their per hour costs, when they must take breaks (usually after five hours of work), and how much their overtime hours will cost. Set out what times the theatre will be available for your activities (load-in, move out, technical rehearsals, etc.) Set out how much it will cost for security and police and (if required) house ushers. Understand what circumstances will allow any portion of any security deposit to be retained by the theatre. Define what fire effects, if any, will be allowed in the theatre without licenses or fire marshal approval.

#### RECAP

- Provide the theatre with all T.A.O.M. non-profit forms
- Make it clear in the contract whether you can sell anything in the theatre and if the theatre must retain any portion of it
- Make sure up front whether the theatre will allow the taping of the shows
- Remember that you may have to work in a union house which has another whole set of cost issues
- Understand what it takes to get back your security deposit
- Make it clear what fire effects, if any, will be allowed (i.e. lighting a match but no flashpots)

### 3. Convention Schedule

Here you have a lot of latitude. There is nothing “carved in stone” as to how early or late you run your convention. You may consider having the convention start early and/or ending late. Tradition has the convention beginning mid-afternoon on Friday and ending by noon on the following Monday. This allows the registrants who arrive early to have something to do and ample time on Monday for the registrants to make their way back home at a leisure pace. T.A.O.M. conventions are thought of as being a four-day convention, but in reality, it only lasts three days (half days on Friday and Monday).

You may wish to schedule evening public shows prior to the convention (i.e. Thursday night) so as to add to your public ticket sales profits. Keep in mind that additional shows may bring in additional revenue, but they will also have associated costs (talent, theatre, tickets, playbill printing, etc.) This has been done in the past and has had lukewarm success. An advantage to a Thursday night show is that it could serve as a dress rehearsal for a “tighter” show on Friday night. You may also wish to have the convention run later on Monday, maybe even having another evening show. If you consider this option,

remember that many will have checked out of the hotel by noon that day. Furthermore, for those needing to return to work and/or school on Tuesday, they will now have less time to get home.

There are a variety of ways to schedule events during the convention. Traditionally, everyone sees everything at the same time. In Dallas, registrants were split into two groups, red and blue, and scheduled for the evening shows, close-up shows, and a close-up workshop at alternating times. This allowed for more intimacy with everyone having time to see everything without having to fight for good seats. As our convention registration grows, more of these ideas should be used to accommodate the larger groups.

Another idea is to have conflicting schedules. Some conventions provide competing lectures so registrants have to decide which schedule they want to follow. Usually these events are so different that registrants who are more interested in one event don't mind missing the other. For example, a close-up lecture given opposite of a stage lecture on birds or illusions. Or a balloon-sculpting lecture given opposite of mentalism lecture.

Another thing done at the Dallas convention in 2000 was multiple youth events. It was almost like there was a "secret schedule" going on for the youth only. Certainly our youth program is growing and there should be ample opportunities for the youth to learn in their own forum. Dallas scheduled youth activities each day with a youth-only lecture on one day, a pizza party the next, and a youth show and panel discussion the next that featured a Q&A teleconference with Lance Burton. This not only made the youth feel special, but it made room in other parts of the hotel for adults to see other scheduled activities.

You could have competing schedules throughout the day with registrants signing up for events aligning with their particular interest then joining each other at night for the evening shows. For example, a schedule for stage performers, one for clowns and jugglers, another for close-up workers, another for mentalists, another for business and marketing, etc. This would of course require color-coded badges, security, and proper signage so everyone knows where to go for their specific event.

Remember that the evening shows are not required and may even be evening close-up shows. You could even schedule the stage shows for the afternoon with professional close-up shows in the evening at the hotel.

There is no firm structure as to how you want to run your contests either. One thing incorporated at the Dallas convention was video submissions. This allowed for better, more qualified competitors who were serious about competing and eliminated those who decided at the last minute that they wanted to enter. It also allowed for fewer competitors that meant less time taken at the contests. So

instead of four hours of stage competition with redundant and unprepared contestants, the time was cut down drastically and there was a higher quality of competitor.

The same held true for the close-up contestants. Prior to the convention, we were prepared to split the competition into two segments – junior close-up scheduled opposite the senior stage on the first day and the senior close-up opposite the junior stage the following day. As it happened, there were not enough competitors to justify the split so we went with the traditional method of having both juniors and seniors compete together in both events. But the point is that you can schedule it however you wish, but the requirement for video submission is recommended for all future conventions to maintain.

The professional close-up shows and the close-up competition should both have the opportunity to perform multiple times. Close-up by its very nature is intimate and should be performed in as close to ideal conditions as possible. Close-up on the big screen TV is a poor second option but sometimes a necessary evil in order for all the registrants to see. Small rooms should be provided to allow the performers an opportunity to perform their act multiple times.

It is important to remember that organizers are trying to appeal to the broadest of interests including those who stay up all night in close-up sessions, those who come just to see the lectures, those who come to spend time in the dealers' room, those who only come to see the evening shows and spend time with old friends. It's hard to accommodate everyone's wishes if you plan activities too far off of the "normal" and "traditional" path. In particular, the schedule flows as follows:

### **Friday**

- Lecture
- T.A.O.M. board meeting
- Dealers open (they stay open throughout the weekend except during the evening shows)
- Evening stage show

### **Saturday**

- Lectures (maybe two or three including late night lecture)
- Non-Magicians (spouse) Event
- Stage competition
- Youth event
- Evening stage show
- Late night activity (i.e. Roger Klause Midnight Madness)

### **Sunday**

- Gospel magic show

- T.A.O.M. general board meeting
- Registration for next year's convention
- Close-up competition
- Professional close-up shows
- Lectures (maybe two or three)
- Evening stage show

## **Monday**

- Lecture

Although the schedule above is a good skeleton of typical and traditional T.A.O.M. conventions, one does not have to adhere to this structure; however, keep in mind that some members don't accept change very well. These ingredients have proven to result in successful magic conventions and can be rearranged however you choose so long as you schedule them all somewhere during the weekend. Where you have a lot of latitude is in who you get for talent and what topics are discussed in the lectures. If you want to host a large number of registrants, then you need name talent with drawing power.

Austin hosted the largest T.A.O.M. convention in 1999 with nearly 1,600 people due in large measure to having Harry Anderson and a reunion of the Left Handed League perform and lecture. They also brought in additional star talent with Jeff McBride and Rudy Coby. It goes to prove that if you "bill" it, they will come . . . and Austin certainly had an impressive bill. The registration numbers for the 1995 convention in Lubbock leapt substantially with the addition of Chuck Smith (underground close-up guru) to their line-up. So it's not the schedule that brings in the people or makes them want to register for next year. It's the line-up and the venue.

You can have your own agenda for what you want the registrants to see and hear. If you want them to learn more on the business and marketing side of magic, then you can book talent to discuss that. If you want registrants to learn more about the allied arts such as juggling, balloon sculpting, clowning, escapology, mentalism, or whatever, then you can have a particular slant toward that (or those) endeavor(s). Likewise, some convention shows in the evening feature large illusions while other have none but more tricks with livestock or featuring comedy. Again it's the prerogative of the hosting club and their particular preference or bias for how they want the convention to go and/or be remembered.

As for routining the running order of the evening shows, I suggest you consult with those who have a good base of comparison and/or have served as stage managers at previous conventions. The formula of ending with a big illusion is just that . . . a big illusion. You do not have to necessarily end with big illusions if your strongest performer has another type of act (i.e. birds, comedy, or other novel act).

The accessibility to and availability of the hotel banquet rooms will dictate much of your planning. You may not have choices as to when and where you can slot certain events and have enough time for registrants to see the event and get to the next one and allow time in there somewhere to dine and visit the dealers.

The schedule should be blocked out as early as possible (at least one year prior to the convention) so it can have time to be fine-tuned as the convention gets closer. The hotel needs to know when and where certain events will take place so they can plan the necessary arrangements (chairs, tables, moving air-walls, rearranging cables, etc.) and schedule their workers for the weekend. Your Printing Chairman will need to have a firm schedule as soon as possible for meeting his printing deadline for the souvenir program and for the registrants' hanging name badges.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR CONVENTION COMMITTEE PROFILES**

**1. PRESIDENT:** General Chairperson of the TAOM convention and responsible for its organization, planning, and execution. The President is also responsible for choosing convention hotel and theater, and it is up to the President to plan the activities during a convention (the convention schedule). The President is first elected to the office of Vice-President of the TAOM and afterward elected as President by the TAOM organization. The year he is President, he has other specific duties to the TAOM organization as outlined by the TAOM Bylaws.

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** A sponsoring club nominates the vice president of TAOM two years before its convention. He is Chief Judge for the contests one year before his convention. He selects contest judges and participates in the presentation of awards in accordance with the Trophy and Awards Program.

**2. REGISTRATION:** Is in charge of all convention registrations and promptly turns over to the Treasurer any moneys received for registrations. The chairperson also secures badges for convention attendees (oversees their printing, the purchase of vinyl holders, the printing of the name of attendees on the badges, the placement of the theatre seat number on each badge, etc), puts together the souvenir packets, helps assign the evening show theatre seats for convention attendees, oversees the staffing of the convention registration booth, and sees to it that the previous year's TAOM convention registration booth is staffed on Sunday.

**3. TREASURER:** Acts as treasurer for the convention, establishes a convention checking account, and oversees the administration of the account. This person also works closely with the President to work up a convention budget, works with the Talent Chairman to work up a talent budget, disburses all funds according to all budgets, and works according to the TAOM Constitution concerning accounting and records as required by the TAOM organization. At the beginning of the convention, the Treasurer provides the Talent Chairperson with checks made out to each performer. Only the Convention President/Chairman and the Treasurer have power to write checks. The account is terminated at the convention's conclusion, after all disbursements are made.

**4. TALENT:** Hires and then executes a written contract with all performers (stage and close-up) and Masters of Ceremonies, works with the Treasurer to write a talent budget, works within his budget, and provides the President and the Treasurer with information regarding all talent contracts and other relevant information. The Talent Chairperson should work closely with the Lecture and Dealer committees. The chairperson has the responsibility to make sure each performer is paid immediately after their services are rendered.

**5. DEALERS:** Secures magic dealers for the convention, develops the dealer's room floor ground plan, and makes sure the hotel properly places the booths and tables in the dealer's room (coordinating this with our Hotel Hospitality Committee). He assigns booths to the dealers, provides appropriate signs for each booth, is the monitor for the dealer's room, and collaborates with, provides, or otherwise arranges for hotel security (working with the Hospitality Committee) during all open and closed hours of the dealer's room. The Dealer chairperson should work closely with the Talent Chairperson so that deals regarding certain dealers/performers/lecturers can be appropriately arranged.

**6. CONTESTS:** Works with the TAOM Trophy and Awards Committee to see that the contests are efficiently executed, coordinates stage and close-up physical facilities with the Stage Manager and Hospitality Chairman, coordinates with the TAOM Vice-President (who is in charge of securing judges for all contests), and secures emcees for the stage contest and each of the close-up contest rooms. He also generates and disseminates a contest application form and other literature conforming to the TAOM contest program (rules, cut-off date information, etc), is in charge of sending this information to contestants who request it, and thereafter is the recipient of all contest applications submitted back to the host club by potential contestants, and notifies applicants of acceptance or rejection.

**7. BACKSTAGE:** Is in charge of the theatre stage for all stage shows (evening shows and stage contest show). He executes all stage shows as Stage Manager, collaborates with the union stage crew to determine lowest budgets and minimize overtime, and works as the liaison between the union stage crew and the performers of each show. The Backstage Chairperson should also have a copy of the contract used to secure the facilities, stage crew, and insurance for the performance venue.

**8. PROMOTIONS:** Works closely with the Souvenir Program Committee and the Ticket Sales Committee so that the convention is properly covered with newspaper, radio, television, and other media coverage, stressing emphasis on pre-convention coverage to aid ticket sales. He is also in charge of advertising the convention to magicians and potential magic attendees, including display advertising in magic periodicals, flyers placed in the December mailing of the TAOM roster immediately prior to the convention, and all pre-convention mailouts mailed to potential convention attendees. He is also in charge of poster production and distribution, the creation of a graphic logo for the convention, and all other aspects of advertising to promote the convention event.

**9. LECTURES:** Works with the Talent Chairman to secure lecturers, sees to the individual needs of each scheduled lecturer, contacts each lecturer prior to the convention to let them know he is their contact person, and meets them at the beginning of the convention to answer any questions they may have. The Lecture Chairperson also introduces each lecturer before his/her lecture, provides each lecturer with one or two helpers to help the lecturer sell his lecture notes and magic wares, makes sure the lectures start on time, and is the ultimate person-in-charge of the lecture hall during each lecture.

**10. TICKET SALES:** Works to sell all unoccupied theater evening show seats to the lay public through individual ticket sales and block ticket sales, and works closely with the Promotion Committee and the Souvenir Program Committee. The chairperson is also in charge of printing the evening show general admission tickets. He is also in charge of the theatre box office the nights of the evening shows to make sure it is manned with personnel who will sell tickets to the public for each evening theatre show. He makes sure that all moneys received from ticket sales are immediately turned over to the Treasurer.

**11. HOUSE:** Secures ushers for the evening shows and oversees all ushering procedures. He also oversees the printing of flyers for each evening show (designating the performers for the particular show, and the facts that no flash photography or audio or video recording devices are allowed) and provides them to his ushers for distribution to the audience as they enter the theatre for each of the evening shows. He is also in charge of securing individuals to sell Convention Souvenir Programs to the lay public in the lobby of the theatre prior to the start of each evening show, and then is responsible for immediately turning in to the Treasurer all moneys received from these sales.

**12. HOSPITALITY:** Works as a liaison between the convention hotel, performers, and conventioners. He is the contact person if needed regarding any hotel/attendee problems that may develop. He secures hotel equipment and operators where needed (including lecture hall backdrop pipe and drape scenery), sound system, lights, and closed-circuit video projection. He makes sure such equipment is properly set-up. He also makes sure the hotel has proper set-up tables and chairs for the various convention events. He also works with the TAOM President to secure the convention hotel. The chairperson is also in charge of the hospitality room at the convention. This chairperson is responsible for working with the Talent Chairman regarding all comp hotel rooms given to performers, convention attendees and convention dignitaries, and keeps up with the hotel room master account and hotel comp room list He arranges for and keeps up with the house physicians cell and/or pager numbers. He should also work with the Dealer Chairman to make sure the dealer's room has security for all hours whether the dealer's room is open or closed. The Hospitality Chairman is also responsible for arranging special handicap services such a signing for the deaf during all convention activities and shows.

**13. SOUVENIR PROGRAM:** Oversees the layout, publication, printing, and distribution of the convention souvenir program. This chairperson also oversees and promotes the sale of all souvenir program advertising space to supporting businesses, block ticket sales purchasers, magic dealers, etc. He either collects moneys directly from the purchasers of advertising and immediately turns it over to the Treasurer, or makes sure the Treasurer has promptly sent them an invoice. The chairperson provides the souvenir programs directly to the Registration Chairperson and helps the chairperson insert them into the registration packets. He also provides the House Chairperson with ample extra copies of the program for sale in the lobby of the theatre to the general public the nights of each evening show.

**14. CLOSE-UP:** Responsible for the execution of the professional close-up shows (in conjunction with the Talent Chairman). He arranges for emcees in each of the close-up rooms, makes sure each room is set-up properly for each show (that is, tiered seating, table for the performers, etc), and makes sure each room is labeled properly (i.e., Room 1 of 4, etc, and a map on each room label showing the locations of the other available close-up rooms). The Chairman should work closely with the Contest Chairman to see that the needs of the close-up contest are met.

**15. TRANSPORTATION:** Responsible for anything dealing with the transport of performers and their cargo to/from the airport. He is to line-up handicap assistance hotel vans for people that need help being transported to/from the hotel. He is to arrange for and coordinate with busses in the event that convention attendees need to be bussed to/from the convention hotel to/from the theater for the evening shows. He might also be the person in charge of coordinating or arranging for limo and van shuttle services.

**16. YOUTH ACTIVITIES:** Responsible for planning and executing activities for youth at the magic convention. The chairman is also responsible for enlisting all the help needed during a convention to run such activities. The chairman must coordinate his efforts with the President so that youth activities do not interfere with the main body of scheduled convention activities. As well, such activities should be planned so as to not take the youth away from other regularly scheduled activities that they might enjoy. The chairman must work closely with the Talent Chairman and the Souvenir Program Chairman so that hired talent for the convention might be used and communication about such activities can be properly published.

# 1. PRESIDENT

The President of the TAOM will be a member from your host club and he/she will generally, be the person in charge of putting on the magic convention. Generally the President will be your convention chairman. Sometimes however the job of actually planning and executing a convention is delegated to another person called the Convention Chairman. If your club decides to have a Convention Chairman position in addition to the President of the TAOM, it is a good idea to decide who will make final decisions. Petty politics and squabbling over who does what can take the fun out of putting on a magic convention.

**PRESIDENT:** General Chairperson of the TAOM convention and responsible for its organization, planning, and execution. The President is also responsible for choosing convention hotel and theater, and it is up to the President to plan the activities during a convention (the convention schedule). The President is first elected to the office of Vice-President of the TAOM and afterward elected as President by the TAOM organization. The year he is President, he has other specific duties to the TAOM organization as outlined by the TAOM Bylaws.

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** A sponsoring club nominates the vice president of TAOM two years before its convention. He is Chief Judge for the contests one year before his convention. He selects contest judges and participates in the presentation of awards in accordance with the Trophy and Awards Program.

The convention and convention year before the President is elected to his office (while he is serving as Vice-President of the TAOM), he has specific responsibilities to the contests. These responsibilities can be found in the "TAOM Contest Responsibilities" sheet that is appended to the "Contest" portion of this guide.

If we there is any advice to be give regarding planning and hosting a magic convention, that advice would certainly be that it simply is never too early to begin. Most host clubs begin planning 4-5 years in advance.

To secure the year for which your club wants to host a TAOM convention, your club Secretary must send a letter to the Secretary of the TAOM and request that year. If that year is not already scheduled, your written motion will be voted upon usually at the next Board of Directors meeting. There is a good chance your motion will be approved!

Sometimes it is impossible to find the person who ultimately will be your TAOM President and/or General Chairman years in advance of the convention. In this case you can find a willing person in your club to be the acting convention chairman for a specified length of time. With your club's approval, this person can

enter into contracts and agreements with a hotel and convention center theater. When you finally find your President, he or she can take over. Usually the person who has demonstrated good leadership and planning abilities as an officer of your local magic club is the best person for the job of President.

After securing a year to host a convention, your first task will be to secure a place to hold your convention. Generally this means securing a convention hotel and a theater for the evening shows. These two tasks are monumental and will set the tone for your entire convention.

Since these tasks are so important, the entire chapter three of this book is dedicated to helping you do these tasks. Additionally there is material in this chapter on how to put together a convention schedule so that attendees will know what activity is when.

The President is the leader who will make sure all convention planning tasks are accomplished. The President must assemble a convention planning committee and your committee chairmen must individually know clearly what is expected of them. Controversy usually comes because of ineffective communication.

The President must keep in mind that his chairmen are volunteers. They must be managed accordingly. There are many ways to manage volunteers and maximize their input and contribution potential. One way is to get them to do their jobs is to get them to do the various aspects of their jobs over a period of time.

By having periodic planning meetings with all your committee chairpersons in attendance, everyone will know every else's job. There will also be polite peer pressure. If a committee chairman shows-up at a planning meeting without a particular aspect of his job done and then has to explain why they haven't done what they were supposed to do, they will probably be motivated! The President must be in good communication with each of his committee chairmen. The use of e-mail, phone calls, letters and even personal visits cannot be stressed enough.

The people who will chair each of the committees will come from the ranks of your magic club. A simple sign-up sheet can be used initially to canvas your magic club membership to see who might be interested in helping plan the convention.

As your first planning meeting is scheduled, a letter sent well in advance to each person who has indicated interest in helping plan the convention inviting them to your meeting cannot be emphasized enough. Also use verbal announcements at magic club meetings and don't forget to publish a blip about the upcoming meeting in your monthly club newsletter.

Be prepared for your planning meetings. Think about the convention, write down your thoughts and ideas, consult past-presidents and previous TAOM leadership still in your club, and read through all the archives you can find relating to how your club put on past conventions. In addition, become a student of the TAOM bylaws. This will be valuable preparation and will enable you to answer questions definitively and efficiently as they come up.

Also go to other magic conventions and try to examine what makes conventions successful. Don't be ashamed to "borrow" ideas from other conventions. Sometimes inbreeding is good, but don't do the things that make other conventions unsuccessful!

To have a list of specific committees and a definition of each committee's responsibilities is INVALUABLE! Use the Committee Profiles presented in this Convention Planning Guide. Don't be afraid to modify the list according to the needs and the talents of your local club members of course, but put into writing job descriptions of each committee.

Convention profiles will stipulate who is to do what and they will alleviate you as President the burden of answering questions regarding who is supposed to do what. Everyone will know their job profile and what is expected of him or her because each committee will be clearly defined on paper. Everyone will know what the other committee chairman's jobs are. If a committee member has a question, it will be easy for him to contact the appropriate committee chairman himself rather than contact you as president and ask the question. This will help free-up your time a bit and help ease some of the burden of responsibility from your shoulders

Be sure to publish and keep updated a roster of your committee chairmen and include on the sheet their addresses and phone numbers. Distribute the roster freely to everyone. Let everyone know how to contact everyone.

As you assign committee chairmen, think about the talents and responsibilities of your club members. Sometimes people have certain abilities and do certain things well that make them ideal to head particular committees.

Most people will do a good job with their responsibilities if they are led properly. Encourage your volunteers. When they do a particular aspect of their job, call them up and thank them! Build them up as human beings. Love them. They will be doing difficult jobs and they should be commended for their work as their work progresses!

Also keep in mind that people will let you down. Sometimes they just simply aren't cut-out for their job or can't do their jobs or part of their jobs due to unforeseen circumstances. Occupational changes occur, people get ill, have

crises in their lives, and have to move away due to unforeseen situations. You will have to be on your toes to know how to shift duties and responsibilities.

Emphasize at your planning meetings that it is up to each of your committee chairmen to enlist all the workers that he or she deems necessary to accomplish the tasks of their committee. Try to get your committee chairmen to understand that they can't do it all themselves! If their job is difficult and they try to do it themselves, they will wear themselves out! If they burnout, you have a big problem on your hands. Motivate your committee chairmen to enlist workers and co-chairmen to help them accomplish the tasks of their committees.

The successful magic convention comes about because of good presidential leadership, communication, and properly motivating people with respect and understanding. If you do this, you will quickly discover diligent hard-working individuals who will be willing to work as chairman and they will make your convention a success.

Methods of communication will vary depending on the information to be communicated. When you call a TAOM Planning Committee meeting, contact individuals by phone, US mail, and e-mail. Call your committee chairman the night before a particular meeting. Remind your committee chairmen of the meeting time and place. Remind them they will be called upon to report regarding the status of their committee's responsibilities.

Prepare for your meetings. Make your planning committee meetings orderly and well organized. Keep accurate written records of each meeting. You might keep a file folder on each committee and review each folder before your meetings so that you are mentally up-to-speed. Write down pertinent information you know should be covered at your meetings.

