

CONVENTION MANUAL

GENERAL INFORMATION:

The Annual Convention is TGOA/MGCA's most important function. The convention responsibilities of TGOA/MGCA and the HOST are closely interwoven. Each must perform certain duties. The following guides are for both TGOA/MGCA and the HOST. The Convention Site & Planning Committee chairperson, who along with the national president, will aid in planning a national convention. It is vitally important to stay in touch with this person, and review all aspects of the planning with him/her.

The responsibility for the annual convention is the obligation of the HOST, but TGOA/MGCA has an obligation to work with all phases of the convention until the last details are properly completed and executed. The HOST selects the time, the place, plans the tours, the programs, and any entertainment. TGOA/MGCA will advise the HOST of necessary business meetings/sessions and conduct same.

The HOST shall secure a facility suitable for the convention that provides space for seminars, meetings, meals, banquet, and exhibits.

TGOA/MGCA:

The decision as to which HOST invitation to approve for a given convention year rests with the TGOA/MGCA Board of Directors, as recommended by TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning Committee. The duties of the committee are defined as being: "To receive invitations for conventions and to recommend their selection by year to the Board of Directors; also, to take an active role in counseling the HOST on convention procedures."

TGOA/MGCA shall be responsible for the business portion of the convention. TGOA/MGCA will inform the HOST of the times needed for business matters. (See Addendum A). It is recommended that TGOA/MGCA send a representative to the host city, at least once, or more if needed, prior to the convention to counsel and advise them on convention matters.

HOST:

After being selected a convention HOST, a Steering Committee should be appointed, that consists of a convention chair, one or more vice chairs, secretary, and treasurer. The convention chair should appoint chairs for convention committees, who should also be members of the Steering Committee.

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STEERING COMMITTEE:

1. Set the dates for the convention. Determine if it shall to be a three or four-day convention.
2. Select a meeting site (hotel), with approval by TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning Committee chairperson. Ensure adequate rooms are available for the Executive Committee meeting; committee meetings; Board of Directors meeting; member sessions; seminars; council meetings; exhibitor/vendor shows; meals; reception and banquet. Send copy of contract to Convention Site and Planning Committee chair for approval before signing.
3. Establish a theme for the convention and present to the TGOA/MGCA Convention Site Planning Committee for approval.
4. Prepare a scenario of convention events covering: business meetings; programs; tours; meals; banquets, etc.
5. Draft an expense budget, preparatory to setting a registration fee.

CONVENTION CHAIRPERSON:

1. Appoint committee chairs. The names, addresses and phone numbers of committee chairs should be reported to TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning Committee chair and office manager at the earliest possible date.
2. Coordinate the convention TGOA/MGCA program with TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning Committee chair and the president through the TGOA/MGCA office manager. There should be no other items scheduled during the directors' meeting, members' meeting, photography slideshow or banquet.
3. Set deadlines for committee reports to be received by the convention chair.
4. Ensure committees are accomplishing their responsibilities and schedules are current.
5. Keep informed of agendas, and special requirements, etc.
6. Contact TGOA/MGCA committee chairs to determine meeting space needs.
7. If the HOST chair should become incapacitated, ensure a vice chair is sufficiently informed and capable of assuming leadership.
8. Make accommodation reservations for TGOA/MGCA president, office manager and other dignitaries.

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9. Approve all expenditures, with convention treasurer, before they are executed.
10. Counsel with TGOA/MGCA office, preferably the president, recommending he/she send thank-you letters to speakers. This would be appropriate because the convention is national in scope and would reflect TGOA/MGCA's involvement.
11. Compile a final report for TGOA/MGCA and the HOST.

TREASURER:

1. Prepare a budget based on estimated attendance and expenses submitted by committee chair. The registration fee will be determined from this budget. The registration fee needs to be established at least six months prior to the convention, earlier if possible.
2. Submit the budget to the Steering Committee and TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning chair.
3. Once a budget has been established, the treasurer should inform each committee of its allocation and advise them that approval by the convention chairperson and the treasurer is required before expenditures are made.
4. The registration fee and registration forms should then be published in the TGOA/MGCA newsletter and website at least 4 months prior to the convention (preferably 6 months). (See PUBLICITY COMMITTEE)
5. The treasurer is responsible for all monies pertaining to the convention. However, all registrations will be sent to the national office and the payment will be processed at the national office and then the registrations will be sent to the host committee. All expenditures should be audited and approved by the treasurer. Requests for payment will be sent to the national office for processing. It is the treasurer's duty to monitor expenditures closely and take steps to prevent any possible deficit.
6. The national will make up to \$5000 available for deposits, etc. after approval by the Convention Site and Planning chair as a loan to the host which must be repaid from the first proceeds received. Any losses are to be equally shared with national and the other clubs whom have donated funds.
7. Open a special convention bank account. It is recommended that three signatures appear on the bank account, with at least two signing checks. Suggested are convention chair, president of the HOST, and the convention treasurer.
8. Final accounting shall be made by the HOST convention chairperson to the Convention Site and Planning chair.