If you plan properly, you will probably only need about four or five general planning meetings to plan your whole convention! Give your committee chairman the responsibility to call meetings for their committee outside your general planning meetings, as they are needed. Let them do their jobs!

If you lead and plan appropriately, as President you will not have to spend a lot of time running around at your convention making sure everything is in place, ironing out problems, putting out small fires, and so forth. A few last minute problems will probably arise during your convention and you will probably have to act. For the most part however, you will be able to sit back, relax, and enjoy the convention and the fruit of your hard work and planning. Your committee chairmen will know their jobs and responsibilities. They will take care of the problems that come up and fall under the jurisdiction. They will do their jobs and they probably will do them well.

Don't forget to say thank you and do it in ways that are meaningful. Each committee chairman of the Planning Committee can be recognized during your convention. Special appreciation certificates are a must. This small gesture is usually well received. Other appreciation certificates may be obtained from the TAOM Secretary/Treasurer and these can be distributed to other helpers as appropriate. If you take people for granted, you will pay for it in the future!

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From Judy Donaldson  
Secretary of the TAOM  
August 2000

## **TAOM PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

(revised 8/00)

Spanish-speaking registration chairman and contest chairman are a real asset. If not possible, an on-call translator is essential. It is very helpful if you, the registration chairman, and the contest chairman have email capabilities.

### **13 Months before your Convention:**

Supply the secretary the necessary information to have registration forms printed for your convention. Secure commitments from five close-up and five stage judges and an alternate. (Names of many prospective judges will be provided by Board representatives.) As a courtesy, invite future contest chairmen and TOAM vice-presidents to get experience by being a judge.

### **At Convention 12 months before your Convention:**

Attend Board Meeting; accept registrations from board (you or registration chairman). If you are allowing registrants to choose theatre seats, have a seating chart available.

Trophy & Awards Program duties as outlined in "TAOM Contest Responsibilities".

Accept registrations immediately after General Meeting (you or registration chairman).

Accept presidential medallion at presentation show and present a brief invitation to your convention.

**September 15:** Send "Thank You" letters to the judges.

**November 15:** Send secretary convention advertising and contest entry information for annual roster mail-out.

**January 15:** Notify secretary of date and location if you plan to have a mid-year meeting.

**Last Saturday in February or meeting date of your choice:**

Preside at mid-year meeting.

Bring secretary registration forms (original or true copy).

Sign Order of Willard certificates and fifty or so copies of Certificate of Appreciation for secretary to include in contestants' statistical analysis after the convention.

**May 1:** Send secretary registration forms.

Solicit program advertising from next year's convention committee.

**August 1:**

Send secretary registration forms.

Notify secretary of date, time, and place of the following: Board of Directors Meeting, General Meeting, Order of Willard presentation ceremony, contest trophy presentations, and Transfer of Power ceremony. Send secretary a list of contestants with addresses, phone numbers, and emails and the categories entered. She will provide you sufficient copies of the contest rules for you to send a copy to each contestant.

**August 20 (or 10 days before convention):**

Send secretary registration forms

**Convention:**

Friday -Preside at Board of Directors meeting.

Sunday - Preside at General Meeting.

Sunday - Present in-coming president with presidential medallion during presentation ceremony and participate in contest awards ceremony.

Monday – Make true copies of registration forms received since August 20 and give them to the secretary.

**Within 30 days after your convention:**

Send T.A.O.M. membership card and refund (less \$6 dues) to no-shows. (The by-laws do not address this issue, but it has been customary since the beginning.) Send Secretary dues collected (\$6.00 per registrant).

Give "Certificates of Appreciation" to your colleagues and performers.

**Within 90 days after your convention:**

Send Secretary your convention financial report and 25% of the profit over \$1500.00.

Send Secretary statistical/registration report.

**SPECIAL NOTE: If your convention has a printed program, the following statement MUST be included:**

**This convention was partially funded by the**

**Renerick “Ren” Clark Memorial Trust Fund.**

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From David Hira  
Planning Summit Leader  
TAOM Convention Planning Guide  
Oversight Committee Member  
August 2000

Part of this manual should include a CHECKLIST at the end of every chapter. Such a checklist may be added at a future date. Some of the items that should be included:

Liability Insurance Hotel/Theater  
Stage Manager  
Fire Marshall for Theater  
Sound Equipment/Lighting  
Transportation of Talent/Equip. to/from Theater  
Handicap Transportation  
Signing for Deaf  
Hotel Room Master Account  
Hotel Comp Room List  
House Doctor's cel #/pager  
Change (money) for Treasurer On Site  
Enough Checks for Treasurer On Site  
Arrangements for Safe at Hotel for Treasurer

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From Judy Donaldson  
Secretary of the TAOM

This guide should include optimum dates for completion of the various items. Such as checklist may be added at a future date.

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## 2. REGISTRATION

One of the most important aspects of a convention is of course convention registrations. A financially successful TAOM convention needs to have as many registered attendees as possible. The job of Registration Chairman is therefore quite important. It is a complex job and demands a lot of attention. A person who has a computer and has the time, energy, and enthusiasm to endure to the end is best for the job.

**REGISTRATION:** Is in charge of all convention registrations and promptly turns over to the Treasurer any moneys received for registrations. The chairperson also secures badges for convention attendees (oversees their printing, the purchase of vinyl holders, the printing of the name of attendees on the badges, the placement of the theatre seat number on each badge, etc), puts together the souvenir packets, helps assign the evening show theatre seats for convention attendees, oversees the staffing of the convention registration booth, and sees to it that the previous year's TAOM convention registration booth is staffed on Sunday.

The first thing you must do regarding registrations is to determine how much to charge convention attendees. The TAOM has no rules, no traditions, and unfortunately no consistency when it comes to establishing convention registration fees. In the TAOM, establishing your fee structure can be time consuming, intricate, and even controversial if you are not careful!

The history of the TAOM shows that the convention has always been regarded as a family convention and at various times the convention has used a flat fee per family registration amount. In addition, amounts for adults and children who register individually have also been a part of its history.

Unfortunately family type registrations are often abused. Groups of people will register at your convention as a "family" when in reality they are not a family at all. At your convention registered under a family registration you might have the magician, spouse and children, but also grandchildren, Uncle Joe, Aunt Martha, Nephew Stephen, and young eight year old Roger the next door neighbor!

If you don't control it in some way, family registrations will severely undercut your registration profit margin. Because of this, some TAOM conventions have gone exclusively to charging separate rates for adults and other rates for children and have eliminated the family registration category.

If you decide to use the family registration, you are going to have to figure out some way of policing the registration. With the proliferation of today's mixed

families, children having different last names, and the fact that you really have no way of verifying a family unit, this will be extremely difficult.

It is expensive for families to come to magic conventions. They must pay for transportation, food and lodging in addition to the convention registration fees. At the same time however, magic conventions are also expensive to host!

There is also no convention anywhere that currently has a family registration rate and the TAOM should probably follow the tradition it seems to have established the past couple of years and eliminate the family registration structure. Most conventions nowadays have two basic registration rates; one for adults (18 years of age and older) and one for children (individuals under 18 years of age).

The TAOM should come to grips with the fact that its annual convention rivals the top IBM and SAM conventions. The TAOM is a major player in the magic convention scene. Its quality and attendance usually far exceeds the SEAM, PCAM, Florida State, Abbott, Midwest Magic Jubilee, and other regional magic conventions. Sometimes the TAOM convention has more attendees than the IBM or SAM conventions as happened in 1999 when almost 1200 people showed up for the Austin TAOM convention!

As the old saying goes, if you want quality, you must pay a fair price. The thing about it is that people will pay if they know the convention is going to be a good one! You can't have a quality convention with exceptional talent without paying for it. You can't pay for good talent if the attendees don't pay for the convention!

**TAOM convention registration rates should at least be similar to the rates other conventions are charging for a particular convention year.**

The summer of 2000, the IBM charged \$98 for an individual registration and \$68 for a child's registration while the SAM charged \$120 for adults and \$60 for children! The 2000 Dallas TAOM convention brought the convention fees up-to-date a bit (and they should be saluted for doing so). The Dallas 2000 TAOM convention charged \$75 for adults (\$85 after August 1), \$50 for Spouse/Partner (\$60 after August 1), and \$35 for children (\$45 after August 1). There was no family registration and there was little opposition that such was not available.

Once registration fees are established, you should send a camera-ready registration blank to the TAOM Secretary. She may reformat it so that it conforms to the TAOM organization's consistency, but you should send her as much as possible. With the advent of modern computers and the proliferation of desktop publishing, this shouldn't be much of a problem.

Be sure to include the address, phone number, and e-mail address of the registration chairman. Include other information such as the TAOM website address. Include the address, phone number, and e-mail address of the contest chairman. Include the dates of the convention and the name and phone number of the convention hotel and how a registrant can reserve their room for the convention. You might also include other information such as a "for office use only" area to indicate registration number and seat numbers in the auditorium for the evening theater shows. Be sure and include proper information needed if an attendee wants to pay by credit card).

You will officially begin receiving registrations on Sunday morning following the business meeting of the previous year's convention and it is customary to let the Board of Directors register for your convention at their Friday board meeting.

Traditionally at TAOM conventions, a person who registers early for the convention will have a seat close to the theater stage. The longer a person waits to register for the convention, the further back from the stage his theater seat will be. This is a good arrangement so long as it is remembered that the people who register early should receive good middle section seats and not seats on the far sides of the auditorium! Treat them right. After all, they did register early.

Theater seating can follow a sort of funnel arrangement with the apex of the funnel being close to the stage, and the funnel growing larger as it progresses further back into the house. The seats outside the perimeter of the funnel can be sold to non-convention attending persons.

Over the past several years, a wonderful tradition has developed where people that register at the previous year's convention can select where they want to sit in the auditorium! Wow! What great incentive to register early! Usually a blown-up theater seating chart is available. When seats are taken, the seats are blocked-out with a marker and row and seat numbers are then immediately written onto the convention registration form. What a great idea!

You will receive more registrations at the convention than you will during any other month except August prior to our convention. Many people procrastinate and don't plan ahead. Many will register in August or will wait and register at your convention once they arrive.

It is recommended that you try to motivate as many people as possible to register early for the convention. This will give you more working capital and will help distribute the work load more easily. One method to accomplish this is to use a lower or discounted registration fee for individuals registering prior to July 1 (or other appropriate date), with individuals registering after this date paying a higher or "regular" registration fee.

One of the best things you can do to promote the success of your convention is to have good convention name badges. Fort Worth has used clear plastic name badge holders purchased from Betty Jo Standridge. (Note from Chuck Lehr, Dallas 2000 TAOM Registration: The vinyl badge holders formerly produced by Betty Jo Standridge are no longer available from that source. She sold the business. We were told the new owner destroyed the die after producing ours).

These types of holders allow for the name badge in the upper section while the lower section of the badge holds the convention schedule. First names on the badges should be big and bold enough so that they can be seen a few feet away. Inexpensive name badge label software is abundant in any office or computer supply store. The cards on which the names are can be printed at a printing shop in strips of five or more, or the whole thing can be printed on simple home-based computer systems.

On the badge somewhere, the attendee's seat row and number should also be printed. The badge can serve a multi-purpose function including the means by which a person is admitted to the evening theater shows, the way a person is admitted to the dealer's room, the lectures and other shows. This will eliminate the need to print evening theater show tickets for the convention registrants. The great backside of this is that there will also be no lost evening theatre show tickets. Each attendee usually sits in the same seat for each of the three evening theater shows.

When an attendee arrives at a convention, it is customary to have convention registration packets waiting for them at a registration booth or table area. These packets are usually large letter-sized envelopes with the registrant's name and their registration numbers printed on the upper portion of the outside. You can also use a system whereby stickers or other indicator can be used on the outside of the envelopes to delineate anyone who owes money to fully pay for their registration.

Inside the envelopes can be an array of various materials such as a convention souvenir program, name badges, a "where to go eat" guide, brochures, discount coupons, and other various brochures that are provided free of charge by your Convention and Visitor's Bureau. You might include things like a downtown map (or map of the convention area) and a "things to do and see" guide including information concerning local tourist attractions. You can include bus route information, special letters from the Talent Chairman in the packets of your performers, dealers, and lecturers. Free giveaways from generous dealers can be included and you might even throw in a wooden nickel or two. In short, be creative and give the attendees all sorts of goodies.

The convention hotel will probably have a convention registration booth area that is permanently built into the hotel. Ask to use it. You might also request

a house phone, a bulletin board, and tables with pens (chained to the tables) so people can fill out registration forms without congesting the packet pick-up lines. The booth can also be decorated with a banner welcoming magicians to the convention. The booth should open early Friday afternoon (at least by about 1:00 pm) and remain open until about 30 minutes prior to the Friday night show. It can reopen after the Friday night show and certainly it should remain open all day Saturday the next day.

The Registration Chairman should make sure the booth is staffed with adequate help. It is also useful if individuals have particular jobs and work the booth on a shift system. Your Convention and Visitor's Bureau may be willing to provide one or more of their employees to work in your booth free of charge, the number based on a prorated schedule pertaining to the number of your convention attendees.

You may need to hand out a few complimentary registrations to dignitaries or other individuals as directed by the President and Talent Chairman. Also many of the performers will probably receive complimentary registrations as part of their payment, the details of which should be worked out by the Talent Chairman for your convention. Be sure to save some of the "good seats" in the auditorium for dignitaries, the talent you hire for the convention, and so forth.

Another thing you might consider is to mix lay people in among the seats where magicians are seated. Lay people are "real people" when it comes to magic conventions, and their enthusiasm, applause, and audience response is always contagious to the magicians seated around them. This is also very educational for magicians in that they are reminded just how laymen respond to magic. The first two rows of the theater might be seated with no one but lay persons. Be sure the performers know this so that "real volunteers" can be chosen from the audience as needed for their various acts.

The job of Registration Chairman is very demanding. Someone who has a spouse, roommate, or children should staff it; people who can help do the job. There are many things that must be done, all the way from mail correspondence, to answering the phone, running errands, to stuffing registration envelopes. Having a co-chairman and workers is a help, but someone actually at the residence of the chairman especially during the months immediately prior to the convention is extremely helpful.

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From Judy Donaldson  
To Bruce Chadwick  
August 2000

This might be the spot to add another category – “Operations Center”. I think it is a CRITICAL addition to the list of committees. It was a lifesaver for the Austin convention on many fronts. Brooks Griffith has worked with much larger conventions over the years and suggested a separate room with communications capabilities staffed with someone knowledgeable about all aspects and personnel connected to the convention. Telephone calls from the public are directed to the Op Center director. Volunteers sign in and are directed to needed areas from this control central. This room can be used to store material and equipment and clears the registration area of clutter. It also allows problems to be solved in privacy.

All questions not immediately answerable by convention personnel are directed to this center. The room itself provides a resting spot and refreshment for the various workers. Walkie-talkies are an invaluable tool for key personnel and can be dispensed, collected, and recharged in this area. The Op Center director keeps up with everything and everybody and hardly gets to enjoy the convention, but is crucial to it's success.

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From Paul Siegel  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Souvenir Program Chairman  
September 12, 2000

Information Packets -- an effort must be made to create a folio of information that will be used for and by each registrant. This information should include special events, maps showing hotel activity locations, important schedule notations, etc. This data can be produced at the last moment (prior to the convention) to offset any schedule changes that may occur.

Convention Identification -- The Print Chair should work with the conventions President and Planning Committee to establish some convention identification. This “logo” can be used on all printing, media releases, stationery and badges. Badge designs MUST be clear, concise and easily readable so that all registrants can be positively controlled.

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From Chuck Lehr  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Registration  
September 25, 2000

Sometimes people arrive at (the Friday theater show) without having registered (just arrived) and want to get it. It is an easy matter to produce a quick

listing from the database of registrants and their seat numbers. The ushers could use this list to verify registration at the door.

There is no way to determine the age of “children” submitted on a registration form. A deterrent to submitting adults as children might be to give them a different color badge – or a badge that has the “child” on it.

Establish price for day badges too. Consider – when you charge \$50 for a day badge – the TAOM membership will only apply if the individual requests it – and then... add \$6 for membership dues. It is NOT a good idea to advertise “day rates” in advance.

If you utilize a two-color badge system where people are grouped by badge color as to which activities they attend – EARLY ON – NOTIFY EVERYONE IF THEY REQUIRE SEATING WITH FRIENDS, THEY MUST TELL YOU IN ADVANCE BEFORE COLORS ARE ASSIGNED.

We had over 100 walk-ins in Dallas. So did Austin. The registration office needs to be equipped both with people to hand out pre-registration packets and other people to handle new registrations (our new registration processing at one time had a one hour backup to process badges).

Concerning mailing receipts, mailing receipts can be costly. Whenever possible, we e-mailed receipts. On the e-mail we included information about the hotel, encouraging early hotel registration. Cost savings using this method were significant. We managed the entire convention using only one roll of stamps.

## RECEIPT

### Texas Association of Magicians 2000 Convention

September 1, 2, 3, and 4, 2000

T.A.O.M. MEMBER:

BADGE NAME –

TOTAL PAID: \$

REGISTRATION #

RECEIVED , 2000 – JOAN LEHR

YOUR SEATS ARE:

This is a good view of the stage.

The Mezzanine overhangs the main floor quite a bit, so there are very few people's heads between you and the stage.

The Majestic has a steep rake to the stage, so little chance of your view being obstructed.

This is the only receipt you will get.

You can keep up with TAOM2K activities on the Internet at [www.TAOM.org](http://www.TAOM.org)  
The Web page now has the schedule, talent lineup, and dealers list on it. Check it out!!!!

WE ARE EXCITED!!!!!!

Chuck and Joannie Lehr

**---Our convention hotel is:**

**The Adam's Mark**  
**400 North Olive St, Dallas, TX 75201**  
<http://www.adamsmark.com>

Our new facilities are gorgeous – ultra-modern – spacious – and even closer to the theater (1\_ blocks). The Adam's Mark will offer the same rates as we have previously advertised - \$89 per day (which includes all taxes).

**You must have reserved your room  
prior to August 17 to get this rate.  
It may not be too late..  
ask for the TAOM rate and see if you get it.**

Please call Adam's Mark at  
1-800 444-2326 or 1-214 922-8000  
for room reservations.

Do NOT try to book your room at their website. Use the phone.

Be sure to ask for the Texas Association of Magicians Convention over Labor Day Weekend to get our special convention rates.

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From Judy Donaldson  
To Bruce Chadwick  
August 2000

(I'm not sure why the "previous" year's club needs a presence at the booth on Sunday; the "current" convention should have a representative on hand even after next year's host club starts taking registrations – possibly at the Operations Center – see below.)

Our "Operations Center" was a life-saver for the Austin convention on many fronts. Brooks Griffith has worked with much larger conventions over the years and suggested a separate room with communications capabilities staffed with someone knowledgeable about all aspects and personnel connected to the convention. Telephone calls from the public are directed to the Op Center director. Volunteers sign in and are directed to needed areas from this control central. This room can be used to store material and equipment and clears the registration area of clutter. It also allows problems to be solved in privacy. All questions not immediately answerable by convention personnel are directed to this center. The room itself provides a resting spot and refreshment for the various workers. Walkie-talkies are an invaluable tool for key personnel and can be dispensed, collected, and recharged in this area. The Op Center director keeps up with everything and everybody and hardly gets to enjoy the convention, but is crucial to it's success.

---

From Judy Donaldson  
Secretary of the TAOM  
August 1999

**T.A.O.M. Registration Procedures**  
**by Judy Donaldson**  
(rev. 8/99)

At least 13 months before your convention, provide the secretary with the necessary information for your registration form. She will bring 500 three-part NCR forms to the Board meeting on the first day of the convention a year before yours.

Accept registrations *only* on the following time schedule:

Accept registrations from the Board of Directors immediately after the board meeting (usually Friday afternoon). If you are allowing registrants to choose their theatre seats, have the seating chart available. The secretary and spouse receive complimentary convention registration. Life Members are exempt from paying dues and convention registration. Life Members as of 5/30/99 are Bob Blau, V. Frank Jones, Ralph Marcom, Doc Miller, Ray Santee, John Sissom, and Ed Watkins. *They do not pay membership dues or convention registration fees.*

Set up a table with appropriate eye-catching decorations and signs to accept registrations from the general membership immediately after the General Meeting (usually Sunday morning). If you are allowing registrants to choose their theatre seats, have the seating chart available.

Anyone who attends a TAOM convention (with the exception of public shows) must to be registered for that convention. To be registered, a person must pay your set fee, which includes one TAOM membership, **or** be the spouse/partner or child/grandchild of a registrant. **No more than two adults should be registered on any one registration form.**

When a magician is accompanied by an assistant, that person is considered a "spouse/partner", pays the spouse fee, and is not issued a membership card. If that person wants a membership card, collect an extra \$6. When more than one TAOM \$6 membership fee is included, please make a LARGE notation on the form so the appropriate cards can be made.

"Guests" perforce become members by completing separate registration forms. Otherwise, all the members of one magic club (for example) could register as "adults" for the spouse fee on only one member's form. If two people (or families) want to sit together, have them complete two registration forms and make a note of seating partners on the top of the form.

This system has worked well by providing the host club the maximum equitable registration income and increasing the membership rolls for future conventions. The registrants are getting a bargain any way you compute the price of the shows, lectures, etc.

Make arrangements with the Dealer Chairman and the person who hires the performers to supply you with a completed registration form for each dealer table and each performing group, whether they pay for themselves or your club includes registration as part of their payments and dealers fees. This may present exceptions to the "only two adults per form" rule. Remember, there will always be exceptions; let common sense be your guide.

Set up your registration database to produce a final report that contains the information required on the "TAOM Convention Statistical Report" form.

If a registrant cancels after paying the registration fee, be sure to deduct \$6 for TAOM membership before you refund any money. Do not discard the registration form; mark it "cancelled" and submit it to the secretary with the others. This will be handled like the ones you get for "dues only".

Give the secretary the original (or a true copy) of all registrations at the mid-year meeting or about the first of March. Send additional registrations to the secretary as quantities warrant until ten days before your convention.

*Important: Notify the secretary of address corrections and mail returned by the post office.*

Label each registration packet with the registrant's name, address, phone numbers, and email.

The secretary will provide you with a form to be inserted in each packet for registrants to note changes in this information. A box will be provided at the registration desk to receive these complete forms.

The secretary will meet with you the Thursday night before your convention to put the membership cards in your registration packets for everyone registered up to that point.

Monday morning of your convention, make a true copy of all registration forms not previously submitted and give them to the secretary.

Remove the unclaimed membership cards from the "no-show" registration packets and mail them to the members when you refund their registration fees (less \$6 dues, of course.)

Within 30 days after your convention, send the secretary the membership dues collected with registrations (\$6.00 per member). Within 90 days, send the secretary the completed 'TAOM Convention Statistical Report' form.

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### 3. TREASURER

As your club decides to put on a TAOM convention, you must understand that you are autonomous from the TAOM organization. Whether you make money or go horribly into debt, the TAOM organization won't come to your rescue. Make sure you pick a Treasurer that you can trust.

**TREASURER:** Acts as treasurer for the convention, establishes a convention checking account, and oversees the administration of the account. This person also works closely with the President to work up a convention budget, works with the Talent Chairman to work up a talent budget, disburses all funds according to all budgets, and works according to the TAOM Constitution concerning accounting and records as required by the TAOM organization. At the beginning of the convention, the Treasurer provides the Talent Chairperson with checks made out to each performer. Only the Convention President/Chairman and the Treasurer have power to write checks. The account is terminated at the convention's conclusion, after all disbursements are made.

There should only be one address where all invoices and financial correspondence is sent. Usually this is the Treasurer's address. If the Treasurer so chooses, a post office box can be secured for the convention. One single address for financial matters will minimize the headaches associated with getting all the bills paid before, during, and after a convention.

A budget must be developed for your convention. You might want to examine the budgets of previous TAOM conventions and then parallel your budget accordingly. You will usually multiply all the figures in your budget by about fifteen percent, as compared to the last time your club hosted a TAOM convention. The budget can always be revised, but you must consider your best and worst case scenarios. Some categories you might consider for your budget will be indicated on an additional sheet in this chapter.

You might also consider a separate "Promotions" and "Advertising" categories in your budget. This will delineate money for the Promotions Chairman to use without interfering with the printing of flyers and posters, advertising in magazines, and so forth as provided by the Promotions category.

The Treasurer should make periodic reports to the President. A computer spread sheet is the best way to make such a report. You might also use a simple computer invoice program to create invoices for use in billing individuals for moneys owed you.

Your Treasurer will probably need to open a convention checking account. This account should be first augmented by the TAOM organization's advance they will give you, and money from your own magic club account (or from the

account that contains the profit from the previous time you hosted a TAOM convention).

Only two people should have the power to write checks, essentially the Treasurer and a backup person such as the President, just in case something happens to the Treasurer. The Treasurer and President should be bonded.

Make sure your Treasurer has change (money) on hand at the convention site. Small matters usually come up that require cash. Certainly the Treasurer should have enough checks on site at the convention to take care of any matters that need financial attention.

Many performers will need to be paid cash. Follow the procedures used by both the IBM and SAM conventions. They have a system whereby the Treasurer has checks pre-written for each performer. The check is usually attached to a regular #10 business envelope with the performer's name on it. In the envelope is the same amount of cash as the amount on the check.

When a performer is paid, he is given the check to endorse immediately. Immediately the performer returns the check back to the Treasurer, and then the Treasurer gives the performer the envelope of cash to "cash" their check. The check becomes the receipt showing that the performer has been paid in full. Note that this payment procedure is specified in the standardized performance contract (found in the Talent section of this convention planning guide).

Yes, this means that the Treasurer will have a lot of cash money on him, but this is how most magic conventions pay their performers. Most performers that work other magic conventions will expect this same payment procedure as they work the TAOM.

Obviously the Treasurer should make arrangements to use the convention hotel safe. The Treasurer and Talent Chairman need to coordinate their efforts so that the Treasurer knows what is promised in the performance contract for each performer.

It should be emphasized that the Treasurer cannot wait till the end of the convention to pay performers. Performers should be paid immediately after services are rendered. Payments can be made backstage immediately before an evening show. Don't wait till an evening show is completed to come backstage and make payments. It is hectic backstage after a performance and some performers will actually leave the theater immediately after their performance and before the evening theater show is completed.

Most performers will need cash so that they can pay their hotel bills. Other performers will not be able to stay to the end of your convention. They will fly in for their performance, perform, and will need to fly back out the next day to their

next performance destination. They must be paid on the spot after their performances!

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From Kevin Stadler  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Treasurer  
October 16, 2000

It is a good practice to write into the note section of each check the budget category that the expense falls under. The same thing should be done with each deposit slip except note the categories of income on the back with the amount for each. This way the process of reconciliation is much easier and the end of convention accounting has an audit trail.

Since much of the money for the convention comes in within the last two weeks, it makes sense to plan the budget with a best case and worst case scenario. In this way you can recommend either increasing or decreasing expenditure well in advance of knowing the actual outcome of the convention. Bear in mind that the local club bears the burden if the convention loses money.

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## 4. TALENT

The person for the Talent Chairman job is a person who knows magicians or at least is willing to get to know them.

**TALENT:** Hires and then executes a written contract with all performers (stage and close-up) and Masters of Ceremonies, works with the Treasurer to write a talent budget, works within his budget, and provides the President and the Treasurer with information regarding all talent contracts and other relevant information. The Talent Chairperson should work closely with the Lecture and Dealer committees. The chairperson has the responsibility to make sure each performer is paid immediately after their services are rendered.

Your Friday night evening show does not have to be the weakest evening show of the convention. A good Friday night show can "set the stage for a very good convention." Of course if you are selling tickets to each stage performance including Friday night, this will motivate you to have strong shows for each evening of the convention.

One of the most anxious aspects of hiring talent for a convention is the dilemma between wondering if you have set aside too much or not enough of your budget toward talent. The single most expensive item on your budget list will probably be your talent budget. Give first priority in your budget to talent and try to give the Talent Chairman plenty of room from the beginning so that he knows the money amounts he has to negotiate with.

The Talent Chairman will also book lecturers for your convention. Also the Talent Chairman and the Dealer Chairman must work closely together when it comes to hiring performers, lecturers, and inviting dealers. Sometimes special deals can be worked out with dealer/performers, such as telling them they can come as a evening show performer if they will also lecture free of charge. Everyone wants to lecture (see Lecture chapter) and there is no reason to pay for lecturers.

Other factors to consider in negotiating fees with performers include free convention registrations, airport pick-up/drop-off, hotel rooms and dealer's booth space.

Performers should be told that they must make their own room reservations at the hotel like all other convention registrants. Where the convention has agreed to pay for performer's rooms, the best way to handle this is to give the performers cash for their rooms when they arrive at the convention. Thereafter they will be solely responsible for checking in and an out of their room, and paying for their room when they leave the convention. This will keep the

convention from getting stuck with room service charges, long distance phone calls, movies and other hotel charges.

One of the most exciting events of the 1988 TAOM convention was Roger Crabtree's Sunday afternoon "Classics of Magic" matinee show. This was a one trick per performer show that was emceed by Roger. Seated on a leisure chair with the intimate stage setting appearance of a living room, Roger would tell about the history of a particular effect (the histories had been provided to Roger by each performer) and then introduce a performer who then performed one single effect.

A copy of the performer contract is part of this chapter. Roger Crabtree originally used this contract when he booked the talent years ago for IBM conventions. This contract was modified and used by the 1988 Fort Worth TAOM convention. In 1997 when the convention was once again in Fort Worth, Bruce Chadwick the Talent Chairman re-wrote the contract once again and it was thereafter examined by Fort Worth attorney and magician Mack Ed Swindle. This contract is legal and it covers most liability. A copy of this contract can be e-mailed to you by Bruce Chadwick. Contact him at [mail@brucechadwick.com](mailto:mail@brucechadwick.com)

Another suggestion is that the evening shows should not extend beyond 10:30 pm. Actually is probably best if do not go beyond 10:00 pm, with a beginning show time of 8:00.

You might also consider evening shows without an intermission. The SAM convention evening shows never have intermissions. This means that most SAM evening shows run between 1-1/2 to two hours. This gives a full 30 minutes for convention attendees to get back to the hotel for any activities scheduled for 10:30 pm.

Consider also arranging for celebrities and politicians to come to your convention. Often they can come at little or no charge.

Impress your VIP personalities and performers by picking them up at the airport in a limousine. Bob Utter worked out a special deal with Carey Limousine Service at the 1988 TAOM convention. Carey would made round trip runs to the airport for \$25 each. Different individuals of the Fort Worth Magicians Club donated the \$25 dollar amounts. These individuals also rode with the limo for their particular run.

Be sure to inform performers and convention attendees how they can get to/from the airport and the convention hotel, especially in regards to shuttle services. Develop a transportation schedule for the performers who have cargo that needs to be transported to/from the airport and make sure this information is placed into the hands of the Transportation Chairman. See if one of your club members has a cargo van that can help haul cargo to and from the airport.

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From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

The job description and responsibilities for scheduling talent for the Dallas TAOM Convention in 2001 was as follows:

**TALENT HANDLER:** Responsible for making sure that the performers know when they are to perform, where they are to perform, and what time they are to be there. Chairman works closely with Transportation Chairman to assure that Performers get to and from the airport at the right times. Each Committee member will be assigned to one Performer to attend to their needs (i.e. water/soda for lectures, liaison with hotel to assure that room accommodations are acceptable, they have transportation to and from theatre/lecture room for them and props, etc.). Chairman prepares booklet for each Performer which identifies and includes the following: welcome letter from President, schedule of events, Performer's contract with TAOM, highlighted times of their performances/lectures, map of hotel which identifies where events will be held, confirmation numbers for hotel, transportation information [flight times, numbers, etc.], names, numbers and responsibilities of all relevant Committee Chairmen).

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# TAOM CONVENTION PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

This Performance Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into between the Texas Association of Magicians, a non-profit association (hereinafter "TAOM") and **Name of Performer** whose address is Street, City, State, Zip, phone 000-000-0000 (hereinafter referred to as "Performer").

## RECITALS

**WHEREAS**, TAOM is conducting a convention in **host city**, Texas, USA during the Labor Day weekend **year** (Friday afternoon **month date** through noon Monday **month date**), and desires to engage the services of **Bruce Chadwick** for such convention in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, for and in consideration of the mutual promises, covenants, and conditions described herein, the Parties hereto agree as follows:

1. **Performance(s)**. TAOM engages the services of the Performer for the **insert year** TAOM Convention in Fort Worth, Texas, USA. The Performer agrees to provide the following performances at the convention in accordance with the terms of this Agreement: **perform the act which won the performer the 2000 FISM first place trophy, on one of the three evening shows**. The schedule for the performance(s) during the Labor Day weekend will be determined by the TAOM and the TAOM reserves the right to change the schedule of the performance(s) during the weekend as it deems prudent.

2. **Consideration**. TAOM agrees to pay Performer at the convention, as full consideration for Performer's services at the TAOM Convention, the following: **two convention registrations, one room in the convention hotel for the three convention nights (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; \$78 per night) and fee of TWO thousand dollars**. The performer must make convention his own hotel reservations. The name of the convention hotel is \_\_\_\_\_ located at \_\_\_\_\_. Be sure to mention the TAOM to get discount room rates of \_\_\_\_\_ per night. The TAOM will pay the performer a cash settlement for his or her hotel accommodations (room and tax) and the Performer will therefore be personally and solely responsible for paying for said room and tax at time of check-out as dictated by hotel policy. In the event that dealer's room booth space is part of the consideration above, a additional written agreement regarding the use of such dealer's space shall be negotiated between the Performer and the TAOM Dealer Chairman.

The two convention registrations will allow the performers access to all convention shows as per a standard convention registration that is granted to or purchased by other convention attendees. The Performer's convention registrations will not include admission to any special events either arranged or suggested by the TAOM that are in addition to a normal convention registration. If performer so requests it, the TAOM is available for consultation regarding automobile transportation from the airport to the hotel at the beginning of the convention, and back to the airport from the hotel at the end of the convention. Except for the consideration described above, Performer acknowledges that there is no other compensation for Performer's services contracted for herein.

3. **Performer's Act**. The specific act or acts which the Performer will perform are set forth in paragraph 1 hereinabove. Performer agrees that he will provide the TAOM Talent Chairman with a written detailed list of effects (or VHS video tape of the act or acts) he or she plans to perform at least 45 days prior to the convention. This information will assist the TAOM in appropriate scheduling of the shows and detail the Performer's performance obligations.

The Performer acknowledges that in preparation for an **evening** show performance, he or she agrees to be in attendance during the four hour technical rehearsal time scheduled by the TAOM. This technical rehearsal will probably be held in the afternoon at the show performance site, but it is understood that an alternative site or time might be required. The TAOM shall be responsible for providing only this four hour period of rehearsal on the day of the performance. It is also understood that this same rehearsal period will be shared with the other performers on the show, with the rehearsal time appropriated by the TAOM Stage Manager. Note that this period is for technical rehearsal (i.e., a rehearsal period to establish the performer's stage cues for lighting, sound, curtains, and so forth) and not a full run-through of either the Performer's act or the show as an entirety.

The TAOM Talent Chairman shall provide information on how to get from the convention hotel to the performance location, provide overall show times, and indicate times scheduled for technical rehearsals. Upon arriving at the rehearsal or performance location, all questions regarding the performance should be directed to the TAOM Stage Manager. For performances other than for the evening shows, the TAOM does not require nor provide a rehearsal.

For evening shows, because of the diversity of the number of performers and the fact that we are dealing with three or more separate shows, a generic stage lighting plot will be developed. In other words, the technical rehearsal time does not allow for involved hanging, re-hanging, or re-focusing of stage lighting instruments. Performer agrees that any special requirements necessary for the performance of the act or acts (such as equipment which the TAOM should provide for the performer, storage of Performer's equipment, facilities for animals, etc) must be specified by the Performer in the space below. If not so specified, TAOM is under no obligation regarding same.

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**4. Fire Regulations.** To comply with fire regulations, Performer agrees not to perform any effects with fire, flash paper, flames from candles, matches, torches, flashpots, or other fire or smoke producing apparatus without the express written consent of the Talent Chairman at least 20 days prior to the date of performance.

**5. Objectionable or Blue Material.** Performer understands and acknowledges that the TAOM Convention shows are attended by children and families, and it is the intent of TAOM to provide family entertainment during the convention. Performer therefore agrees to refrain from the use of any blue, ethnic, sexual, or otherwise inappropriate mater. Upon breach of this provision, Performer acknowledges that he or she has waived the right to recover any of the consideration due under this Agreement.

**6. Performance Aspects.** The TAOM shall designate the performance location for the Performer's act(s). The TAOM shall provide sound reinforcement, lighting, curtains, and other stage facilities at it's discretion. The Performer acknowledges and agrees to comply with the authority of the Talent Chairman and/or the Stage Manager regarding all aspects related to his or her performance.

The parties acknowledge that no special theatrical equipment, including and not limited to stage rigging, lighting instruments, curtains, scenery, sound reinforcement, special effects equipment, and so forth shall be provided by the TAOM. The performer agrees to request the

use of only the theatrical equipment at the performance location which the TAOM has leased or otherwise has permission to use, and such request may or may not be granted by the TAOM or its authorities. The TAOM is under no obligation to provide additional equipment, and the Performer assumes all liability and obligations to pay for, rent, or otherwise provide additional equipment for his or her performance(s).

For recorded music that a performer may desire to use during his or her performance(s), the Performer acknowledges that the TAOM will only provide cassette tape playback equipment, and such equipment will only be available for use during evening shows. The parties acknowledge that the Talent Chairman is obligated to assure that sound levels and decibel level limits are appropriate during performances, and therefore the Talent Chairman and/or the Stage Manager shall be ultimate authorities regarding the control of such. Furthermore, the Performer is solely liable for paying any fees, royalties, commissions or otherwise (such required by BMI, ASCAP or other authorities) related to the use of the Performer's music during his or her performance(s).

**7. Reasonable Availability, Motion and Still Photography.** Performer agrees to spend a reasonable amount of time during the convention mingling with the convention attendees, and, unless otherwise agreed herein, attend the president's party on Sunday night of the convention.

Performer also acknowledges that as a part of his or her services engaged herein that he or she will be reasonably available for photographs with convention attendees. Performer also agrees to permit non-flash still photography during the Performer's performance by the audience, by TAOM photographers, and by representatives of the news media. The TAOM will make reasonable attempts to see that any photography is properly conducted so as to not distract from the Performer's performance.

Due to contractual regulations at some TAOM performance sites, the TAOM will request that no motion film or video taping of the Performer's performance(s) be made unless written permission is granted by the Performer AND the Talent Chairman. In the event that the Performer wants to arrange for (or otherwise requests that) his or her performance be audio, video, or otherwise mechanically recorded, permission from the Talent Chairman must be granted in writing. If owner of the performance location requires that additional fees be paid to allow for such recording (such as additional money for rent, stage hand labor, and so forth), the Performer shall have sole responsibility for paying such fees.

**8. Independent Contractor.** Performer is an independent contractor and not an employee or agent of the TAOM. Performer assumes all responsibility for any taxes, state, federal or otherwise, associated with Performer.

**9. Indemnification.** Performer agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the TAOM, its officers, directors, employees, and members from any claims for any loss or damages to performer or any of Performer's property that may arise out of Performer's performance. Performer agrees to pay for any damages to persons or property resulting directly or indirectly from the Performer's performance(s) or conduct.

**10. Acts of God.** TAOM shall not be liable for any consequences arising as a result of any fire, strike, labor dispute, court order, act of God or other act without the reasonable control of TAOM.

**11. Breach.** In the event either party materially breaches the provisions of this Agreement, the other party shall have his or its remedies at law. Upon any material breach of this Agreement by Performer, Performer also waives payment of all consideration provided for herein.

12. **Miscellaneous.** This Agreement is performable in Fort Worth, Texas. This is an Agreement freely negotiated between the parties.

**SIGNED** the day and year first written above.

**TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS**

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Harry Houdini, Talent Chairman  
PO Box 12345  
Fort Worth, TX 76110 USA  
Phone 817-927-0581  
FAX 817-927-1804  
mail@brucechadwick.com

**PERFORMER(S)**

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[mail@brucechadwick.com](mailto:mail@brucechadwick.com)

\* \* \* \*

## 5. DEALERS

One of the most exciting things about a magic convention is the dealers' room. Here the world of magic apparatus from the simple thumb tip to floating ladies in the air is made available to the magician willing to buy it. Here the advertisements from the magic magazines and periodicals come to life with live demonstrations and sometimes even hands-on examinations. Needless-to-say, the dealer's room offers a magnetism and appeal all its own. The person in charge of dealers' room will have the following responsibilities:

**DEALERS:** Secures magic dealers for the convention, develops the dealer's room floor ground plan, and makes sure the hotel properly places the booths and tables in the dealer's room (coordinating this with our Hotel Hospitality Committee). He assigns booths to the dealers, provides appropriate signs for each booth, is the monitor for the dealer's room, and collaborates with, provides, or otherwise arranges for hotel security (working with the Hospitality Committee) during all open and closed hours of the dealer's room. The Dealer chairperson should work closely with the Talent Chairperson so that deals regarding certain dealers/performers/lecturers can be appropriately arranged.

The number of dealers at a convention should be limited. There is value to the convention attendees if there is a broad range of various magical apparatus without an excessive amount of overlap. Also too many magic dealers compared to the number of convention attendees is a financial disaster for dealers. This will leave unsuccessful dealers with an attitude that the TAOM convention is not profitable. This will foster unwillingness for them to come to future TAOM conventions and it can stain the TAOM with a bad reputation that the convention is unprofitable.

Some conventions have dealers on an invitation only basis. This helps control the variety and the number of dealers. As dealers began to contact the dealer's chairman and inform the convention that they would like to display, it is best to have them fill out a request form that will in turn put them in the pool as the convention decides whom to invite.

There is a tradition to invite Texas dealers first. After all, it is the Texas Association of Magicians.

There will be much overlap between dealers, performers, and lecturers. The Dealer Chairman must work closely with the Talent Chairman. Most of the time there will be negotiation and the offer of a dealer's booth to performers and lecturers. Some performers will not come to perform or lecture unless they are given a dealer's booth.

The reputation of the magic dealers should be considered. It is no secret that certain magic dealers have a hard time getting along with other magic dealers. Where you are aware of "problem dealers," the choice to bring them to your convention should be weighed heavily.

The 1988 Fort Worth TAOM Convention used the tactic of telling dealers that if they came as a dealer, they might be required to perform, lecture, or emcee a show. The success of the tactic varied. Some dealers expressed resentment when they were told that they might have to perform, lecture or emcee a show without financial compensation. Some dealers even decided that under these terms, they would not come as dealers to the convention and withdrew their interest in coming as a dealer.

The assignments of the booths should be well thought out so as to avoid putting like dealers together, or dealers that are contentious with their competition.

The number of dealers may be limited to the amount of hotel space available for the dealer's room. It is best if all the dealers can be located in one large room. If possible, also put in the center of the room a water station complete with tables and chairs. This will give a nice place for conventioners to congregate and provided space for magician's spouses to sit and gossip while their magician combs the dealer's booths.

Standard booth sizes at magic conventions are usually 8'-0" x 10'-0" and consist of one front draped table measuring 6'-0" x 2'-6" and one school table (6'0 x 1'6")" stacked on top of a regular 6'-0" x 2'-6" table, the stacked tables located at the back of the booth. Dealers that require electricity should be placed along the walls that contain electric receptacles, or near floor pockets with receptacles. It is also nice if there is at least some space between each booth to give the dealers and convention attendees "room to breathe."

A paging system is useful in the dealer's room so that the Dealer Chairman can make announcements to close the dealer's room, make announcements, and so forth.

Professionally made (perhaps computer generated) signs for each booth are helpful. This is a professional touch so that each dealer will know his booth as he arrives to set up in the dealer's room. Signs are also useful to convention attendees to know which booth is which.

A security guard may be needed to spend each night in the dealer's room to give it ample overnight security. Certainly security should be used at the entrance to the dealer's room to make sure that only people with convention badges enter the room. This will keep laymen and non-registered persons from

entering the room. During closed times, no person should be allowed in the room without the Dealer Chairman's approval and/or presence.

The dealer's room booth tables are usually set-up by 9:00 am on Friday before the convention, with the room officially opening by about 1:00 or 2:00 pm in the afternoon. The dealers room should probably close by at least 1:00 pm Monday afternoon, and hotels may request that the room be cleared by 3:00 pm.

Each of the dealers who agree to come to the convention should probably be sent an Exhibitor's Guide that will give them information on where to enter the hotel or unload their supplies, the rules and regulations of the dealer's room, and provide the written contract engaging their services.

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From Steve Burton  
Past IBM Dealer Chairman  
March 1, 2001

One of the busiest and most appreciated areas of any convention is the dealer's room. TAOM Convention planners should consider the dealers an integral part of a successful convention and do everything they can to make both the dealers and the attendees happy with their dealer's room experience.

One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to appoint a dealer chairman who is receptive to concerns by both the buyers and the sellers. For this reason it is not recommended that the person in charge of the room be a dealer him/herself and certainly not someone who is going to display at the convention. This prevents the perception of a conflict of interest whether or not one actually exists. It also insures that the Dealer Chairman will be available to all dealers and not be involved in running their own booth.

This does not mean the Dealer Chairman should not be knowledgeable about the business of magic. On the contrary, it would be of great benefit to the convention if the Dealer Chairman has attended as many different conventions as possible and seen first hand how different dealer rooms are managed.

Once the Dealer Chairman has been selected it is up to him/her to go about soliciting dealers for the convention. It is a good idea to approach people who have displayed at previous TAOM conventions, as long as there wasn't a problem with their appearance. It would be a good idea for the new Dealer Chairman to contact the previous year's chair and ask questions about the dealers who attended. In this way, the new Chairman will gain valuable information about different dealers and what he/she can expect.