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EXPENSES:

There are separate and distinct expenses attendant to a convention:

1. TGOA/MGCA convention administrative:
 - a. Awards
 - b. Business meeting packets
 - c. Convention patches, shall be designed by the local club and sent to the Convention Site and Planning chair for approval before manufacture.
 - d. Convention travel /office manager
 - e. Identification ribbons. A list of these ribbons may be obtained from the office manager to facilitate making the registration form. The ribbons are to be attached to the name tags and must be secure enough to last throughout the convention.
 - f. Name badges
 - g. Registration forms
2. HOST convention administrative
 - a. Expenses incurred to make arrangements for the convention
 - b. Hotel accommodations for office manager
 - c. Hotel accommodations (suite) for TGOA/MGCA president
 - d. Printing and layout of official program
 - e. Publicity
 - f. Registration fee for office manager
3. CONVENTION General:
 - a. Meeting rooms not waived
 - b. Decorations
 - c. Entrance fees
 - d. Equipment/rental fees
 - e. Honorariums
 - f. Hospitality room
 - g. Meals
 - h. Speaker fees
 - i. Transportation

INCOME:

REGISTRATION FEE: The registration fee shall be determined by the HOST and submitted for approval by the TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning Committee. This is the amount to be charged to convention attendees as a package. All expenses of a convention will be borne by the registration fee, or raised from donations and fund-raisers.

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ADVANCE REGISTRATION: Reduced rates for early registration from the established convention fee should be utilized. A time limit should be set for advanced registrations.

FINAL REGISTRATION: Registration forms should include a final date for accepting any registrations. The HOST must remember that they have certain obligations to finalize transportation, facilities, and meals prior to the start of the convention.

REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS: Refunds of registration fees are the sole responsibility of the HOST. They are not handled by TGOA/MGCA headquarters. The HOST's policy regarding cancellations must be stated on all reservation applications. A specific date or number of days prior to the start of the convention must be indicated. The determination of that date relates directly to the cut-off dates for function charges.

SPECIAL TICKET SALES: The HOST convention committee should determine a policy regarding selling less than full registrations. It has been traditional to offer partial registrations, either for a full day, or for an event.

COMMENT: It is not the intent of TGOA/MGCA convention to create excess funds. Any surplus generated will be divided equally between TGOA/MGCA and the HOST.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEES

Banquet and Reception	Properties
Decorations	Publicity
Door Prizes	Reception/Registration and
Hospitality and Merchandise	Transportation
Housing	Speakers and Programs
Information	Spouse Program
Meals	Tours
Printed Programs	

BANQUET AND RECEPTION COMMITTEE:

RECEPTION: Traditionally held prior to the banquet. A receiving line is an appropriate place for officers, office manager and spouses to receive convention attendees. A minimum of one and one-half hours should be allotted. The reception should be held in a facility separate from the banquet facility.

BANQUET: The banquet is traditionally held on the last night of the convention. It is given as a testimonial of appreciation to the accomplishments by the president. The master of ceremonies should be someone who is well qualified for the position. He/she should keep the program lively, moving, and on schedule.

HEAD TABLE: Seating at the head table will be provided for TGOA/MGCA officers and their spouses; master of ceremonies (if other than convention chair); speaker; convention chairperson; individual delivering the invocation and spouses. The people

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seated at the head table should be notified in writing prior to the convention. If space is limited, delete head table seating for the vice president's; treasurer and spouses. If this option is required, ensure reserved seating is provided in front of the head table and the individuals concerned are notified. (Place cards are recommended for the head table.)

Others, such as past presidents; directors; office manager and spouses should be seated directly in front of the head table, at tables designated reserved. It is recommended that these people be told in advance that a special place has been reserved for them.

DECORATIONS COMMITTEE:

This committee is charged to decorate the hotel during the convention. Regardless of what arrangements for decorations are made, the committee should ensure that appropriate decorations are displayed. It may be necessary to obtain approval from the hotel before outside flowers are brought into the building. The hotel may have a binding agreement with a florist.

DOOR PRIZE COMMITTEE:

Door prizes/souvenirs are well received by attendees. Solicitation of door prizes is a host activity. The quality and quantity shall be a result of the tenacity of the committee. It is necessary to develop a list of businesses to contact and to visit them. Have a letter, on letterhead, explaining what we are doing and the fact that TGOA/MGCA is a 501(c)3 federal tax exempt organization, to leave with the businesses.

Distribution of door prizes can be made in different manners. Methods used in the past have included: pre-drawn and listed with place of pick up noted; pre-drawn and awarded at specific meal functions; drawn and awarded at meal functions. Regardless of distribution method selected, care should be given to time necessary to distribute door prizes.

HOSPITALITY AND MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE:

The hospitality room at TGOA/MGCA conventions has traditionally been a place to meet, have a cup of coffee, and a snack. Ideally the room should be near the center of the activities. There should be plenty of comfortable seats and tables. If the HOST is going to provide coffee and snacks, this activity must be cleared in advance with the hotel. The hotel may have legal restrictions concerning refreshments being in competition with their own food services.

Provide adequate space in or near the hospitality room for the sale of TGOA/MGCA merchandise. Preferably use of joint space is desired. Space should be ample enough to provide for display tables and racks. The HOST will provide personnel to handle the sale

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of TOGA/MGCA merchandise. Responsible for aiding the office manager in set up and sales of national merchandise: keeping accurate records of what is sold, how much and what sizes. TGOA/MGCA will provide initial money from which change is made for sales.

May also make arrangements for vendors/green marketplace. Vendors may be charged a fee and/or requested to donate an item of at least \$50 in value for the door prizes. Ask vendors to provide manual credit card machines, so that the hotel need not provide data lines.

HOUSING COMMITTEE:

The Housing Committee chair and convention chair shall negotiate a contract for the convention. This should be done at the earliest possible date and re-negotiated, if prices decline. Specific portions of the contract should be examined carefully; for example, the cut-off date at which time the hotel will no longer hold rooms; ensure arrangements are as discussed and agreed upon to meet the requirements of the convention. Hotels normally provide complimentary rooms, per number of occupied rooms.

The housing chair should be able to answer questions and assist attendees to find accommodations if the supply of reserved rooms is exhausted. The chair should locate in advance possible alternate housing, available transportation to the convention hotel, location of trailer court(s), etc. Normally hotels have relationships with other hotels that will meet the agreed convention room rate. The host shall furnish a copy of the hotel contract to the Convention Site and Planning chair prior to signing.

Hotels do not block smoking and other special needs rooms. It must be impressed on the potential attendees that hotel reservations are their responsibility and must be made as early as possible to accommodate these requests.

The Housing Committee chair will need a potential schedule when you discuss any specifics with the hotel. Err on the high side when reserving these rooms. Look at previous convention statistics to get an idea of room needs, seminars and dining space needs. Make sure the hotel has an American flag.

INFORMATION COMMITTEE:

It is necessary that information be available throughout the convention. The committee should have an information table in or near the hospitality/merchandise facility to: (1) provide answers to a wide range of questions relating to restaurants, shops, recreation facilities, convention happenings, hotel facilities/services, etc.; (2) deliver attendees mail; (3) provide a lost and found department; (4) provide a message board where registrants can leave messages for others. Maps, brochures, etc., should be available to enhance answers.

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MEALS COMMITTEE:

This committee is responsible for all meals in the registration package. The HOST Convention Committee shall determine how many meals will be included and of what nature: breakfast, luncheon, and/or dinner. The committee can then work with the hotel in determining the type of service and menu's. One of the important parts of the hotel contract will be cutoff dates for determining final counts for meals. It is also a good idea to arrange cafeteria-style breakfasts and luncheons. This will help speed serving time. Use of meal tickets minimizes the possibilities of unpaid "guests" and insufficient amounts of food being prepared, which the host is responsible for paying.

PRINTED PROGRAMS COMMITTEE:

The chair of this committee should be someone who has experience with commercial printers and/or computers. While the basic responsibility of the committee is to compile a complete convention program, listing all activities and specific programs for each day, it could be broadened to perform any printing needed by the HOST Steering Committee.

The printed program should provide all information, including:

1. Each day's activities.
2. Locations of various sessions, events, award presentations, etc.
3. All meals, locations, times, etc.
4. Headquarters will provide information for inclusion regarding Spade Club members, honor clubs, service clubs, deceased members, etc.

Printed program recommendations:

1. Consider selling advertisements in the program. The key is to determine the size and the price per page well in advance of printing; a pocket-size is recommended.
2. Have a good proofreader check both the copy when it goes to the printer and the proofs before final printing is performed.
3. Get final approval from convention chairperson.
4. Take a sample copy to two or three printers to obtain competitive bids.
5. Deliver the finished printed programs to the registration chairperson a few days ahead of the opening session, so they can be included in the registration packets.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

This committee secures necessary supplies for the convention such as microphones, tables, chairs, projection screens, piano, flag, and/or

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audio/visual equipment.