The Dealer Chairman must work closely with the person arranging the hotel facilities on the committee. One of the first things they must find out is how large an area they will have for the dealer's room. Generally speaking, dealer spaces are limited to 6 by 8 feet square depending on how the pipe and drape company sets up the room. The hotel coordinator must find out the name of the company usually in charge of setting up dealer spaces and how many spaces can be comfortably accommodated.

Once the chairman knows how many booths they can arrange, they can set about selling those spaces to potential dealers. The Dealer Chairman must contact the pipe and drape company and ask them to create some sample layouts with at least two different room configurations. It is also important to find out how much this service will cost and what is provided, i.e. electricity, carpet, signage etc. Usually the pipe and drape company will provide most of things necessary to set up the room but it's a good idea to find out. If the company's proposal is not satisfactory the chairman may need to get bids from other companies.

Another consideration the chairman should discuss with the hotel coordinator is the issue of security. You will need a security guard to protect the dealer's wares after the room is closed in the evening and throughout the night. It is also a good idea to secure the services of a guard during the convention to make sure no one but TAOM registrants are allowed into the room. Secrets are often revealed in the dealer's room and you don't want someone who is simply curious walking into the room. The hotel staff will often have a security firm they work with in these cases or you can check the telephone directory for companies. As with the pipe and drape company it may be a good idea to secure multiple bids in order to get the best price.

It is usual to limit the number of spaces one dealer may purchase for the convention. For instance, most conventions will not allow a single dealer to purchase more than three spaces. This allows more dealers to participate and keeps anyone from dominating a particular area of the dealer's room. It is not a good idea to discount "triple" or "double" displays either. You don't want your smaller dealers feeling that they are being charged more than anyone else. It also not a good idea to allow two dealers to share a space for the same reason and you should not allow anyone to deal items from their hotel room or suite. The idea here is to treat all dealers with the same courtesy and respect.

Another possible requirement for dealers is electrical outlets because many times dealers have lighted signs, powered effects and video displays. You must find out how much it will cost to provide this to the dealers and how much you will need to charge in order to make it cost effective for all parties involved. This can run more than \$100.00 per booth space or it may be provided by the hotel, so be sure to find out all the details before you begin signing up companies to display at your TAOM convention.

The hours of operation for the dealer's room is likely to be the responsibility of the Dealer Chairman but he/she must work closely with the Convention Committee to make sure they are open at the best times to benefit the entire convention. Obviously you don't want the dealer's room open every hour the convention is operating so be sure to schedule a break during the day. This might not be during the regular lunch or dinner period as quite often these are busy times in the dealer's room. Of course the room will need to be closed during the evening shows but may be opened immediately afterward.

After you have worked out the important details of hours of operation, set-up, security, electricity and other factors you should begin the task of selling your booth spaces. Don't be shy when it comes to asking dealers to participate and use the list from previous years' TAOM conventions to your best advantage. The number of spaces you will have to sell depends on the how many your facility can comfortably provide. The fee charged per booth space will largely depend on what they cost in the past. You may need to raise prices but be considerate of your dealers when you do this. Too large of a rate hike may cause some of your participants to feel they are being taken advantage of by the convention planners.

You will need to create a form for your dealers to fill out detailing information such as: company name, company address, hotel address, phone information, credit card numbers (if accepted), e-mail address, number of spaces required, whether or not electricity is needed, etc. It is also a good idea to spell out any rules and regulations in this form and have your dealers sign it. This way there can be no question as to whether they have been informed of your committee's policies.

The I.B.M. and S.A.M. have created a joint Code of Ethics that is good to use a guideline for dealers. It is as follows:

The members agree to the following:

- 1) Oppose the willful exposure to the public of any principles of the Art of Magic, or the methods employed in any magic effect or illusion.
- 2) Display ethical behavior in the presentation of magic to the public and in our conduct as magicians, including not interfering with or jeopardizing the performance of another magician either through personal intervention or the unauthorized use of another's creation.
- 3) Recognize and respect for rights of the creators, inventors, authors, and owners of magic concepts, presentations, effects and literature, and their rights to have exclusive use of, or to grant permission for the use by others of such creations.

4) Discourage false or misleading statements in the advertising of effects, and literature, merchandise or actions pertaining to the magical arts.

5) Discourage advertisement in magic publications for any magical apparatus, effect, literature or other materials for which the advertiser does not have commercial rights.

6) Promote the humane treatment and care of livestock used in magical performances.

Other rules and regulations can be: making sure they are properly registered for the convention, no littering of the aisles or loud demonstrations that may disrupt the atmosphere of the room (such as a video being turned up too loud), no pornographic materials, policies about sharing booth space and dealing outside the dealer's area. Be sure to inform your dealers of any special rules the hotel has added to your convention contract. These can include; no animals, no fire or explosive effects or no admittance after the room is closed. Every hotel is different and it is good to find out anything that will be expected of those displaying at your convention.

We hope your experience as a Dealer Chairman for the TAOM Convention will go smoothly and that you have a great convention experience because of it. Again, don't be afraid to ask people who have served as Dealer Chairpersons in the past for advice. After your term as chairman is over we hope you will do the same when a future Dealer Chairman approaches you for that same advice.

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From Mark Roberts  
2000 Dallas TAOM Dealer Chairman  
March 12, 2001

One thing I would add is to make sure the dealer chairman checks with the hotel to see if they charge to hold and store incoming UPS boxes. The Adam's Mark was pretty high. Luckily we found out about this in advance and I was able to have dealers ship to me.

The other thing I would recommend is to keep some spaces in reserve. The Presidents will often times have promised a dealer space to a performer, and there may be some confusion as to who and how much space they need. You covered this, but I would emphasize it! My best advice is to have the President route all dealer inquiries to the chairman and keep him informed as to what has been negotiated.

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From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

It's also suggested that the Dealer Committee be chaired by a magic dealer, if possible. Better still, this committee should be co-chaired by a club member and a dealer who acts as liaison between the club and the dealers.

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## 6. CONTESTS

Magicians love to compete. There is also something wonderful about watching individuals grow in the art of magic, to see the innocence of performers performing as they see fit and the growth and improvements that come to them through time. Sometimes real sparks of creativity, unique innovations, and new twists can be seen in the acts of contestants that makes magic come alive with newness and brilliance.

**CONTESTS:** Works with the TAOM Trophy and Awards Committee to see that the contests are efficiently executed, coordinates stage and close-up physical facilities with the Stage Manager and Hospitality Chairman, coordinates with the TAOM Vice-President (who is in charge of securing judges for all contests), and secures emcees for the stage contest and each of the close-up contest rooms. He also generates and disseminates a contest application form and other literature conforming to the TAOM contest program (rules, cut-off date information, etc), is in charge of sending this information to contestants who request it, and thereafter is the recipient of all contest applications submitted back to the host club by potential contestants, and notifies applicants of acceptance or rejection.

A packet of literature should be produced consisting of an contest application blank, a copy of the rules of competition from the Trophy and Awards Committee of the TAOM, and advertising materials about the convention. This packet of information should be distributed freely to anyone who requests it. The contest chairman should be the one to control the distribution of this literature as needed. It would also be wise if the rules of competition and a contest application blank were made available on the [www.taom.org](http://www.taom.org) website for download.

It is important to communicate a clear cut-off date in all advertising literature. A cut-off date will be necessary because conventions can only accommodate a certain number of contestants for the two contests especially in regards to time constraints. You might also have to limit the number of contestants for each contest category because of the limited time available during the convention for the contests. Every promotional flyer published should not only contains the Contest Chairman's name and address, but also a definite cut-off date when you will under no circumstances accept further applications for the contests.

As the time for the convention grows near, a follow-up letter should be sent to each contestant that gives them specifics about the time, date, place, and other such details of their contest.

Close-Up Contests performing environments can be handled two different ways. The contests can be held in several smaller rooms at the convention hotel with each performer moving from room-to-room and the audiences seated on a combination of flat floor and tiered platform seating.

Alternatively the entire close-up contest can also be held in the lecture hall or ballroom with closed circuit video in use. With today's technology, home video camera(s) work very well on a good tripod. Large screen televisions can be rented from home consumer appliance rental places. Some of these places will even deliver them to the hotel, set them up, and after the convention come back to pick them up! These televisions can be rented for an entire week for only \$30-\$40! (See additional information about video projection in the Close-Up chapter).

The close-up performers should be supplied with a small card table sized table rather than the long banquet tables.

Members of the host club can be drafted to become emcees, one club member for each room. These volunteers should meet with the Contest Chairman prior to the contests to get names of the contestants and other information to make their close-up rooms run smooth. Note also that these same emcees might also serve their same rooms for the professional close-up show.

If at all possible, the stage contest show should be held in the convention center theater. This gives novice performers the opportunity to perform on a real stage and gives them a chance to get the feel of a theater-performing situation. This is both inspirational and educational for them.

Experience dictates that the awards ceremony should be held during the Sunday evening show of the convention. If done correctly, this ceremony does not have to be dull and boring, and it can be done quickly.

The way to make the awards ceremony quick is to have your emcee announce before the Sunday night's show intermission that during intermission all contestants from the various categories of stage and close-up contests should come backstage during the intermission. After this intermission, the curtain can open and everyone who has competed in the contests can be standing on-stage. This gives visible recognition to all contestants as well as speed-up the presentation of the awards to the winners in that you won't have to wait for the winners to come up out of the audience. While the ceremony will then be short, it will give visual recognition everyone who worked so hard to receive it. After the awards are disbursed, all contestants can exit the stage back out into the audience and the MC came forward to continue the evening show.

Future TAOM conventions might think about using some of the contestants as performers for the evening shows. The top six IBM Convention stage contestants appear again for one of the evening shows that they call their

Gold Medal show. These contestants are generally the performers for the first half of the show, with a feature performer closing the second half. This show provides the contestants with a semi-final competition and gives the judges and the entire convention audience a fresh look at the finalists. Most importantly, it also provides the convention with a well done yet inexpensive evening show!

The SAM conventions goes a step further in that the entire stage contest show is one of the evening convention shows. Again this provides good performers for the evening show without expense. This might be a great idea for future Friday evening TAOM shows?

Contestants must not be allowed to compete unless they are registered at the convention! Watch this very closely!

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From Judy Donaldson  
Secretary of the TAOM  
August 1999

## **T.A.O.M. Contest Responsibilities**

(revised 8/99)

### **Secretary of T.A.O.M.**

1. Notify the T.A.O.M. Board of Directors representative of each member club of his/her responsibility to supply, before August 1, to the Vice President the name, address, and telephone number of three prospective judges.
2. Provide the host club sufficient copies of the "Trophy and Awards Program" for distribution to all contestants.
3. Meet with Vice President, Trophy and Awards Committee Chairman, and the judges to provide each judge a copy of the "Trophy and Awards Program", a list of the contestants and the category entered, and sufficient copies of the contest score sheet.
4. Meet with the Vice President, judges, and Trophy and Awards Committee Chairman to compute scores. Provide forms and materials necessary.
5. Provide official T.A.O.M. trophies to the Trophy and Awards Committee Chairman at the convention.
6. Mail each contestant the statistical results of the contest entered, pertinent judges comments, and a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the T.A.O.M. president.

### **T.A.O.M. Vice President**

1. Appoint five judges for the close-up contest and five judges for the club/comedy/stage competitions.  
Judges should represent as many different member clubs as possible.
2. Meet with the judges, Trophy and Awards Committee Chairman, and T.A.O.M. Secretary to compute scores.
3. Keep a record of the exact time of each performer's act or appoint a deputy to do so.

4. Meet with the judges, Trophy and Awards Committee Chairman, and T.A.O.M. Secretary to compute scores.

### **Host Club**

1. Make available to all prospective contestants approved contest application forms. The application to compete may be part of the T.A.O.M. mailings or prominent space and copy may be allotted in one or more T.A.O.M. bulletins describing the manner in which prospective contestants may make application to compete.
2. Notify all applicants at least seven days before the convention whether or not their applications have been accepted.
3. Provide a copy of the "Trophy and Awards Program" to each contestant accepted at least seven days before the convention.
4. Provide the T.A.O.M. Secretary a list of competitors names, addresses, and telephone numbers, annotated with the contest entered as soon as the contest is closed. (Usually by August 15<sup>th</sup>)
5. Before the contest, arrange a meeting for the contestants and the Trophy & Awards Chairman.

### **Trophy and Awards Committee Chairman**

1. Before the contest, meet with the contest chairman and contestants to answer questions and annotate any last-minute changes in the schedules. Notify the secretary of such changes.
  2. After the contest, meet with the judges, Vice President, and T.A.O.M. Secretary to compute scores. Discard high and low score for each act; average the remaining three to ascertain the contestant's score. Deduct any penalty points from that score.
  3. Participate in the presentation of awards at the scheduled time.
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## 7. BACKSTAGE

It is so easy to hand the usher your ticket, take your seat, enjoy the evening theater magic show, and then walk away after the show without ever realizing the intricacies of what happened backstage. It is also so easy to be critical that the light was not right, or that the music was too loud, or that someone missed a sound cue. It would be good for all of us as magicians to realize that the world of technical theater is quite complex and very demanding. Include with this the fact that most magic convention evening shows are put on without a dress rehearsal, it is incredible that most evening theater magic shows come out as good as they do.

The key to making what goes on backstage is the Stage Manager. He is in complete control of calling cues, working with sound, lights, set-up, tear-down, the curtain, changes in cues, the union crew, making sure the performers have a dressing room and even making sure the floor is swept between acts. His job is to make sure the theater shows are run professionally and smoothly. This person does not have to be a member of the stagehands union. It is best if this person knows the Stage Manager's job, has experience in this area, and is knowledgeable about the needs and requirements of magic.

**BACKSTAGE:** Is in charge of the theatre stage for all stage shows (evening shows and stage contest show). He executes all stage shows as Stage Manager, collaborates with the union stage crew to determine lowest budgets and minimize overtime, and works as the liaison between the union stage crew and the performers of each show. The Backstage Chairperson should also have a copy of the contract used to secure the facilities, stage crew, and insurance for the performance venue.

In 1988, Fort Worth executed its contract with the Tarrant County Convention Center over three years prior to our 88 convention. The fee to use the theater was \$1,600. Six Hundred dollars was paid at the time the contract was executed, and the remaining one thousand dollars was paid immediately prior to the theater use. This amount does not include the amount paid to the union stagecrew.

When stagehands are a union crew, generally they must be hired separately from the theater contract to work the lightboard, followspots, sound system, and other backstage equipment. Usually a separate contract in addition to the auditorium rental contract must be executed with them. They have specified rates, minimum amounts of hours they will work, and maximum shifts before they go into overtime (unionized). They also have minimums concerning the number of personnel that must be called for any given show. At the Fort Worth 1988 convention, the total stage crew bill was \$4,617.65. In addition, Fort Worth had to hire convention center security and provide insurance.

Concerning insurance, the contract executed by Fort Worth in 1988 with the convention center specified that they were to be furnished with a certificate of liability insurance at least ten days prior to the event in the amount of \$500,000 and \$125,000 property damage, listing them as the insured. To this end, Fort Worth obtained a general liability policy from Alexander and Alexander Insurance located at One Tandy Center here in Fort Worth. The policy was titled "Social Gatherings and Meetings on Premises Not Owned by Insured." It was underwritten by Scottsdale Insurance Company of Scottsdale, Arizona and cost us \$526.10. It is wise to check with the administrators of the theatre facility you are renting to recommend an insurance supplier that they have dealt with in the past and are comfortable with in providing coverage for their facility.

See Also the chapter on LIABILITY

Notations should be added here on how to deal with the Fire Marshall.

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From Bruce Chadwick  
SAM Stage Manager  
August 2001

## GENERAL STAGING SPECIFICATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS (SAM) CONVENTION THEATRE SHOWS

**CREW:** Generally the theatre shows of the Society of American Magicians Convention can be effectively executed with a skeleton crew: Lights, Sound, Spotlight(s), Grand Curtain and/or Rail. We welcome the doubling up of crew responsibilities where appropriate. We will work in accordance with your rules and regulations. We do request that all stage personnel be in place at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled starting time for each show.

**HEADSET:** We request that **all stage crew members** be on headset and in communication with our Stage Manager at all times.

**STAGE MANAGER CONSOLE:** During the shows, our SAM Stage Manager will need to work on-stage, in the wing, at some sort of stage manager's console where he can cue directly via headset the stage crew. Please provide the console with a **good reading light** (white is preferred, but amber or blue gel is ok if it is needed) and a **podium or stand microphone** so that he can also make offstage announcements and voice-overs to the audience through the house sound system. Our Stage Manager will also need **good backstage sound foldback** to effectively hear the Master of Ceremonies and performers.

**SHOW STARTS:** All shows will start at the scheduled times unless there is a hold established by Producer R. G. Smith or Stage Manager Bruce Chadwick. Generally the house will open 30 minutes prior to show time. Our Stage Manager will call for the house to open at the appropriate time.

**DRESSING ROOMS:** We would like to use as many of your individual dressing rooms as available. We will use your greenroom or gang type dressing room if necessary. A changing room or booth located on either wing of the stage is useful but not necessary. Please label and reserve the dressing room closest to the Stage

Manager's console for use by each of our Masters of Ceremonies. If available, prop tables located on the wings of the stage are also useful.

**STAGE RESPONSIBILITY:** We will endeavor to direct all questions regarding the use of your theatre facilities to you and your stage crew. Additionally, we request that any questions you have be directed to our Stage Manager. If performers ask you questions, please answer questions the performers ask you, but please clarify with our Stage Manager any matter of significance before executing a performer's request. When our Stage Manager is not in the theatre, you are the ultimate stage authority between the performers and your theatre facility. Please do not allow anyone backstage before scheduled rehearsal times unless Bruce Chadwick or R. G. Smith has arranged with you otherwise. Please notify our Stage Manager of your rules, regulations, work schedules and required work breaks prior to the use of your facility. Please inform our Stage Manager of local fire codes, location of fire extinguishers, etc. In case of emergency, please take command of the situation. Your authority will be respected at all times.

**REHEARSAL TIME:** All rehearsal times will be established prior to the conventions by Show Producer R. G. Smith. These times will remain as scheduled unless re-negotiated by Mr. Smith in conjunction with your theatre crew leader.

## LIGHTS

**GENERIC CUES:** Our philosophy in working magic conventions is to establish before the performers arrive a series of 8-10 generic stage lighting cues. These cues will deal with areas and color. Generally we are willing to take advantage of the lights, positions, and instruments already hung in your theatre before we ever arrive (if any). We will have a minimum amount of time to hang and focus lights and therefore a general light plot is advantageous for us.

Rather than ask performers what their lighting requirements are, our procedure is to show performers the lighting cues/lit areas that are "available" and then ask them which of the cues they want to use. Our experience is that this saves a lot of headaches for everyone concerned.

**SPECIALS:** On rare occasion, a performer may require that special lights or lighting instruments be hung to meet their illusion criteria. If this need is critical to their particular act and cannot be satisfied any other way, we will comply with their request. Generally R. G. Smith will notify you prior to a given rehearsal day that such requests will probably be asked. Generally we do not make it known to performers that we are willing to hang and adjust lights to meet specific needs. We must deal with multiple performers for each show, each show is comprised of a different set of performers, and limited tech rehearsal time defines these parameters.

**AREAS:** We welcome the use of your "house lighting plot" (if any) where your lights approximate our basic needs.

- 1) Curtain Warmer: One or more instruments which project a nice glow on the closed grand curtain.
- 2) Centerstage Apron Light: Light centerstage (midstage and downstage of the grand curtain).
- 3) Full Apron Light: A well-lit apron.
- 4) No color pink or straw lights in each of the three basic stage areas: CS, SL, SR
- 5) Blue lights in each of the three basic stage areas: CS, SL, SR
- 6) Combinations of the above area.

Note:

**HOUSE LIGHT REQUESTS FROM THE PERFORMERS:** If a performer suddenly calls for house lights (generally to bring a spectator up out of the audience), the light board operator should take his own cue to bring up house lights. Our Stage Manager will endeavor to give such cues over headset, but sometimes if the performer fails to inform us that he will request house lights, our stage manager may miss his cue. Inform our Stage Manager over headset as you execute houselights.

## FOLLOWSPOTS

Generally we will use two followspots. Each spotlight should be prepared with at least steel blue, red, and pink gels. On headset, our Stage Manager will refer to the stronger spot as spot number one, and the weaker spot (if any) as spot number two. Unless noted otherwise, both spots will remain on the magician at all times. The spotlight operators should be on headset at all times.

## SOUND

**BOARD LOCATION:** We **require** that sound control to be located in the house where the sound technician can hear what the audience hears and regulate sound levels. Any complaints about sound level should first be directed to our Stage Manager.

**TAPES:** Most performers will use recorded cassette tapes as background music for their acts. We request that performers put each of their cues (where applicable) on separate cassette tapes. Sometimes performers will have regular CD's and mini-disks. Some performers may have mini-disk players in the event that the theater is not equipped with such.

**CUEING:** Our Stage manager will assume the duties of talking directly to each performer and taking from them their audio tapes, labeling the tapes properly, and cueing each tape up in the performer's presence using a small cassette recorder which our Stage Manager will bring for this purpose. Your Sound Technician can expect that each tape will be cued exactly so that when the tape player button is pushed, your Sound Technician should immediately hear audio. We would appreciate it if your Sound Technician would bring the performer's tapes backstage immediately after the show and return them to the performers.

Our Stage Manager will also get all sound cues directly from the performers. He will then call over headset all sound cues. We understand that it is difficult for a sound technician to wear a headset while running a sound board. Still, it is very important that your Sound Technician be on headset to hear our Stage Manager's sound cues.

**MICROPHONES:** We request that there be **four microphones available** for each show. Ideally we request that **two of the mics be on stands** (removable hand-held). These two mics should be located on the stage; one on the right wing area and one on the left wing area, each having enough cable to reach the opposite side of the stage. We prefer unswitched mics so that your Sound Technician has the power to make the mics hot.

We also request the use of **one wireless lavalier mic** if possible. We would also like to be able to use **one stage manager's console microphone** so that our Stage Manager can do offstage pre-show voice-overs, etc. (See *Stage Manager's Console* above).

**NOTE:** Please provide the stage manager console and the performers with adequate onstage foldback.

## CURTAINS

**FREE PIPES:** If possible, we will probably require several free pipes or batons where we can fly performer's scenery. Rarely will a performer have any type of scrim, backdrop, or other rag scenery. When there are items to be hung, they are generally small scenic properties and special hardware for the rigging of illusion effects. Fortunately only a few performers (if any) will have scenic hanging situations.

**GRAND:** We prefer that there be a grand drape where the Master of Ceremonies (MC) can walk between the proscenium and the grand curtain to enter and exit the stage. Generally the MC will work off the side of the stage where the Stage Manager's console is located (generally Stage Right). The grand can either travel or guillotine. We require that a stage crew member be available at all times to open and close the grand drape (the Rail Operator if appropriate). This operator must be on headset or otherwise be able to hear clearly the cues of the Stage Manager. This grand curtain will open and close a number of times during each show. **Please do not close the grand curtain at the end of an act until cued by the Stage Manager to do so.**

**OTHER CURTAINS:** As far upstage as possible (but still allowing for room for performers to get across the stage behind the curtain), we need a backdrop. This curtain will remain stationary throughout all of the shows.

Also if possible, we would like to use a midstage curtain (travel or guillotine). Please trim the stage with legs and teasers as appropriate.

For questions regarding backstage technical matters contact:

Bruce Chadwick  
SAM Stage Manager  
PO Box 12345  
Fort Worth, TX 76110 USA  
Phone 817-927-0581  
Fax 817-927-1804  
E-Mail: [mail@magicbybrucechadwick.com](mailto:mail@magicbybrucechadwick.com)

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## 8. PROMOTIONS

The world of promotions usually carries a dual role. First are promotions to inspire magicians to come as registered attendees to the convention, and second are promotions to inspire the public to purchase tickets for each of the three evening convention shows. Without proper promotions, your convention will be a failure.

Promotions to inspire magicians to come as registered attendees to the convention can include:

Multiple mail outs to the TAOM membership.

Flyers given away at various magic shops.

Information sent to Texas magic clubs for publication in their monthly newsletters.

Advertisements placed in MAGIC, LINKING RING, and GENII magazines.

Advertisement placed in the previous year's TAOM convention souvenir program.

A Flyer and Convention Registration Blank placed in the December mailing of the TAOM roster immediately prior to the convention.

Information and a Convention Registration Blank place in [www.taom.org](http://www.taom.org)

**PROMOTIONS:** Works closely with the Souvenir Program Committee and the Ticket Sales Committee so that the convention is properly covered with newspaper, radio, television, and other media coverage, stressing emphasis on pre-convention coverage to aid ticket sales. He is also in charge of advertising the convention to magicians and potential magic attendees, including display advertising in magic periodicals, flyers placed in the December mailing of the TAOM roster immediately prior to the convention, and all pre-convention mailouts mailed to potential convention attendees. He is also in charge of poster production and distribution, the creation of a graphic logo for the convention, and all other aspects of advertising to promote the convention event.

Most conventions tend to have some sort of logo drawn by a graphic artist that individualizes their particular convention. Fort Worth usually uses Louis Daniel, professional artist in illustration and design, and member of the Fort Worth Magicians Club.

Louis Daniel is the person who designed our current TAOM logo. It would recommend to any city that is preparing to host a TAOM convention that they contact Louis to get good clean copies of our logo for use in creating their own advertising pieces. Louis' phone number is (817) 334-0039.

Don't advertise any performer's name until you have a signed contract with that performer!

Include with the December TAOM Roster Mailing a hotel registration postcard or information how a person can make hotel reservations at the convention hotel. Your convention hotel will usually be willing to provide these free of charge. If the hotel has an 800 toll free telephone reservations number, make sure it is included.

Publicity photos that you get from the performers can be used in the souvenir convention program can be used in promotional flyers and in periodical advertising. Conventions can be also dedicated to particular magicians who have done much to promote the art of magic.

In 1988 Fort Worth used three flyers to promote the attendance of registered magicians at their convention; the December Christmas mailing, and two flyers mailed during the summer months.

The TAOM Secretary can provide the membership roster in a database format, or the roster can be photocopied off onto moisture/adhesive sensitive paper, or labels can be produced. If timing is important, all mailings should be sent via First Class Mail.

Posters can be used to promote lay public attendance at the three evening shows. Single color or two color posters can be easily printed onto 11" x 17" card stock. These posters can be used to canvass your city. Copies of the poster can be posted in magic shops to perhaps catch the interest of the semi-interested magic clientele. The printing cost for 1000 of these posters will be almost the same as for 500.

The hardest aspect of the posters is getting them posted. They are used primarily as a window card to be placed in front windows of stores, on bulletin boards in the break rooms of companies, and at any location where there is high walk-in traffic such as convenience stores.

With 1000 posters, however, the job of posting the posters is not a job for just one person. The posters should be placed no earlier than three weeks prior to the convention, and no later than one week. Local club members can be elicited to help post. A sign-up sheet can be used at host magic club meetings to get club members committed. By listing the fifteen places they would post a poster on the sheet, and by signing it and returning to me at the end of the club

meeting where it was initiated, it can motivate club members to help. The club should also provide rolls of cellophane tape. If all else fails, your club can hire a couple of college-aged individuals to put up remaining posters.

Full page advertisements are most effective in magic periodicals. Full page ads are not much more expensive than half page advertisements and they are much more visible. Advertisements in the magic magazines for the three months immediately prior to a convention are the most effective.

Do not advertise performers who are not contracted for the convention! When advertising in magic magazines, one must also plan ahead so that the ad reaches the periodical before their deadline, which is usually one month prior to when you want the advertisement to appear.

A "department number" following registration mailing addresses in each advertising flyer and mailings is way to measure which advertising sources is most effective, useful information for planning the advertising strategies of future conventions.

For most conventions, over 50% of the registrations will come during the month of August and at the convention in September.

## 9. LECTURES

After the Talent Chairman has contracted a particular lecturer, the Lecture Chairman should contact the performer and introduce himself. The Lecture Chairman should get information from the lecturer to use in creating an introduction. The lecturer may also need local host club help to sell their notes and effects at the end of their lecture.

**LECTURES:** Works with the Talent Chairman to secure lecturers, sees to the individual needs of each scheduled lecturer, contacts each lecturer prior to the convention to let them know he is their contact person, and meets them at the beginning of the convention to answer any questions they may have. The Lecture Chairperson also introduces each lecturer before his/her lecture, provides each lecturer with one or two helpers to help the lecturer sell his lecture notes and magic wares, makes sure the lectures start on time, and is the ultimate person-in-charge of the lecture hall during each lecture.

You will not have a problem finding lecturers for your convention. Most of your evening and close-up show performers lecture, and most dealers have a lecture. Everyone wants to lecture. It is the way whereby reputations are enhanced and it is a way for the performers and dealers to make additional money.

Lecturers should not be paid at magic conventions if they are performing on one of the evening shows or are a dealer. Lecturing at conventions is an honor and privilege. Lectures are very profitable when the lecturer sells his notes and magic goods.

The Lecture Chairman is not the one responsible for hiring the lecturers! This is part of the job of the Talent Chairman. The Talent Chairman hires the performers and uses the lure of lecture spots and dealers space as negotiating tools to get the best talent for the convention. The Lecture Chairman's job is simply one of administration and communication.

Most lecturers sell lecture notes and magic effects to attendees. A special table should be set up for them either near the lecture platform or at the back of the room. It is best if their table is at the back of the room rather than at the front because if you have two lecturers back-to-back, the swarm of people at the front of the lecture hall can cause a hindrance to the second lecturer setting his props and starting his lecture on time.

In addition to a lavalier type microphone mentioned above, some lecturers require a stand microphone. It is a smart move to have both microphones handy anyway. Sometimes wireless lavalier type microphones go dead. The wired stand microphone will come to the rescue. Lecturers may also

need certain chairs and tables onstage. Again it is the lecture chairman's job to see that the needs of each lecturer are met.

Consider using the closed circuit television system in the lecture hall. A home video camera mounted on a good tripod and broadcast through two or more big screen televisions is an inexpensive but very useful endeavor. Home appliance rental places will rent televisions inexpensively for an entire week and they will also deliver them to the convention site and pick them up afterward! Also with the advent of inexpensive video projectors, an even larger image can be produced onto projection screens. Don't overlook these wonderful tools that can certainly enhance any lecture!

It is important to work with your Hotel Chairman to make sure hotel sound equipment and lighting is in place. The microphone (usually a lavalier microphone and a stand microphone) in the Lecture Hall should be put under the Lecture Chairman's charge. Additionally some lecturers may require the use of a cassette deck so that music can be heard.

## 10. TICKET SALES

It is not possible to put on a TAOM convention that is financed only by the *registration money* generated from its attendees. Inflation, the prices that performers must charge for their performances, and the costs of the other things necessary to put on a well-done TAOM convention now exceeds what any TAOM convention can ever hope to bring in financially from convention registrations.

Other sources of revenue for TAOM conventions include dealer fees, advertising space sold in the souvenir program, and the advance received from the TAOM also come into play. The other source of income readily available to TAOM conventions is money generated from ticket sales, the sale of tickets to the lay public who hopefully will come to one or more of the convention theater shows. The big budget TAOM conventions get most of their revenue from these evening show ticket public sales.

Generally a host club rents an auditorium, pays for its stage hands and security, secures an MC and hires performers, and sometimes even has tickets printed. As has been mentioned elsewhere, most TAOM conventions draw between 600-800 registered attendees. Most theaters hold upwards to 3000 people. What sense does it make to have 2000 or more empty seats?

TAOM conventions have perfect way to make money; simply fill the auditorium with ticket buying lay customers. Any TAOM convention that does not profit, especially when it an abundance of theater seats not filled by magicians, just simply did not spend enough time promoting its ticket sales to the general public. It is possible to raise enough revenues from public ticket sales that a convention will make a profit even if no magicians come as registered attendees.

Laymen like magic shows. Unlike many magicians, they laugh, applaud, and “ooh and ah” the performers. Laymen are real people who respond like real people. With the number of laymen in the audience outnumbering the magicians in attendance, their magnetic enthusiasm can carry the aurora of audience rapport to unfathomable heights.

**TICKET SALES:** Works to sell all unoccupied theater evening show seats to the lay public through individual ticket sales and block ticket sales, and works closely with the Promotion Committee and the Souvenir Program Committee. The chairperson is also in charge of printing the evening show general admission tickets. He is also in charge of the theatre box office the nights of the evening shows to make sure it is manned with personnel who will sell tickets to the public for each evening theatre show. He makes sure that all moneys received from ticket sales are immediately turned over to the Treasurer.

The auditorium can be broken up into \$8, \$10, and \$12 seats and sell them to the public and to corporations for each of the three evening stage performances. There are two avenues to selling tickets to the public: sell blocks of tickets to businesses and organizations, and selling individual tickets to whoever will buy them.

The Saturday morning stage contest is another show to sell, an additional way of generating revenues. The Saturday morning tickets can be sold for \$4 or \$5 per ticket, general admission. These tickets can be sold at a 50% discount to non-profit groups such as the Boy's Clubs, Scouts, and so forth, and they can mark them up 50% to generate funds for their organization. The contest show can also be promoted in toy stores, with club members performing in the stores perhaps on a Saturday morning, and giving tickets away to children only (mom and dad buy your own!) with the store having purchased the tickets at a discount.

Evening show tickets can be sold through Ticketron or other ticket resale outlet. Tickets can be used as giveaways on local radio stations.

To divide your auditorium up into sections and then charge different amounts for each section (more of course for the better seats) you might check with the theater to see if they have suggestions on how to divide the theater. Additional information can be gleaned from organizations such as the local symphony orchestra who use the auditorium frequently. Their system of dividing up the auditorium will probably be refined because of their frequent use of the auditorium

In Fort Worth in 1988 based upon the \$8, \$10, and \$12 price structure, the potential income per night was \$16,750, and for three nights the potential was \$50,250. These figures did not include 800 seats per night we set aside for convention registrants, nor do these figures reflect the possible sales for the Contest Show. Note also that the upper balcony seats were priced at \$8, \$6, and \$3 per seat.

A discount fee structure for companies and organizations who buy 100 or more tickets can be constructed. Video tape footage (such as that from performer's promotional video tapes) can be used as sales tools to promote ticket sales.

Literature should be created to convey in written form your ticket offer to companies. The flyer should emphasize employee benefits.

In selling block tickets to companies, one should not attack their advertising budgets, but rather their employee recreation budgets. Corporations can be honored by listing them in your Souvenir Program. Since the TAOM is a non-profit corporation, companies can write their purchases off as donations, or write their expenditures off as advertising. Convention program advertising can be

given away to corporations that buy larger blocks of tickets, sort of an additional incentive for them to purchase block ticket amounts.

Your Chamber of Commerce may have guides with the addresses and phone number of the major employers in your city. It is an inexpensive guide and can give you a jump start as you begin to contact companies to sell them blocks of tickets.

More affluent magic club members might think about buying blocks of tickets to give to friends and associates. Close-Up magicians can be used during a reception or party in the evening theatre "Green Room" before one of the evening shows.

In dealing with larger companies, posters can be placed in their employee break rooms, on their bulletin boards and other designated places. Tickets can also be consigned to companies through their employee relations departments where employees can buy tickets at special employee discounts.

Don't overlook the possibility that an entire evening show can be sold to a particular corporation and that particular show can be dedicated to the corporation. The corporation can buy the empty auditorium seats the auditorium for its employees or donate them to non-profit groups, or for specific causes, and so forth. Companies can be reminded that this would be fully deductible because it is a form of advertising and can come out of their advertising budget.

A tremendous publicity blitz instigated the week before the convention will insure good ticket sales to the lay public. Newspaper advertising, special articles written in the local newspaper as human interest stories, and discount newspaper sponsored coupons can all contribute to the success of ticket sales. Local television stations can provide you with public service announcements. The convention center marquee can also promote your evening .

You will not have to pay amusement tax if you are a non-profit corporation. This will give you local club a good incentive to bring up-to-date your non-profit status.

Tickets to the evening shows can be consigned to your local magic shops and they should be made available at the door the nights of the evening shows.

Concerning the printing of tickets, an array of various ticket printing companies are listed in the Theater Crafts Directory of Manufacturers and Suppliers. Many of the companies will send you samples of their tickets along with other general information. Fort Worth has had good experiences with Weldon, Williams, and Lick in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Their tickets are offset printed rather than computer generated.

Ticket companies will generally create you a ticket proof if you ask for it. Information needed during the ticket ordering process includes ticket prices, dates, times, place of the shows, ticket colors, and quantities. Concerning colors of the tickets, it is best to give each show a specific ticket color such as Red, Blue, and Yellow for each of the three evening shows, and gray for the general admission Saturday morning Contest Show.

If you can find them, professional ticket sales companies can also be used to sell your theater evening show tickets. Many of these companies use tele-marketing campaigns and most of them are quite successful in their sales approaches.

When you offer ticket discounts, you need to make sure you offer the discounts consistently. Newspaper coupon discounts must match the other ways a person can purchase discounted tickets such as through their company.

When talking to a corporation about ticket sales, it is important to reach the "right person." This is the person who has the authorization to write a relatively small check for up to about \$1,000 without a lot of company approval. Also host club members that have access or inroads to the management of big corporations should be the person to contact that company regarding ticket sales.

In light of the fact that most tickets sold to the general public for the three evening shows will be sold at the box office the day of the shows, the idea of providing assigned seat ticket sales to the general public is not a good one. Long lines might form at the box office and this will keep your shows from starting on time. Also there will probably be a lot of confusion and frustration in the box office trying to keep up with assigned tickets. It is better if tickets sold to laymen in the box office immediately prior to a show be general admission (sit wherever he or she wants to sit) for a certain section of the auditorium. For instance, the ticket might say "Ticket good for any seat available in rows P through ZZ.."

To keep the magicians happy, convention attendees should have assigned seats (no printed tickets for magicians, but rather their seat numbers printed on their badges).

You might consider letting magicians enter the auditorium through special entryways reserved only for them, with the general public being admitted through other auditorium doors. This might minimize confusion with seating the lay public and keep them out of reserved (the magician's) seats. The sections reserved for magicians could also be roped-off to further prevent potential problems.

Magic club volunteers can man the box office. The House Chairman should have the responsibility for making sure that the box office is manned and operates smoothly.

## 11. HOUSE

**HOUSE:** Secures ushers for the evening shows and oversees all ushering procedures. He also oversees the printing of flyers for each evening show (designating the performers for the particular show, and the facts that no flash photography or audio or video recording devices are allowed) and provides them to his ushers for distribution to the audience as they enter the theatre for each of the evening shows. He is also in charge of securing individuals to sell Convention Souvenir Programs to the lay public in the lobby of the theatre prior to the start of each evening show, and then is responsible for immediately turning in to the Treasurer all moneys received from these sales.

The House Chairman should contact the evening show theater management and get any information they have about how they usually work ushers. Some theaters provide ushers for a minimal charge. Sometimes union theater ushers must be hired as dictated by the contractual agreement to use the theater facility. Sometimes hiring ushers is an option and the choice will have to be made therefore whether or not to use ushers.

It is helpful if the House Chairman acquires a ground plan of the theater and building and studies it thoroughly so that he can accurately answer attendee's questions during the convention. He should know what the theater's policies are regarding emergencies such as fires or other reasons where the building might need to be evacuated quickly. Generally the theater staff (probably the union steward) will take over in the event of such emergencies. The House Chairman should know how to contact an ambulance in the event of a medical emergency.

If the decision is made to use printed flyers (also called playbills or handbills), ushers can hand these out to the theater audience as they enter the auditorium. For multiple shows, such as in the case where three different shows are in the theater for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, consider printing each flyer on a different color of paper stock for each performance to facilitate keeping the flyers separated.

Note that the flyer should have printed on it "Program subject to change without notice" and "No flash photography, and no unauthorized audio or video taping permitted during shows," very important informational items that always need to be related to theater audiences. Flash photography is very disturbing to other audience members seated in a darkened theater house, and most performers do not want their act taped.

Volunteers can be used as ushers. Local magic club members are great for this task of course. A simple sign-up sheet can be used at one of the local magic club meetings prior to the convention. Consider also the use of clowns from the local clown alley, and people from service organizations such as debutantes, and so forth.

If Souvenir Programs are going to be sold to the public as they enter the theater, volunteers for this job must be lined-up as well. The sale of souvenir programs is a simple way to generate funds with relatively little effort. Usually there is an excess amount of Souvenir Programs left over after the convention attendee's souvenir packets are stuffed. It is also easy for the printer to print two or three hundred extra of these programs at minimal charge. The rule is to simply plan ahead.

The House Chairman should be informed if the "Green Room" is being used as a hospitality room for pre-evening show parties or for special guests and dignitaries. He should also work closely with the Ticket Sales chairman to make sure his efforts are coordinated with the sales of tickets immediately prior to the evening shows. It is best to find a gracious "people person" to be your House Chairman.

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From Paul Siegel  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Souvenir Program Chairman  
September 12, 2000

Playbills should contain the specific date and location of each performance. Similarities may exist, and this will help identify each as a unique event. The performance, as well as the names of the performers in the order of their appearance should be display in an easy to read manner on this document. Also included, should be exclusionary notes - such as "no cameras", "use of pagers", etc. By limiting the scope of this item to simple print production a significant savings can be obtained.

Editor's Note: Some conventions that choose to use playbills or handbills use a half-sheet approach (half of a sheet of letter-sized paper). This allows for two playbills to be printed on each sheet of letter-sized paper. The paper is cut in half of course (making the handbill size "baronial," 8-1/2" x 5-1/2").

Editor's Note: Some conventions have gone to a system of listing the performers in no particular order on their playbills or handbills so that the order of the performer's appearance on a particular show can be changed as needed. When this approach is used, the performer's names (and sometimes a thumbnail of their publicity photo) are usually arranged in a montage on the playbill so that the bill does not "promise" a particular performing order. The Dallas TAOM

Convention for instance used the same show at the Majestic Theater for the Friday and Saturday evening shows (one half of the registered convention attendees each attending one of the two shows to "empty-out" theater seats that could be sold to the lay public). After the Friday night's show, the evening show was rearranged for the Saturday night's performance to provide better flow and continuity. The same performers performed of course, but the new arrangement provided for a better show feel.)

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Harold Pulcher  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
House Chairman  
November 1, 2000

I think you have captured all that I have to input. Wish I could've been more help. I am glad someone is putting this sort of stuff together. It will be a great help to folks in the future.

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## 12. HOTEL HOSPITALITY

If you can find a hotel for your convention that is either adjacent to or in reasonable walking distance to the convention center theatre, you've got it made. Next find a good Hotel Hospitality chairman.

**HOSPITALITY:** Works as a liaison between the convention hotel, performers, and conventioners. He is the contact person if needed regarding any hotel/attendee problems that may develop. He secures hotel equipment and operators where needed (including lecture hall backdrop pipe and drape scenery), sound system, lights, and closed-circuit video projection. He makes sure such equipment is properly set-up. He also makes sure the hotel has proper set-up tables and chairs for the various convention events. He also works with the TAOM President to secure the convention hotel. The chairperson is also in charge of the hospitality room at the convention. This chairperson is responsible for working with the Talent Chairman regarding all comp hotel rooms given to performers, convention attendees and convention dignitaries, and keeps up with the hotel room master account and hotel comp room list. He arranges for and keeps up with the house physicians cell and/or pager numbers. He should also work with the Dealer Chairman to make sure the dealer's room has security for all hours whether the dealer's room is open or closed. The Hospitality Chairman is also responsible for arranging special handicap services such as signing for the deaf during all convention activities and shows.

Make sure the hotel's room registration system works and make sure their room registration phone 800 number works. Test the hotel periodically posturing yourself as a registrant who wants to make a reservation for the convention. Hotels are notorious for botching up their reservations systems. It is amazing that they sabotage the very business they are in! Hotels and hotel staffs usually go through many changes from the time you first contract with them to the time you actually use their facilities.

Get a contract with the convention hotel and make sure everything you can possibly think of is in the contract. Make sure the contract is specific about room rates (and the rates based upon the number of people staying in the room), what the hotel will provide or not provide free of charge in the way of meeting rooms, registrations area, dealers room and so forth. Also make them delineate the number of complimentary rooms you will receive, cut-off dates when attendees will no longer be able to make reservations, information about reduced parking rates, and so forth.

Most hotels will negotiate with you and give you the Presidential Suite and a number of free rooms in relationship to rooms occupied. You can also negotiate for low rate "staff rooms," rooms you can use primarily for talent and

VIP's. You will probably have to fill out and submit a credit application with the convention hotel. Be prepared.

Convention attendees usually secure their reservations at the convention hotel in one of two ways, either by telephone or mail. Your hotel probably has a toll free phone number that goes direct to their hotel reservation system. Include this phone number in all your advertisements. Include the hotel's address to facilitate reservations made by mail. Get driving directions and make sure they are available somehow to convention attendees who are driving to the convention site. Most hotels can provide you with reservation postcards and these can be included in the December TAOM roster mailing, and in your other mass mailings to the TAOM membership at large.

It is up to the President of the TAOM whether or not to call for a mid-year meeting. For the past several years, this meeting has been held during the lunch time in Fort Worth at the Lone Star Magic Auction. A President may opt to call a mid-year meeting in the host city at the convention hotel. If so, negotiate the free use of this meeting room in your hotel contract.

Arrange for food buffets or other ways convention attendees can get food quickly and easily. Food service problems are traditional at TAOM conventions. Since the convention falls on Labor Day weekend, hotels tend to be understaffed. Also arrange for water stations in the lecture hall and dealer's rooms. This is a welcome touch for most convention attendees.

The Hotel Hospitality chairman needs to become familiar with the layout of the convention hotel, especially where activities to be held, the times for these activities, and how each room should be set-up and arranged. He needs to make sure each room is labeled properly so that attendees will know where each activity will be held. If meeting rooms have them, use the door label holders that are part of the hotel, which we could have used if we had known about them prior to the convention.

Close-up rooms should be labeled "Close-Up Room 1 of 4" and so forth. This notation not only designates the room as a close-up room, but it also reminds convention attendees that three other close-up rooms are available. In addition to each of these signs, printed maps showing the locations of all the close-up rooms should also be posted with each of the "Room 1 of 4" signs.

Audio-visual equipment usually can be provided by the hotel AV company. They may tell you that all AV equipment used in the hotel must be rented from them, but this is usually not true. Again negotiate this in the hotel contract. If you want to bring in outside sound systems, lights, video projectors, big screen televisions or the like, make sure there are provisions in the hotel contract that say you can bring into the hotel and use this outside equipment.

It is best if the lecture hall has two microphones, a stand microphone as well as a lavalier microphone. If shows are to be held in the lecture hall, then sound playback equipment must also be provided.

The Hospitality Chairman should also make sure sound, lights, platforms, and pipe and drape scenery are secured and are set-up properly before each event where the equipment will be used.

Be sure to inform performers and convention attendees how they can get to and from the airport to the convention hotel, especially in regards to shuttle services.

Arrange for signing for deaf at the convention activities. Use a call board located at or near the convention registration booth so that messages can be left for the attendees. Use the board to post a map of the hotel showing where various activities will be held. Attendees can also see publicity clips about the convention that have appeared in the newspaper.

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From Paul Siegel  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Souvenir Program Chairman  
September 12, 2000

Signage -- An effort to direct registrants to specific areas of interest during a convention should be attempted. By using signage (adaptable to any particular set of circumstances) adequate information may be made available for times or events that could otherwise be overlooked. The use of signage may aid in the controls that sometimes appear to be of a burdensome nature.

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From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

This Convention Guide suggests that the Hospitality Chairman be in charge of securing the Audio/Visual needs. This area has become more important as our convention numbers have grown and people in the back of the room need to see and hear what's going on up front. In this regard, I appointed a chairman to oversee the A/V committee.

**AUDIO/VISUAL:** Responsible for providing, setting up, and staffing all A/V facilities at the hotel and theatre, if necessary. Works with Hospitality Chairman to coordinate negotiations with the hotel and providing

competing bids for adequate facilities. Works with Close-up, Talent, and Lecture Chairmen to determine their A/V needs.

Furthermore, the Hospitality Chairman should have the additional responsibility of negotiating convention rates with the hotel.

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## 13. SOUVENIR PROGRAM

The souvenir program is perhaps one of most unique keepsakes that comes out of a magician's convention. The program not only gives basic information about the convention but it also provides advertising, gives salutes to special people, and presents other general items that may be of interest to conventioners.

**SOUVENIR PROGRAM:** Oversees the layout, publication, printing, and distribution of the convention souvenir program. This chairperson also oversees and promotes the sale of all souvenir program advertising space to supporting businesses, block ticket sales purchasers, magic dealers, etc. He either collects moneys directly from the purchasers of advertising and immediately turns it over to the Treasurer, or makes sure the Treasurer has promptly sent them an invoice. The chairperson provides the souvenir programs directly to the Registration Chairperson and helps the chairperson insert them into the registration packets. He also provides the House Chairperson with ample extra copies of the program for sale in the lobby of the theatre to the general public the nights of each evening show.

Putting together a TAOM convention souvenir program is a hard job. With modern computers and desktop publishing capability, it is much easier now than it used to be. Believe it or not, your biggest challenge in putting together a souvenir program will be assembling information and selling advertising space.

If your convention planning committee chooses to do so, you can honor particular magicians and dedicate your convention to them. Be sure to honor them pictorially as well as in print. Ask club members and dealers to give tribute to the magician to be honored by purchasing advertising space in the program to salute this "great man (or woman) of magic." If you can't think of anyone to dedicate your convention to, the editor of this guide is always willing to volunteer.

The souvenir program is an excellent way to bring in extra money for the convention when it comes to selling advertising space. Make your advertising space in the program moderately priced. If it is inexpensive, more people will buy and you will make more money. A program page sized piece of paper that shows the various sizes of advertising spaces and their costs is helpful to visually communicate the space available. Charge more for the back of your souvenir program. Advertise to the TAOM membership at large through your mass mailings that ad space is available in the program. Of course don't forget to contact local business and individuals and try to get them to buy ad space as well.

Some individuals have suggested that a professional company be used to produce the program for the convention. This company would produce a certain

number of programs free of charge (including printing). In turn they would receive as their payment a portion of revenues generated from the sale of advertising space. In theory the result would be a very professional looking program with little effort on the part of your club.

TAOM souvenir programs have come in an array of styles and print quality. There has been a trend over the past few years to make these letter-sized. Most are printed on a quality grade of glossy paper. Be sure to find a good printer who will give you a fair price. Most programs are black and white, with some sort of two or three color cover. If there is a graphic artist in your club, he may be the perfect choice for your souvenir program committee. Certainly at least, someone with artistic ability should be the final editor of your souvenir program.

It is helpful if you designate the number of your convention. Please don't call your convention the "50<sup>th</sup>" because that has already been taken three other times! Check chapter seven of this guide and see what number your convention will be. Don't argue about the numbering system. It was unanimously adopted by the TAOM Board of Directors that:

- The 50<sup>th</sup> convention was held in Lubbock in 1995
- The 51<sup>st</sup> convention was held in Houston in 1996
- The 52<sup>nd</sup> convention was held in Fort Worth in 1997
- The 53<sup>rd</sup> convention was held in San Antonio in 1998
- The 54<sup>th</sup> convention was held in Austin in 1999
- The 55<sup>th</sup> convention was held in Dallas in 2000
- The 56<sup>th</sup> convention will be held in Corpus Christi in 2001

If you get your convention number wrong, the TAOM Historian has unanimous approval from many in the TAOM organization to put a contract out on your life!

Your Souvenir Program might include any of the following:

1. A short history of the TAOM
2. A list of the TAOM officers, representatives, and the names of host clubs
3. Information on the convention's founder Herman Yerger
4. A list of past presidents
5. A welcome from your convention President
6. A list of your convention committee staff
7. A list of the honorary members of the TAOM
8. A dedication page dedicating your convention to someone in magic
9. A copy of the convention schedule
10. Information about the hotel and locations of the various events
11. A page dedicated to each show indicating talent, line-up, etc.
12. Pictures and biographies of the performers and lecturers
13. Information about Youth Activities

14. A description of the lectures
  15. Information about special "non-magic" events for convention attendees
  16. A map of the downtown or convention area showing the theater location
  17. A "Where to Eat" guide
  18. A special advertisement regarding next year's convention
  19. An autograph page
  20. Display Advertising
  21. And anything else you can think of! Be creative!
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From Paul Siegel  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Souvenir Program Chairman  
September 10, 2000

The most important thing that any of the committee chairmen can do is be dedicated to completing the job they start. In essence each chairman must be dedicated to missing the very convention they are preparing. The most important part of any convention is the satisfaction and the enjoyment of each participant.

Also equally important is support from your club. I will not dwell on either one of these subjects, for each sponsoring club must deal with the realities of the convention that they are preparing. Some of the "pitfalls" will be quite evident to each club and may not be shared by any other club that precedes or follows that particular convention.

The proceeding should be included in any guide that is printed. Although these points are most obvious, sometimes the simplest of details don't seem to be understood by the very people that have assumed the responsibility for completing them.

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From Paul Siegel  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Souvenir Program Chairman  
September 12, 2000

In the case of TAOM 2000 (at Dallas) the sale of advertising space was a separate chair and function. The Print Chair DID NOT oversee and promote advertising space, but rather controlled the content (of each advertisement) and appearance (for format and uniformity). It may be that some future Print Chair may wish to assume this particular duty as they define and assume these responsibilities. Since the proposed guide is a "living" historical document, the following items should be included for future reference.

A "Chain of Contributors" (actual contributor by name) including their name, address, and e-mail location should be included with each entry, so that at any time these people could be contacted for their individual and personal viewpoints.

Although, it is suggested that some "Professional Company" be used to produce the Souvenir Program, this very action might be counter productive to the overall effort and possibly not be cost effective. By use of an "outside source" the club will possibly be incurring a debt responsibility that is or cannot be defined unless it is defined to and by some contractual stipulations. This may be difficult to define in the early stages of planning, and most likely will change as the total requirements near fruition.

Furthermore, the TAOM Secretary should be contacted to see if there are any outstanding legal requirements that might affect the production, distribution or sale of this particular publication. (Editor's Note: Currently the TAOM non-profit corporation is a separate entity from any magic club hosting the TAOM convention. The host club is completely responsible for any legal requirements and liability regarding the production, distribution, or sale of souvenir programs. All liability, tax or otherwise, is the sole responsibility of the host club and not the TAOM non-profit corporation).

There are a number of variables that control the design of this publication. A conscious effort must be made to decide which is the more important (to a host club) --the "content" or the "advertising." As previously discussed, various articles, anecdotes and information could be used to "flesh out" the proposed document. Care should be taken to give credit to ALL references and material that may be taken from other magic sources or publications. Copyrighted material should only be used with the copyright holder's permission.

If an effort is made to display a large amount of advertising, this act may yield some desired revenue for the host club, but in the process may "cheapen" and "degrade" the final appearance of the publication. In the process the final document will have little or no real historical value.

Convention Identification -- The Print Chair should work with the conventions President and Planning Committee to establish some convention identification. This "logo" can be used on all printing, media releases, stationery and badges.

Lastly, if the Print Chair is unfamiliar with the printing industry, he must try and make a comparison between materials and processes. Some materials (for example "enameled paper") have a "higher cost" than some "offset papers". By careful selection of materials and controls of the printing process a significant cost reduction can and should be attained. The Print Chair should deal with a

printer that is willing to explain ANY process, and the costs involved. If necessary it may be wise to search the market for comparative bids on a common project.

Editor's note: Paul's notes contained additional information that was not specific to the job of Souvenir Program chairman. This information has been placed elsewhere in this TAOM Convention Planning Guide under the appropriate category.

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From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

The Convention Guide refers to the Souvenir Program Committee handling just the program. In Dallas, we found it important that a Printing Committee should incorporate the Souvenir Program as part of its overall responsibility.

**PRINTING:** Works with the appropriate chairmen to assures that printing is completed for the following: signs for dealer room, signs for close-up, lecture, contest, and registration rooms, tickets, souvenir program, playbills, mailouts, flyers, promo, and advertising pieces, booklets for talent (see Talent Handler description), and any other printing that is required. If the chairman of this committee is different from the Souvenir Program chair, then the Printing Chairman should closely coordinate schedules with that committee.

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## 14. CLOSE-UP

The Close-Up Chairman is responsible for making sure the professional close-up and contest close-up shows go according to plan.

**CLOSE-UP:** Responsible for the execution of the professional close-up shows (in conjunction with the Talent Chairman). He arranges for emcees in each of the close-up rooms, makes sure each room is set-up properly for each show (that is, tiered seating, table for the performers, etc), and makes sure each room is labeled properly (i.e., Room 1 of 4, etc, and a map on each room label showing the locations of the other available close-up rooms). The Chairman should work closely with the Contest Chairman to see that the needs of the close-up contest are met.

In a way, professional close-up shows and close-up competition at magic conventions is comical. Most in magic will agree that real close-up magic is magic performed intimately for two or three spectators. At magic conventions, even with the use of a number of close-up rooms, the "close-up" magic is often performed for groups of 25, 50, 75 or even more. Unfortunately there isn't really any other choice at magic conventions but to do the best you can. Since the audiences can't be made intimate, the goal should be to make sure everyone watching can at least see and hear the performer.

Traditionally at magic conventions there are two ways of doing this. One is to have each performer perform in a number of small meeting rooms. Basically the conventioners stay in the rooms and the various performers rotate from room-to-room performing for the convention attendees. This means that performers must perform a number of times in several different rooms. Usually the audiences are sitting in a couple of front rows of seats and the rest of the audience is seated in tiered seating. The hope is that everyone can see.

Despite best attempts, most of the time people still won't be able to see. Sight lines will be bad for someone. People will have trouble seeing over the shoulders of the person seated in front of them. The performers will use small props such as coins and cards and the people seated at the back of the room will have a hard time seeing the small items. Sometimes they won't be able to see what card has been selected simply because of the distance. One might liken it to trying to read a newspaper from across the room!

The second approach is the approach that was used in Milwaukee for the 2000 Society of American Magicians convention. Working in conjunction with Convention Chairman Brad Jacobs and Show Producer R. G. Smith, we decided to have the professional close-up show and the close-up contests in the lecture hall. A small card-sized table was used and this was placed on a 12" tall platform approximately 8 x 12 feet square. A video projection system was used to enable the entire lecture hall audience to see. The camera used was a studio grade

camera that produced a quality line feed that was split off to two independent video projectors. The projectors projected the video image onto large video projection screens. One screen was located at the far right of the platform performing area and the second screen located at the far left of the platform area. In addition, each performer used a wireless lavalier type microphone so that the entire audience could hear.

Was it successful? I think so. The performers only had to perform once and the audience seemed to gel better as a larger audience. Every performer received good applause and every audience member could see the performer thanks to the two large video screens.

Certainly other magic conventions have used video projection systems for the lectures, but it is seldom used for close-up. The audience members that were arranged around the platform area received the same "close-up feel" that they normally would have experienced in a small close-up room. The rest of the audience received a combination of visual close-up thanks to the video as well as a unique feel of being able to watch close-up performers at a distance.

Whichever route is taken, video or close-up rooms, platforms for tiered seating, performance platforms, sound system reinforcement, and video projection equipment must be acquired. Most TAOM conventions will probably rent this equipment. Check around for the best prices before you rent.

Make sure the hotel contract has a clause in it that allows outside lights and spot lights to be brought in and used in the hotel if needed. Particularly make sure you can bring in outside sound systems and audio-visual equipment. Also make sure the contract says you can use your own equipment operators. You might also want to bring in platforms, pipe and drape backdrop systems, and so forth. If there is not something in the hotel contract regarding these concessions, you might be forced to only use hotel equipment, forced to rent only hotel audio-visual equipment (which is usually very expensive), and you may be forced to hire union labor.

## 15. TRANSPORTATION

**TRANSPORTATION:** Responsible for anything dealing with the transport of performers and their cargo to/from the airport. He is to line-up handicap assistance hotel vans for people that need help being transported to/from the hotel. He is to arrange for and coordinate with busses in the event that convention attendees need to be bussed to/from the convention hotel to/from the theater for the evening shows. He might also be the person in charge of coordinating or arranging for limo and van shuttle services.

Impress your VIP personalities and performers by picking them up at the airport in a limousine. Bob Utter worked out a special deal with Carey Limousine Service at the 1988 TAOM convention. Carey would make round trip runs to the airport for \$25 each. Different individuals of the Fort Worth Magicians Club donated the \$25 dollar amounts. These individuals also rode with the limo for their particular run.

Be sure to inform performers and convention attendees how they can get to and from the airport to the convention hotel, especially in regards to shuttle services.

Work with the Talent Chairman and work-up a transportation schedule for the performers who have cargo that needs to be transported to and from the airport. See if one of your club members has a cargo van that can help haul cargo to and from the airport.

You will also need to arrange for transportation of you talent and their equipment to and from the hotel and theater the day of their evening performances. You might also inform yourself about public parking, parking lots, what to do if a performer has a truck or car and trailer that needs parked.

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From CaptMica (Mica Calfee)  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention  
Transportation Chairman  
September 11, 2000

Transportation chairmen should be knowledgeable about the local transportation options for convention attendees. If there are streetcars, buses, light rail or free shuttles to shopping or eating areas, these things can be made known. Such information could be placed in the convention packet. If possible the transportation chairman could make arrangements with the local merchants for free transportation. The West End Marketplace offered to provide such a

service for the Dallas convention but the offer fell through when the shopping center went up for sell.

If the transportation chairman chooses to have a team of people volunteer to transport performers, there should be at least one volunteer for every two performers/groups. With the same person(s) to transport each performer to and from the airport, rapport is also established. The transporter and the performer can double-check the times and airports together. This gives both confidence. Several of the people who helped with this years transportation called or e-mailed me to thank me for allowing them the opportunity to visit with the performers.

To assign a single volunteer to two or more performers is too difficult. When it comes to returning them to the airport, the possibility of a conflict is too great. When making assignments, consider the times for both the arrival and departure. There will also be those entertainers who will need only one way transportation. Some will arrive with friends but will depart on separate flights. Some will only need transportation from the airport.

Keep in mind that there will be schedule changes right up to the last day of the convention. People will decide to change flights in order to go to a different location or ride with a different person. People will miss flights coming in and vehicles will break down causing the need for people to be picked up or returned to the airport.

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From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

The Transportation Committee arranges for pick-up and drop-off for the talent, but it needs to be taken one more step. A Talent Handler Committee should be responsible for following the talent throughout the convention and attending to their needs. One thing we incorporated in Dallas was providing each performer with their own personalized spiral-bound notebook containing information such as what events they were scheduled to do, a copy of their contract, etc.

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## 16. YOUTH ACTIVITIES

**YOUTH ACTIVITIES:** Responsible for planning and executing activities for youth at the magic convention. The chairman is also responsible for enlisting all the help needed during a convention to run such activities. The chairman must coordinate his efforts with the President so that youth activities do not interfere with the main body of scheduled convention activities. As well, such activities should be planned so as to not take the youth away from other regularly scheduled activities that they might enjoy. The chairman must work closely with the Talent Chairman and the Souvenir Program Chairman so that hired talent for the convention might be used and communication about such activities can be properly published.

## 16. OTHER COMMITTEES

The list of TAOM convention planning committees as has been presented in this guide is only a model on how to organize volunteers as you execute your convention. The list is not intended to be complete, nor should it be considered inflexible. The list may or may not work for your particular host club depending upon the number of people available to help you host your convention, their abilities, and willingness to participate. The model should be tailored to meet the needs of your convention as you see fit.

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From Scott Wells  
Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention President  
April 2001

The Convention Committee Profiles seem quite complete; however, we found in Dallas that there needed to be additional committees to handle the work of our convention. It is recognized that some hosting clubs may not have neither enough voluntary support nor expertise to properly staff all of the committees. In that case, it would be proper to have the same individual(s) chair multiple committees provided that a) they want to do it, b) they feel qualified to do it, and c) they have time to do it. Some committees require a lot of planning up front with little to do during the convention. Other committees will require their work to take place during the convention. Chairmen can easily serve dual roles in these cases.

When soliciting committee chairmen at your club meetings, it's important to recognize that some have more experience or interest in one area or another. It's better to solicit their voluntary help rather than have a disgruntled volunteer who feels "stuck" in a committee they don't enjoy. It's important to recognize that you have advisors and help outside your club, too.

Don't feel that you must call upon just those from within your club. In our growing technological world, you can easily solicit assistance for any committee from within the entire T.A.O.M. organization. Even the President doesn't need to reside in the same city if you fully utilize the electronic facilities at your disposal (i.e. e-mail, fax, telephone, etc.) Convention committee chairmen can come from other cities if you can't find enough assistance from within your club. For example, in Dallas we used Trixie Bond from Houston as our chairman of the Non-Magicians Event and it worked out quite successfully.

A Computer Support Chairman needs to be in charge of the variety of things required for efficient communication and to facilitate the multitude of

computer-related needs onsite for the convention (i.e. registration, digital photo uploads to website, etc.).

**COMPUTER SUPPORT:** Responsible for working with T.A.O.M. webmaster, providing convention updates, support for any computer needs (software, hardware, answers, technical advice) before, during, and after the convention sets up, and provides ways and means to electronically simulcast convention activities.

We tried in Dallas to add something new which was a daily printed update that we were going to call "The Flash Paper." Time and personnel prevented that from coming to pass, but it is something to consider for future conventions. Our thought was to involve the Youth with this activity which would give them a learning experience, something else to do at the convention, and allow them to interview the talent, take pictures, write articles, format the newsletter, etc. If this idea is carried forward and the youth do pick up this task, then it needs to have adult supervision and guidance.

**FLASH PAPER EDITOR:** Responsible for preparing, printing, and distributing a morning "flash" sheet each day of the convention. "Flash" sheet to include reviews of previous night's shows, close-up shows, dealer items, tidbits of news and gossip heard around the convention, contests (who was in them, etc.), schedule of events for this day, and other material deemed suitable for reporting. Writes and/or gets articles submitted by others. Works with Computer Support and Printing Chairmen to get Flash Paper published each day for delivery before the first event of the following morning.

Although not generally well attended, there needs to be a non-magicians event planned which should be headed by an individual with a flair for planning parties and events and interested in doing something special utilizing the local color.

**NON-MAGICIANS EVENT:** Responsible for providing an event/activity for the non-magician guests for one morning/afternoon. Works with Treasurer to ascertain budget versus associated costs.

Registrants need to know that they are at a magic convention from the moment they walk in, so it's important to have the hotel lobby and/or the registration area decorated with some sort of festive decorations indicating that they are in the right place. There should ideally be decorations throughout the convention rooms where activities take place.

**DECORATING:** Responsible for arranging backdrops, curtains, plants, music, etc. in lecture rooms, contest rooms, close-up rooms, hospitality

rooms, registration area, and wherever else necessary. Works closely with Hotel Hospitality Chairman.

Finally, one can't be everywhere or see and do everything. So, a Plenipotentiary Chairman acts not only as Protocol Chairman but also as the one who looks at the overall convention to see if there are any details being omitted or problems that need to be brought to the attention of the President.

**PLENIPOTENTIARY:** This is a "catch all" position for extra duties as needed either not covered by one of the above, or to help out should a committee chair person fail or become impaired. It is important for this person to be fully up to date with all committees and in complete sync with the president. This is VITAL role. The Chairman of this committee also acts as Protocol Chairman for the convention. Such duties should include: identifying magic and civic luminaries in attendance, making sure that the President is aware of their presence, helping with any private parties (i.e. President's party) to make certain no one is inadvertently omitted, makes sure the VIP's are taken care of (good seats at theatre, transportation provided, coordinate VIP treatment with hotel, etc.)

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### LIABILITY

By David Hira  
August 2000

Whenever TAOM activities take place in a hotel and/or theater, the owners of the establishments will require liability insurance in varying amounts. The purpose of this insurance is to indemnify the owner(s) in the event of an accident. Should any participant related or not related to the convention suffer any injury, the insurance would provide for treatment and/or other liabilities suffered instead of the property owner. The insurance is for the EVENT, not necessarily for an individual property. However, it includes the properties in which the events are held.

Insurance for the past TAOM conventions have been obtained for around \$600.00 for the entire weekend. However, premiums will vary from city to city depending upon coverage required.

One Insurance Contact, which provided insurance for the '97 convention in Fort Worth, can be contacted at:

Everman Insurance  
2914 S.E. Loop 820  
Fort Worth, TX 76140  
293-4747 or (Metro) 817-572-1731

Note:

It is hopeful that the TAOM organization will be able to obtain a "blanket" insurance policy that will cover each city for the future. Bob Utter is working on this at present.

Editor's Note: The representative at Everman Insurance was Shela Graham and the cost was \$577.50 for \$1,000,000 General Liability Insurance.

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Regarding Dallas trying to acquire theater insurance for their 2000 convention:

Chuck Lehr wrote:

Were we Surprised! Know anyone in the insurance business? An unforeseen expense for the TAOM2k is General Liability Insurance to cover us when we are

at the Majestic Theater. We have no problem at the hotel, but the theater requires we have a rather large General Liability Policy for the three days we are there.

So we checked with an insurance agent who advertises "Special Events." When we got back up off of the floor, Scott (Wells) suggested we poll our club members to see if anyone is in -- or has a contact in -- the insurance business. This is to help us determine if the price we were quoted is in the ballpark of reason, or perhaps you know someone who could get us a better deal? If you can help, email me at Klownchuck@aol.com or call me at 972-226-1313.

Appreciate your help.

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From: Scott Wells, Dallas' 2000 Convention President  
To: Chuck Lehr:

Please forward your information to Bruce for his project. Also, Bruce, another helpful suggestion I received was to align ourselves with a non-profit organization and ask for them to add us on as a rider to their general liability policy. Since we are already working with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, that could have been an avenue, but our time was growing short and we needed to make a quick decision. In hindsight, we (I) should have gotten this taken care of about six months prior to the convention. Another suggestion was similar . . . request the hotel to add us on as a rider to their policy. Both of these suggestions were taken from real-life experiences and have worked. In our case this year, we only needed a policy for the theatre to cover us for \$1MM. The hotel did not have a requirement for any amount.

Finally, the other suggestions I had were pointing me towards a guy who advertises in the Linking Ring each month and also to get blanket coverage offered by the SAM.

I hope this helps.

Yours,  
Scott Wells  
President - TAOM 2000

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From: Chuck Lehr  
RE: Theater Insurance for the Dallas 2000 TAOM Convention

It is a loooooong story, but after getting all kinds of quotes from all different kinds of agents.. the quotes being 1800, 1500, 1200, 900.. and my favorite \$525.

All of the other people who gave me the other quotes said, "Grab the \$525. You can't do better." So that is what I finally did. I am now waiting for him to fax me the contract so I can sign it. It is a bargain.

Comment: Pretend we got Make-A-Wish to add us to their insurance and we did have an accident and it cost their insurance company a lot of money. Can you imagine what that would do to their loss ratio? They would be years paying higher premiums to make up for the higher loss ration. That is why I was against this avenue. If their insurance person was dumb enough to do this -- he would hurt the Make-a-Wish foundation for years to come.

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## **INCORPORATION PROCEDURES FOR TAOM MEMBER CLUBS**

by Judy Donaldson

Incorporation of your magic club limits its liability to the club's assets. Each member of an unincorporated club is liable, individually and severally, for any debts or damages the club might incur. Therefore, it is highly recommended that all member-clubs of the Texas Association of Magicians incorporate. Your club is eligible for non-profit corporation status if no part of its income is distributed to members, directors, or officers.

The State of Texas does not provide forms for such filing. General information about non-profit corporations is available at:

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/function/forms/202.pdf>. (Example A of this chapter).

Example B contains the Articles of Incorporation used by Austin Ring 60 to become a non-profit corporation in Texas. Three members of Ring 60 signed as incorporators, although one person can legally incorporate. Ring 60 chose to list all the members of the Board of Directors, although only three are required.

Two copies of these Articles were mailed with a check for \$25.00 to Secretary of State, Statutory Filings Division, Corporations Section, P. O. Box 13697, Austin, TX 78701. In less than three weeks, the Secretary of State returned a file stamped copy of the Articles, letters of approval, and a charter number for the corporation. (Examples C and D)

Incorporation as a non-profit corporation does not qualify a club for sales tax exemption. To be eligible for sales tax exemption, you must apply to the IRS for

501-(c) status, a complicated and possibly expensive undertaking that would be beneficial only if your club purchases a great deal of retail merchandise.

A few weeks after you receive the approved Articles of Incorporation, you will receive a letter from the Tax Policy Division of the Comptroller's office explaining (using the term loosely) franchise tax. Further franchise tax information is available at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/franfaq.html>.

Incorporation as a non-profit corporation does not qualify a club for exemption from the annual franchise tax levied by the State of Texas on non-profit corporations. However, your club will pay no franchise tax and will be eligible to file a "no tax due" form annually unless its assets are \$150,000.00 or more. You will also receive a letter and form from the Texas Workforce Commission. It will not pertain unless your club pays wages to one or more employees.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### TAOM CONVENTION NUMBERS, YEARS, PRESIDENTS, AND LOCATIONS

Conv Nbr	Conv Year	President	Location	Bulletin(s)	Program AdvertiseAdvertises
	1943	Mother's Day	Austin		
	1944	Labor Picnic	Austin		
	1945	Labor Picnic	Austin		
1	1946	Labor Picnic Herman Yerger	Austin	1	
2	1947	Herman Yerger	Fort Worth	2	1
3	1948	Ralph De Shong	Houston	3	2
4	1949	Jas. A. Bowlin	Dallas		
5	1950	Ed DeWees	San Antonio	5	
6	1951	Dr. Carl L. Moore	Austin	6	
7	1952	A. R "Ren" Clark	Fort Worth	7	7
8	1953	Tommy Bearden	Houston		
9	1954	Royal Brin, Jr.	Dallas		
10	1955	L. Louis Harrop, M.D.	Corpus Christi		10
11	1956	C. Allen Sears	Austin		11
12	1957	W. C. Stubblefield	Fort Worth		12
13	1958	James Daniels	San Antonio	13	
14	1959	Ed Watkins	Dallas		
15	1960	Thomas B. Martin	Houston		
16	1961	W. Doug Grounds	Corpus Christi		16
17	1962	Allen Sears	Austin		
18	1963	Robert O. Utter	Fort Worth		
19	1964	Ed DeWees	San Antonio	19 (Env)	19
20	1965	Dr. John H. Gladfelter	Dallas	20	
21	1966	Frank Clauder	Houston	20 (Badge)	
22	1967	Gene Looper	Corpus Christi		
23	1968	Wilbur Kattner	Fort Worth		
24	1969	Dean Duncan	San Antonio		
25	1970	Harold Thomas	Dallas		25
26	1971	Walter Blaney	Houston		
27	1972	John L. Howell	Abilene		27
28	1973	Nolan Manly, Jr.	Fort Worth		28
29	1974	Robert C. Ford	San Antonio		
30	1975	Dr. Ralph A. Marcom	Dallas		30
31	1976	Ed Campagna	Houston	31	
32	1977	Bob Emery	Austin	32	
33	1978	Roger Crabtree	Fort Worth	33	33
34	1979	Frank Ramirez	San Antonio	34	
35	1980	Noel Coward	Dallas	35	
36	1981	Frank C. Price	Houston		
37	1982	Gerald Edmundson	Fort Worth		
38	1983	Kent C. Cummins	Austin		38
39	1984	Steve Norman	Abilene		
40	1985	Alex D. Gutierrez	San Antonio		40
41	1986	Bob Karlebach	Dallas		
42	1987	J. D. "Tex" Babin	Corpus Christi		
43	1988	Bruce Chadwick	Fort Worth	43	43
44	1989	Douglas Kornegay	Houston	44	
45	1990	Chuck Lehr	Dallas	45 (nickle)	
46	1991	Bill Faulkner	Tyler		
47	1992	Joe Douglas	Corpus Christi	47	
48	1993	Raymon Galindo	Austin	48	48
49	1994	Charles E. Golla	San Antonio		47
50	1995	Bill Mayes	Lubbock	50	50
51	1996	Terry Campagna	Houston	50	
52	1997	David Hira	Fort Worth	50	50
53	1998	George Blackburn	San Antonio		
54	1999	Peter the Adequate (Hinrichs)	Austin		
55	2000	Scott Wells	Dallas		
56	2001	Don Stiefel	Corpus Christi		

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Excerpts from TAOM History: 50 Years and Counting!

by Bruce Chadwick, TAOM Historian

As the Fort Worth IBM Ren Clark Ring 15 hosted the 1997 Texas Association of Magicians convention, much emphasis was placed on celebrating fifty years of TAOM history. This estimation is certainly correct, for the TAOM has been around for at least 50 years and perhaps longer, depending on how you count.

#### HERMAN YERGER

The historical archives of the TAOM provide a wealth of information about the origin of the organization. All accounts herald Herman Yerger of Austin, Texas as the founder of the Labor Day weekend magic gatherings that became the TAOM organization and annual conventions.

According to the first TAOM newsletter that was published and distributed shortly after the 1946 Austin magic gathering by Secretary M. S. Mahendra, Yerger was a most enthusiastic practitioner of the art of magic.<sup>1</sup> Born on March 22, 1894 in Brooklyn, New York, Yerger and his wife Emilie operated a tent show, played schools, vaudeville, and carnivals.

A former tight wire walker, Mahendra writes that a fall paralyzed Yerger and left him confined to a wheel chair for life.<sup>2</sup> There are other accounts which explain his paralysis however. In the Summer of 1996, Claude Crowe, editor of the "Texas Magic Collectors Newsletter" (Volume 2, Number 2) states that:

Herman himself had no problem telling friends what actually happened. He was stabbed in the back of the neck by a husband jealous of his wife's attentions to Herman (though he would sometimes deny that the husband had reason to be jealous). Apparently he made a complete recovery from the attack but, as time passed, he began to lose the use of his legs and kidneys. Eventually, X-rays revealed that a piece of the knife blade had broken off in the attack and remained lodged in his spine. He was soon confined to a wheelchair as his condition continued to deteriorate.<sup>3</sup>

Despite his handicap, Yerger continued to live life with zeal. He would later write, "My formula is simple. First, I refuse to admit that my physical defects are overwhelming, they are something to be lived with, compromised with, and conquered. I realize that the

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<sup>1</sup> T.A.O.M. Official Organ Texas Association of Magicians, first TAOM newsletter which was published and distributed shortly after the 1946 Austin gathering. See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Texas Magic Collectors Newsletter, Claude Crowe, Editor, Volume 2, #2, Summer 1996. A revised version of the historical text of this newsletter is reproduced in full. See Appendix B.

man who buried his one talent buried something of himself also. Therefore I try to make the best of my talents, especially the ability to think for myself.”<sup>4</sup>

Even with the confinements of his disability, Herman would continue to perform and be enthusiastic about magic. As Claude Crowe has written,

. . . he continued to perform from the chair, playing throughout Texas and often performing a “Buried Alive” outdoor promotion with his first wife. Herman was a good performer with an aura of mysterioso that would stand him in good stead when he turned to crystal gazing (although Whitney the Magician with whom Herman often appeared, and father of Delora Whitney, said of his card work, “When he held a break it stood out like a valentine card in a pinochle deck”).<sup>5</sup>

Sometime during the 1930’s Yerger retired from performing professionally and began operating a drug store of sorts at 1011 Red River Street in Austin, Texas. Although not a pharmacist, he sold herbs, potions, and other over-the-counter remedies to his clients, provided readings, and maintained living quarters in the back of his establishment. On a May Saturday in 1943, Yerger suggested to Ray Santee who was visiting from San Antonio, that if the next day he would bring up some of the San Antonio magicians and bring the beer, Yerger would barbecue for them. A total of ten magicians, six from San Antonio and four from Austin, all members of I.B.M. Ring 18, convened in Herman’s backyard for a day of food and magic. The only problem with this Sunday gathering was that it was also Mother’s day.

### THREE PICNICS AND THE TAOM

According to Ray Santee who was at the first Mother’s Day backyard gathering, Yerger and the other San Antonio Ring members decided on another meeting for Labor Day 1944 so that “more magicians could be in attendance.”<sup>6</sup> The location of this first “official picnic” was to be Herman’s lodge, property Yerger purchased on Onion Creek about six miles south of Austin. There Yerger erected a club house, some concrete picnic tables, an open air stage, and a barbecue pit. Mahendra, Moore, DeWees, and Yerger got together and made up a list of magic friends and sent out invitations. A flyer was prepared to advertise the event as “Herman’s Magic Show and Picnic, featuring Texas Top Notch Magicians and Prestidigitators.”<sup>7</sup> Magicians from Austin, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Dallas, and Houston attended the Sunday and Monday, September 3 and 4 event. Of the 169 persons in attendance, 71 of the guests were non-magician friends of Yerger.

A second picnic followed in 1945 with 112 people in attendance, and a small fee of \$5.00 per person was instituted. During this picnic, M. S. Mahendra, Ed DeWees, Ralph DeShong, Dr. Carl Moore, Ren Clark, Henry Schmidt, Jim Bowling, and a few others met and formed a committee to move the gatherings into a state magician’s association. At this 1945 picnic, Doc Mahendra was asked to serve as acting president of the organization, Ren Clark was selected to prepare a constitution and by-laws, Henry Schmidt was asked to be secretary, and Ed DeWees was asked to select a slate of officers to be presented to the

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<sup>4</sup> Frontispiece from the “TAOM Silver Anniversary Convention” booklet for the September 4-7, 1970 Dallas, Texas TAOM Convention. See Appendix C.

<sup>5</sup> 1996 Texas Magic Collectors Newsletter. See Appendix B.

<sup>6</sup> 1994 San Antonio TAOM Convention Souvenir Program.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix D.

1946 gathering. Yerger was opposed to the idea of such an organization as early as 1944, but eventually warmed up to the idea during the months that followed the 1945 gathering, and especially after it was proposed to him by Ed DeWees that he be the first president of the organization.

Ed DeWees was one of the representatives from the San Antonio IBM Ring 18 who signed the original 1946 TAOM Constitution and By-Laws on behalf of his club. In 1975, he wrote a letter to Colonel J. L. C. Beaman to explain his recollection of how the TAOM organization came into existence, and to counter some of the insinuations that any particular person was the "sole founder." DeWees records that he was privileged to have first hand information regarding the organization of the TAOM.

Dear Colonel,

I'm certainly sorry to learn about your impaired vision and hope that you may find ways and means for improvement in the days ahead.

Now about the early days of TAOM and those who had to do with its organization. I have thought about writing about those early days, especially since 1973 when a history was put together by someone in Dallas and then received considerable criticism from Ren Clark. I'm sure they each honestly believed they were correct, but neither of them had the first hand information available that I am privileged to have.

This letter may give more information than you asked for, but since you have addressed the subject to me, I'm going to use your request as motivation to write a true, documented history of those early days leading to the organization of TAOM. Now at the outset let me say in no uncertain terms that no single individual can by any stretch of the imagination make claim as "the" organizer of TAOM.

In 1940 the San Antonio Ring 18 was chartered. Since Austin, Texas, did not have a Ring or Assembly, persons living in Austin and known to have an interest in magic were invited to join. The most active members in Austin at that time were Herman Yerger and Dr. Carl Moore.

Most of Ring 18's monthly meetings were held in San Antonio. However, several were conducted in Austin. Through the years starting in 1941, a close relationship was formed between Herman Yerger, Doc Mahendra, Carl Moore, and Ed DeWees. We visited each other's homes, talked magic, and exchanged ideas.

It was out of these frequent get-togethers that Herman came up with the idea of enlarging these groups and often invited not only Austin and San Antonio Ring members but other friends in magic throughout the state. Out of these small get-togethers a larger group evolved in 1944. This was Herman's party and he was to pick up the "tab" for the beer and barbecue. Doc Mahendra, Carl Moore, Ed DeWees, and Herman Yerger got together and made up a list of magic friends and sent out invitations. The first conclave was launched and held over Labor Day weekend in the year 1944. Ed DeWees had each person attending to sign his or her name in a register, and he has this book of names in his possession (see photo copy of this book). This first conclave was such a success that Herman and others of us immediately began making plans for a 1945 conclave. A printed invitation was sent out (a photo copy is enclosed). A small group of us in Austin and San Antonio got together with Herman and convinced him that since so many invitations were being sent for the 1945 conclave, we thought it only proper that those attending should pay a small fee of \$5.00 per person. Herman did not want to charge the fee, but we finally convinced him that this was the proper thing to do. Ed DeWees again registered

everyone attending and collected the \$5.00 per person. Ed has the original list of those attending and a record of payment (see photo copy).

The 1945 conclave was again a great success, but there were a few incidents that occurred which made for considerable unpleasantness for some of the wives. Now just a few words about those unpleasant events. Herman more or less gave a blanket invitation for all his Red River friends and customers to attend his magic conclave and enjoy free entertainment, beer, and food. There were 169 persons, counting men, women, and children at the 1944 conclave; of this number, 71 were Austin people who had no interest in magic, some of whom proved very undesirable, as they did heavy drinking, not only beer but hard liquor, used foul language, and some of the women were reported to be prostitutes.

Wives of some of our magic members as well as some of us men didn't think this good for magic. The same type of visitors again appeared at the 1945 conclave. It was at this time that Mrs. Ed (Adelaide) DeWees and Mrs. Ralph DeShong approached Doc Mahendra and Ed DeWees and told them that if they didn't do something about keeping this element of people out of the conclave, they would not attend any in the future. Doc and Ed didn't want to offend Herman, for these "visitors" were his friends and customers and we knew he did not want to form a Texas organization; Doc, Ed, and Carl Moore had suggested that right after the first (1944) conclave, and Herman did not want it. He felt this was his party and he wanted to keep it his; therefore nothing was done about organizing. But in 1945, when these two women approached Doc and Ed, the men felt action had to be taken. Doc and Ed called into session with the Ralph DeShong, Dr. Carl Moore, Ren Clark, Henry Schmidt, Jim Bowling, and possibly one or two others that I don't remember. In any event we decided to go ahead and start an organization of Texas magicians. Herman was not included since we already knew of his objections. While Carl Moore was present, he wasn't in favor for he was afraid he might hurt Herman's feelings. None of us wanted to hurt Herman, but we felt the ball was rolling for magic in Texas and that we should go ahead with the hope of changing Herman's way of thinking.

At this small meeting mentioned above, Doc Mahendra was asked to serve as chairman of the organization. Ren Clark was selected to prepare a constitution and by-laws, Henry Schmidt to record our action as secretary, and Ed DeWees was asked to select a slate of officers to be presented to the 1946 conclave. He was also to talk to Herman and try to get him to give up his Labor Day party and turn it into an association of Texas magicians. During the following months prior to the 1946 conclave, Ed DeWees had many sessions with Herman and finally convinced him that the best interests of magic in Texas would be served by the formation of an association. His original idea of a few friends in magic getting together each year had grown too big and too expensive to be handled by one man. Ed DeWees asked Herman if elected to serve as the first president. This made Herman very happy; since he agreed to serve, we could go ahead "out in the open."

At the 1946 conclave we printed a program (see attached). At the business meeting, Doc Mahendra served as chairman, as it might be said temporary, or acting president.

Note: I am enclosing a photo copy of the first issue of TAOM official organ. This will give you the best material available about the mechanics of our organization. Now to summarize as Ed DeWees sees it.

As mentioned at the outset, no one person can make claim as the founder of TAOM. It was a progression of events directed by a few dedicated magicians that put it together over a period of some five or six years. It is always dangerous to list names for fear of overlooking someone. Now that TAOM is some thirty years old and has achieved such success, I am certain that there are many who would be glad to lay

claim to its origin. However, since I have in my possession the early records leading up to the organizational meeting in 1946, I am listing the names of those who can rightfully be named as the founders of TAOM -- Doc Mahendra, Ed DeWees, Dr. Carl Moore, Ralph DeShong, Ren Clark, and Herman Yerger. All of these men except Ed DeWees and Ren Clark are deceased.

You may want to put some of this material on your printing press and have it ready for the 1976 convention in Houston.

Sincerely,  
(signed)  
Ed DeWees<sup>8</sup>

The Texas Association of Magicians was organized at the third Labor Day weekend picnic gathering, at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas on Sunday morning September 1, 1946. The first "T.A.O.M. Official Organ" newsletter contains "Minutes of the Meeting, Texas Association of Magicians, Austin, Texas September 2, 1946."<sup>9</sup> These minutes are designated as the second business session of the TAOM, the meeting being called to order in the Mural Room of the Stephen F. Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas at 11:00 A. M. on Sunday with acting President M. S. Mahendra presiding.

The newsletter is not accurate in stating that the second business meeting was on Sunday September 2, because September 2 was a Monday. The printed convention program stated that Saturday August 31 was a night-before party, a "Magicians Meeting to discuss matters of General interest to Texas Magicians" was scheduled at 10:30 AM on Sunday September 1, and a "Magician's Business Meeting and selection of the 1947 Conclave City" was scheduled for 10:30 AM on Monday September 2. Apparently the Sunday morning meeting when the TAOM was declared into existence was the first TAOM business meeting. The minutes found in the first TAOM newsletter for "Sunday September 2, 1946" should have been listed for the Monday second business meeting.

The first order of business for this second business meeting on Monday September 2 was a report by Ren Clark, chairman of the Constitution and By-laws Committee. Ren read the tentative draft that he and his committee had prepared. It is noted that attorney Sproesser Wynn helped revise the constitution and put it into proper legal language. The minutes do not reveal if Ren's committee was comprised of other individuals other than himself and Wynn.

After the initiation fee of \$2.50 and \$1.50 first year's dues was set, DeShong moved the adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws, it was seconded by several and then was carried by a unanimous vote.

Ed DeWees asked that the meeting be temporarily adjourned so that the representatives of the various Rings and Assemblies could name their respective representatives or governors to the TAOM. The meeting was then resumed and the results were as follows:

S.A.M. No. 13, A. Robert White  
S.A.M. No. 19, James Bowling

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<sup>8</sup> Letter written by Ed DeWees to Colonel Beaman, October 7, 1975, and composed on stationery from the First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, Texas. A copy of this letter was forwarded to this author by Fred Story of Tulia, Texas.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A.

I.B.M. No. 15, Ren Clark  
I.B.M. No. 18, Herman Yerger  
I.B.M. No 34, H. H. Gaddis  
I.B.M. No. 39, John Dunlop

Next this Board of Governors met and elected the following to serve until October 1, 1947, or until their successors were duly elected and installed:

President: Herman Yerger  
Vice-President: Ralph DeShong  
Secretary: M. S. Mahendra  
Treasurer: Glen Y. Davidson

It was emphasized from the onset that the TAOM was to be controlled by the Board of Governors, with each Governor being selected by the members of his or her Ring or Assembly. The Governor in turn would then represent his club in all matters requiring executive action.

For a person to become a 1946 charter member of the TAOM, the person had to first be in good standing with one of the approved magic clubs in Texas. Next the prospective member would fill out an application and submit it to the Treasurer along with a \$2.50 initiation fee and \$1.50 for first year's dues. The application was then passed by the TAOM Membership Committee for approval and it was also submitted for approval to the prospective member's Ring or Assembly Secretary. It was emphasized in the first TAOM bulletin that a person could be a charter member of the organization if their application was received (and presumably also accepted by the TAOM) by November 1946. According to the second bulletin (noted as Volume 1, Number 2) published in December 1946, 118 people made application to become charter members of the Texas Association of Magicians.<sup>10</sup> In the third bulletin (Volume 1, Number 3) published in July 1947, four additional names were listed and Secretary Mahendra specified that they should be added to the roster in bulletin number two. This made a total of 123 charter members.<sup>11</sup>

#### WHEN WAS THE FIRST CONVENTION?

The TAOM archives are clear that the first 1944 and second 1945 Labor Day weekend picnic gatherings were exactly that, gatherings of magicians and friends over Labor Day weekend and hosted by Herman Yerger in Austin, Texas. The question comes regarding the 1946 gathering, whether or not it was just a third picnic, or the first convention of the TAOM. The printed flyer or program used to publicize the 1946 gathering used the title "TEXAS MAGICIAN'S CONCLAVE."<sup>12</sup> It is clear that at the Stephen F. Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas on Sunday morning September 1, 1946, shortly after 10:30 AM, the Texas Association of Magicians came into existence.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix F.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix G.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix E.

A short synopsis of the TAOM beginnings appeared in the 1947 Fort Worth TAOM Convention Souvenir Program. This synopsis (or parts thereof) is used in many bulletins and souvenir programs of subsequent TAOM conventions:

#### HISTORY OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS

The Texas Association of Magicians was first conceived at Austin, Texas during the Labor Day Conclave of 1946. The idea of such a Conclave first started with Herman Yerger when he built a theatre and lodge for the use of magicians and their friends and invited them to be his guests on Labor Day of each year.

In the beginning this was a small gathering and Herman furnished food and refreshments for everyone while his guests supplied most of the entertainment. All of this started three years ago. Then the attendance grew so large as to make it impossible for one man to assume such a heavy task.

It was at that time that I.B.M. Ring No. 18 of San Antonio assisted Herman in 1946 by sending out invitations, planning shows, etc. Members of Ring No. 18 and well-known leaders from other Texas Rings and Assemblies then suggested that a state organization be formed with the express purpose of exploiting a Labor Day Magical Conclave in Texas.

Accordingly, A. Ren Clark, the present leader of the largest magical organization in the World--the International Brotherhood of Magicians--with the legal assistance of Sprosser Wynn--T.A.O.M.'s legal advisor--drew up a Constitution and By-laws for the new organization. These were presented by M. S. Mahendra, then President of I.B.M. Ring 18 to about one hundred magicians assembled in Austin at Herman Yerger's lodge. They were duly adopted and officers and directors elected. Herman Yerger was given the honor of being the first President--Ralph DeShong of Wichita Falls, Vice President--M. S. Mahendra of San Antonio, Secretary--Glenn Davidson of Houston, Treasurer and thus began the Texas Association of Magicians composed of all accredited magic clubs of the State of Texas.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to note that the Fort Worth 1947 convention program does not specify that the convention was the first TAOM convention. However, Fort Worth did distribute a earlier promotional flyer which invited attendance to the "1st Annual TAOM Convention."<sup>14</sup> The 1947 Fort Worth TAOM convention was definitely the first convention to be advertised solely under the Texas Association of Magicians name.

The 1947 Fort Worth TAOM convention would probably be considered the first TAOM convention if it were not disputed by Doc Mahendra, the first editor of the TAOM periodical. In his fourth TAOM bulletin (Volume 1, Number 4) dated November 1947, Mahendra lists a roster for the Fort Worth TAOM convention and titles it the "2nd Annual Convention, Ft. Worth, Texas."<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere the bulletin recounts the success of the 1947 Fort Worth TAOM gathering and states "Well its now all over and a matter of magic history, but those who attended the second TAOM Convention will long remember the outstanding shows, general good fellowship and meeting the grandest bunch of magicians anywhere in America." Also in this bulletin, under the heading "Financial

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<sup>13</sup> 1947 Fort Worth TAOM Convention Souvenir Program, See Appendix H for reproductions of the front cover and the history page of the program.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix J.

Statement, T.A.O.M.," the first sentence reads: "Our first Convention was held over Labor Day at Austin, Texas and this is when the TAOM was formed."

Mahendra remained numerically consistent in future TAOM bulletins. The TAOM bulletin (Volume 1, Number 5) dated August 1948 announced that the third annual TAOM Convention would be held Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, September 4, 5, and 6, 1948 in Houston, Texas.<sup>16</sup> Like Fort Worth however, Houston didn't adopt Mahendra's chronology. In their 1948 convention souvenir program Houston stated:

#### HISTORY OF THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS

A state wide organization of professional, semi-professional and amateur magicians. It is the result of a dream of Herman Yerger, first President of the T.A.O.M. who, after retiring from the life of a traveling magician and mentalist, settled in Austin, Texas, where he now resides. In 1944 Herman bought property near Austin, on which he had erected a club house, open air stage, barbecue pit, etc. for one purpose, and that being to have his magician friends from over the State attend his Annual Conclave, the first being held on Labor Day weekend 1944. Labor Day Conclaves followed in 1945 and 1946. Each year the crowd grew larger, so in 1946 prominent magicians of Texas urged Herman to agree to the organization of a State Association of Magicians was organized with Herman Yerger as First President, Ralph DeShong of Wichita Falls, Vice President, M. S. Doc Mahendra, San Antonio, Secretary and Glenn Y. Davidson of Houston as Treasurer, the last two named still hold these offices, with Ralph DeShong, President, and Jas. A. Bowling of Houston, Vice President. ***First T.A.O.M. Conclave was held in the city of Fort Worth, and we WELCOME YOU TO HOUSTON for the Second Annual Conclave of the TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS.***<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, the name badges for the Houston 1948 Convention were printed with the designation "2nd Annual Conclave."<sup>18</sup>

This didn't budge Mahendra however. The TAOM bulletin Volume 3, Number 1 for August 1949 announced that the fourth Annual TAOM Convention (1949) would be in Dallas, Texas.<sup>19</sup> The bulletin for August 1950 (Volume 4, Number 2) announced four days of convention, September 1, 2, 3, and 4 and a headline which read "Announcing Fifth Annual TAOM Convention At San Antonio, Texas."<sup>20</sup> Austin was the host for the "Home-Coming Meeting" 1951 TAOM convention, and Volume 5, Number 2 of the bulletin for August 1951 stated that it would be the sixth annual convention.<sup>21</sup> Austin concurred with the numbering system and sent out a letter to promote the sixth convention.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Appendix K.

<sup>17</sup> 1948 Houston TAOM Convention Souvenir Program, front page, italicize by this author. See Appendix L for a reproduction of the program front cover.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix M.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix N.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix O.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix P.

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix Q

The TAOM bulletin Volume 6, Number 2 for August 1952 announced that Fort Worth would host the seventh annual convention.<sup>23</sup> Whether it was out of acceptance or indifference, the 1952 Fort Worth TAOM hosts conceded to the TAOM bulletin's (Mahendra's) numbering system. Fort Worth's 1952 souvenir program labeled its convention as the seventh annual TAOM convention.<sup>24</sup> Fort Worth's adoption of the numbering system may imply a concession that the 1946 Herman Yerger lodge picnic was the first TAOM convention.

It is very important for historians to acknowledge that the newsletter convention numbering sequence that was in place by the 1950 San Antonio convention (convention number five) is the numbering system that the TAOM continued to use for the next forty-three years, through the 1993 Austin convention (advertised as convention number 48). If this numbering sequence is continued to the present, then the 1995 Lubbock convention was number 50, the 1996 Houston convention was number 51, the 1997 Fort Worth convention was number 52, and the 1998 San Antonio convention will be number 53. Again, this numbering system recognizes the 1946 Yerger Austin picnic as convention number one, the first convention of the TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MAGICIANS.

The following is a list of the each TAOM Convention, the year it was held, the name of the president for the particular convention year, the location for the convention, and notations on the numbering system(s) used for each convention. Blank spaces indicate that either the host city/club in question did not number its convention, or that the current TAOM archives in possession of the TAOM Historian at the time this treatise was composed do not indicate a number.

Conv Nbr:	Conv Year:	President: for the	Location of Host City/Club:	Convention Bulletin Advertised Number:	Host City/Club Labeled their Convention As Number:
	1943	May Mother's Day	Austin		
	1944	Labor Picnic	Austin		
	1945	Labor Picnic	Austin		
1	1946	Labor Picnic	Austin	1	
2	1947	Yerger Elected Herman Yerger	Fort Worth	2	1
3	1948	Ralph De Shong	Houston	3	2
4	1949	Jas. A. Bowlin	Dallas		
5	1950	Ed DeWees	San Antonio	5	
6	1951	Dr. Carl L. Moore	Austin	6	
7	1952	A. R "Ren" Clark	Fort Worth	7	7
8	1953	Tommy Bearden	Houston		
9	1954	Royal Brin, Jr.	Dallas		
10	1955	L. Louis Harrop, M.D.	Corpus Christi		10
11	1956	C. Allen Sears	Austin		11
12	1957	W. C. Stubblefield	Fort Worth		12
13	1958	James Daniels	San Antonio	13	
14	1959	Ed Watkins	Dallas		
15	1960	Thomas B. Martin	Houston		
16	1961	W. Doug Grounds	Corpus Christi		16
17	1962	Allen Sears	Austin		
18	1963	Robert O. Utter	Fort Worth		
19	1964	Ed DeWees	San Antonio	19 (Env)	19
20	1965	Dr. John H. Gladfelter	Dallas	20	
21	1966	Frank Clauder	Houston	20 (Badge)	
22	1967	Gene Looper	Corpus Christi		

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix R.

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix S.

23	1968	Wilbur Kattner	Fort Worth		
24	1969	Dean Duncan	San Antonio		
25	1970	Harold Thomas	Dallas		25
26	1971	Walter Blaney	Houston		
27	1972	John L. Howell	Abilene		27
28	1973	Nolan Manly, Jr.	Fort Worth		28
29	1974	Robert C. Ford	San Antonio		
30	1975	Dr. Ralph A. Marcom	Dallas		30
31	1976	Ed Campagna	Houston	31	
32	1977	Bob Emery	Austin	32	
33	1978	Roger Crabtree	Fort Worth	33	33
34	1979	Frank Ramirez	San Antonio	34	
35	1980	Noel Coward	Dallas	35	
36	1981	Frank C. Price	Houston		
37	1982	Gerald Edmundson	Fort Worth		
38	1983	Kent C. Cummins	Austin		38
39	1984	Steve Norman	Abilene		
40	1985	Alex D. Gutierrez	San Antonio		40
41	1986	Bob Karlebach	Dallas		
42	1987	J. D. "Tex" Babin	Corpus Christi		
43	1988	Bruce Chadwick	Fort Worth	43	43
44	1989	Douglas Kornegay	Houston	44	
45	1990	Chuck Lehr	Dallas	45 (nickel)	
46	1991	Bill Faulkner	Tyler		
47	1992	Joe Douglas	Corpus Christi	47	
48	1993	Raymon Galindo	Austin	48	48
49	1994	Charles E. Golla	San Antonio		47
50	1995	Bill Mayes	Lubbock	50	50
51	1996	Terry Campagna	Houston	50	
52	1997	David Hira	Fort Worth	50	50
53	1998	George Blackburn	San Antonio		
54	1999	Peter the Adequate (Hinrichs)	Austin		
55	2000	Scott Wells	Dallas		
56	2001	Don Stiefel	Corpus Christi		

#### REN CLARK: FOUNDER OF TAOM?

In 1952, the Fort Worth convention program brought to head a controversy that began brewing during the early days of the TAOM. This "Ren Clark Founder Controversy," a controversy that existed continually until his death, surrounded Ren Clark's claims that he was "the founder" of the TAOM.

The 1952 "7th Annual Convention" program contains a biography of A. R. (Ren) Clark and it states: "It was Ren who first suggested and promoted the founding of the Texas Association of Magicians, at one of Herman Yerger's annual Labor Day get-togethers. Therefore, it is fitting that the Texas magicians should honor one who has brought recognition to his state by his accomplishments in the magic world."<sup>25</sup>

This author was privileged to be personally acquainted with Ren Clark for many years. In questioning Clark about the beginnings of the TAOM organization, Ren Clark told this author rather emphatically that he founded the TAOM.

In 1970, the Texas Association of Magicians celebrated their Silver Anniversary Convention to mark the first 25 years of TAOM history. The Dallas convention distributed to each attendee a saddle stapled book which chronicled the TAOM convention from its beginnings. The author(s) dedicated a page or two to each convention, and included many photographs where available.

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<sup>25</sup> 1952 Fort Worth TAOM Convention Souvenir Program. See Appendix S.

The book did contain numerous inconsistencies however. For example, inside the front cover it read: "On a small ranch near Austin, Texas, Herman Yerger conceived the idea for the Texas Association of Magicians. At an informal picnic Herman presented his idea to a group of friends and from this casual meeting came the charter for the association."<sup>26</sup>

History is very clear that Herman Yerger did not want a Texas magic association. He wanted the picnics to remain as they were, his annual parties. It was only after Ed DeWees convinced Yerger to allow the Labor Day gatherings to be formed into an annual magician's association did Yerger concede to the idea. It should also be noted that the enticement DeWees used to help Yerger change his mind was the offer to make Yerger the first president of the TAOM. That is when Yerger in 1945 or 1946 accepted the idea for a state-wide magician's organization that became the Texas Association of Magicians.

The Dallas club did try to correct the silver anniversary chronicle. Attached inside the front cover of the program was a letter written by Paul Siegel. Dated August 9, 1970, the letter was addressed "To All T.A.O.M. Members."

The following additional data has been brought to my attention by Ren Clark and is included with this booklet in an effort to offer a complete document which would be of significant interest to anyone concerned in the founding of our organization.

- 1) Herman Yerger conceived the idea of a Labor Day Magical Get-Together and picnic, which started in September of 1944 and continued for three years.
- 2) Herman Yerger was the 1st President of the Texas Association of Magicians.
- 3) Ed DeWees and Doc Mahendra were two important individuals in helping Herman plan and carry out his magical get-togethers. These same individuals were founders of the TAOM, along with a few other individuals.
- 4) Ren Clark was the person who first conceived and suggested the idea of forming the T.A.O.M.
- 5) Ren Clark and Sproesser Wynn drew up the Constitution and By-laws for the T.A.O.M.
- 6) Among those who could be listed as the founders of T.A.O.M. are: Ren Clark, Ralph DeShong, Ed DeWees, Doc Mahendra and Herman Yerger.

I sincerely hope that these facts (as listed) have enabled you to complete your understanding of the founding of our association as we have come to know it.

With Best Regards.  
(signed)  
Paul Siegel  
Editor  
T.A.O.M. History<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 1972 Dallas TAOM Convention Silver Anniversary book. See Appendix C

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Paul Siegel attached inside the front cover of the 1970 Dallas TAOM Convention Silver Anniversary book. See Appendix C.

The corrections were not emphatic enough for Ren Clark however. Ren would always claim that he and he alone was the sole founder of the TAOM. He would often label himself as "Ren Clark: Founder TAOM." To some, this was simply Ren indicating that he was one of founders of the TAOM, but this is not what he meant. When he was asked, Ren would state very plainly that he was THE founder of the TAOM.

Clark put his specific claims in writing numerous times. The TAOM constitution and by-laws were revised in 1975. On the cover page attached to the revised document Clark writes:

Herman paid for all costs - beer, liquor & food. About one-half, or slightly more, of those in attendance were magicians, and the balance were Herman's friends. Herman was a big hearted, generous person but he was a person of modest means and it could be seen that such annual gatherings in the future would be a burden that one person should not be expected to bear; so I got together Jim Bowling of Houston, Ed DeWees of San Antonio, Doc Mahendra of San Antonio, Dr. Carl Moore of Austin and Ralph DeShong of Wichita Falls and suggested the formation of the Texas Association of Magicians with Herman Yerger as our 1st president - and it was from this meeting that the association was formed.

What does the above have to do with the New Constitution and By-laws? NOTHING! Except that I wish to point out - that since I opened my big mouth and suggested the formation of the Texas Association of Magicians, as usual when such things take place, I was given the task of writing up the 1st Constitution and By-laws of the association.<sup>28</sup>

In 1978, Ren Clark wrote a short history of the TAOM which appeared in the 33rd annual convention souvenir program:

***On Sunday afternoon, September 2nd, 1945, Ren Clark called together for an informal meeting, Ed DeWees, "Doc" Mahendra, Dr. Carl Moore and Ralph DeShong. Ren suggested the formation of an association of Texas magicians*** which would meet alternately in the major cities where there was an I.B.M. Ring or an S. A. M. Assembly. It was pointed out that this Conclave was larger than the first one and that the attendance would likely continue to increase each year and that it would be unfair for Herman to continue to bear the expense for the food and drinks since he was not financially able to do so. All agreed to this but at the same time, felt that this was a delicate matter and no one wished to hurt Herman's feelings; so it was decided to discuss the matter again the following morning at Dr. Moore's breakfast.

A second meeting was held Monday morning with those present on the previous day, together with the addition of Jim Bowling and one or two others. Some of the ladies came by and entered into the discussion and expressed their strong feeling that future meetings should restrict the Conclave to magicians and their families.<sup>29</sup>

Others do not agree to Ren Clark's claim. Ed DeWees' 1975 letter for example states, "I am listing the names of those who can rightfully be named as the founders of TAOM -- Doc Mahendra, Ed DeWees, Dr. Carl Moore, Ralph DeShong, Ren Clark, and Herman Yerger." Again note DeWees' letter for reference:

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix T.

<sup>29</sup> 1978 Fort Worth TAOM Convention Souvenir Program; history pages authored by Ren Clark. Italicize by this author. See Appendix U for a reproduction of these history pages.

Wives of some of our magic members as well as some of us men didn't think this good for magic. The same type of visitors again appeared at the 1945 conclave. It was at this time that Mrs. Ed (Adelaide) DeWees and Mrs. Ralph DeShong approached Doc Mahendra and Ed DeWees and told them that if they didn't do something about keeping this element of people out of the conclave, they would not attend any in the future. Doc and Ed didn't want to offend Herman, for these "visitors" were his friends and customers and we knew he did not want to form a Texas organization; Doc, Ed, and Carl Moore had suggested that right after the first (1944) conclave, and Herman did not want it. He felt this was his party and he wanted to keep it his; therefore nothing was done about organizing. But in 1945, when these two women approached Doc and Ed, the men felt action had to be taken. ***Doc and Ed called into session with the Ralph DeShong, Dr. Carl Moore, Ren Clark, Henry Schmidt, Jim Bowling, and possible one or two others that I don't remember. In any event we decided to go ahead and start an organization of Texas magicians.*** Herman was not included since we already knew of his objections. While Carl Moore was present, he wasn't in favor for he was afraid he might hurt Herman's feelings. None of us wanted to hurt Herman, but we felt the ball was rolling for magic in Texas and that we should go ahead with the hope of changing Herman's way of thinking.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever actually happened and whoever it was that actually suggested it, it is clear that the idea for a Texas magician's association came to fruition at the 1945 Austin picnic. History is also clear that Ren Clark, his committee, and attorney Sproesser Wynn (TAOM's legal advisor) prepared the constitution and by-laws that were revealed on Sunday September 1, 1946 and adopted at the second business meeting of the TAOM on Monday September 2.

Although we do not currently have any documentation to support the assumption, it may have been Ren Clark who coined the title the "Texas Association of Magicians." The title does not seem to appear anywhere in documentation until Ren Clark and his committee produced the constitution and by-laws.

Whatever Ren Clark's contributions to found the organization, he should always be remembered as being gracious to the TAOM. His contributions to the TAOM were immense. He was the General Convention Chairman for the first gathering of the TAOM outside of Austin, at the Fort Worth 1947 convention. He was one of TAOM's early presidents, 1951-52 when Fort Worth held its second TAOM convention (number seven). Finally, the incredibly generous endowment that he left the TAOM after his death is a monumental testimony as to how he felt about Texas' greatest magic organization.

## CONCLUSIONS

Anyone who has ever been associated with the Texas Association of Magicians can be proud of a fifty year plus history that has promoted the fine art of magic. It is impossible to list all of the individuals who given unselfishly to this fine organization. The TAOM annual conventions now rank among the best magic conventions in the world, and many contend that they are often better than the big IBM and SAM conventions.

There was much discussion among the leaders of the Texas Association of Magicians from about 1994 to 1997, to pinpoint a date to celebrate the organization's 50th anniversary. Based upon the organization's history, it is impossible to be emphatic about

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<sup>30</sup> DeWees 1975 letter to Colonel Beaman. Italicized by this author. See pages 3-5 of this manuscript.

a date. Any one of three years could be considered the 50th anniversary; 1995, 1996, or 1997. The TAOM archives support the following conclusions:

**For the 1995 Lubbock TAOM 50th convention:** The TAOM came into existence in Austin 1946. If this convention is counted as the first TAOM convention, Lubbock held the 50th convention of TAOM history in 1995. This conclusion supports the tradition convention numbering system.

**For the 1996 Houston TAOM 50th convention:** The first convention advertised solely under the TAOM title was held in Fort Worth 1947. Fort Worth called their 1947 convention the "1st TAOM Convention," and Houston the following year called their convention the second. If the 1947 convention was the first TAOM convention, the Houston convention in 1996 was the 50th annual convention of TAOM history.

**For the 1997 Fort Worth TAOM 50th convention:** If the 1947 Fort Worth TAOM convention was the first TAOM convention, exactly 50 years of TAOM history have passed since 1947.

**For the 1998 San Antonio TAOM convention:** If San Antonio recognizes the convention numbering sequence that was in place when they hosted the 1950 TAOM convention (advertised as convention number five) and recognizes that the numbering sequence was consistent through the 1993 Austin TAOM convention (advertised as convention number 48), then the 1998 San Antonio convention will be the 53rd annual convention of the Texas Association of Magicians.

Whatever the outcome of how future TAOM conventions are numbered, all members should keep in mind that it is not the small matters of date, time, and place that really matter. It is rather the fellowship, the enjoyment, the friendship, and the progress of magic that is central. In closing, perhaps no finer words can be said than those authored by Herman Yerger himself:

Some magicians go to conclaves to learn something new; some go to fatten their ego. After all, a conclave is the one place where magicians are assured of finding a group of like-minded people who will try to believe their tall tales--tales that would extinguish Diogenes' lantern and cause Baron Munchhausen to swoon. But those are minor reasons magicians go to conclaves. The real reason is the Damon-and-Pythias love and loyalty for each other.<sup>31</sup>

\* \* \* \*

**END NOTE:** For all future investigations regarding the TAOM convention numbering sequence, it should be duly noted that at the 1997 Fort Worth TAOM Convention Board of Directors meeting, following a brief explanation by TAOM Historian Bruce Chadwick concerning the ambiguity of the early TAOM numbering sequence, the board officially adopted Mahendra's convention numbering sequence. This official recognition adopts the understanding henceforth that the 1946 Austin picnic was convention number one and the 1998 San Antonio convention is convention number 53. It was further adopted by the board that all future conventions should thereafter be numbered consistently and

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<sup>31</sup> "Prologue by Herman Yerger," Conclave of Magic, published in THE LINKING RING, Volume 45, Number 2, February 1965, page 45.

numerically, the 1999 convention to be convention number 54, the 2000 convention to be convention number 55, and so forth.

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