Properties Committee chair will want to work closely with the Housing Committee chair and the hotel to secure equipment for presentations, i.e. screens, electronic equipment, high speed internet access for two days, slide projectors, audio patches, equipment stands and microphones. Extra extension cords, extensions for remotes, extra bulbs, etc need to be available. Work in conjunction with the speakers and Programs Committee to determine speakers' needs. Cords in traffic areas will need to be taped to the floor. Check on set ups, distance, height, darkness of the room, etc prior to use.

The chair of photography may have a data projector which may be available for other speakers, check with that chair for availability. There is also some equipment at the national office, check with the office manager on these items. There are usually several laptops available for use during a convention.

The committee should provide a monitor for each room while a meeting is in session to take care of any problems. One of the most frequent problems is improperly operating audio/visual equipment and/or room lights. It is imperative that all equipment be checked in advance to assure proper functioning and operation. It is suggested that someone who understands these pieces of equipment sit near the speaker so that emergencies can be handled as quickly as possible.

Confirm all properties and equipment requests with hotel management in advance. Determine charges if any.

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE:

This committee will publicize the convention from the time planning is first begun until the convention is over. It is critical that ALL publicity regarding registration fees, hotel provisions, etc, (anything that is essentially contractual in nature) be approved by the convention chairs or co-chairs.

General information needs to be put on the national website as soon as it is available. The registration and hotel forms should be finalized at least six months in advance of the convention in order to maximize participation and allow attendees to make their hotel reservations as early as possible. Early reservations by attendees are very important to guarantee room availability. Room reservations can almost always be cancelled by attendees without penalty.

At least three issues (six months) of the national newsletter should be used to promote the convention; the featured gardens, described in detail; the venues for garden tours. At least 4 months prior to the convention (preferably 6 months), the TGOA/MGCA newsletter and website should carry the final registration and hotel forms, final costs, contact information, etc. The registration and hotel forms should be repeated in each

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subsequent newsletter prior to the convention. Registration forms should include a FINAL DATE for accepting ANY registrations.

The committee should provide copy for publicity in TGOA/MGCA publications through photos and informative articles prior to the convention. Have a photographer on hand for all events, to record activities for publication in TGOA/MGCA newsletter immediately following the convention.

The HOST may want to use TGOA/MGCA mailing lists for additional promoting of its convention. Consult with the office manager.

RECEPTION, REGISTRATION AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE:

This committee is to meet and welcome all convention attendees upon their arrival. The chair should organize members of the committee into teams and appoint a captain for each team. Team captains are responsible for having the members of the team on hand at the place and time designated for the team assignment. Much of this committee's success depends upon requesting specific arrival time and flight in advance from attendees.

A welcome at the airport is a sign of friendship and consideration, which is meaningful to attendees. The Convention Reception Committee must be immediately identifiable at the airport terminal. It is suggested that the greeters wear TGOA/MGCA clothing so the incoming attendees can spot the greeter quickly. The HOST may wish to provide free transportation by a personal auto of a greeter, or through a courtesy car from the hotel.

The committee arranges transportation for all features of the convention, which requires attention. It is necessary that this committee, along with the Convention Steering Committee, determine the time and amount of transportation that will be needed to transport groups in connection with events. One factor that is most important to this committee is timing. An actual physical run by car over proposed routes should be taken and times noted. If buses are used, make sure they can negotiate turns, hills, turn around, viaducts, etc.

Will register and provide confirmation of same to members and spouses attending the convention. As registrations are received they should be assigned numbers. Alphabetically arranged file of registrants shall be kept, to verify pre-registration.

PROCEDURE: A registration/INFORMATION booth, in form and arrangement best suited for local conditions, shall be set up in the headquarter hotel. General convention material should be pre-packaged.

When attendees arrive at the hotel, the registrant shall present his/her registration receipt at the registration booth and receive the convention documents and other handouts.

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It is important that everyone fill out a registration form so that the numbers for meals, name badges, arrival and departure times, etc are accurate. Share this information with the other committees. This is one of the most important pieces of information in putting on a national convention. The local committee may want to peel out registration, making it a committee by itself.

SOUVENIR PACKET: At each convention it has been traditional to provide a packet of assorted material which is distributed at the registration desk. It is suggested that a separate committee might handle the packet preparation.

The packet itself can be anything from a large envelope to a sack. Some firms may wish to provide containers at no charge or the Steering Committee may wish to promote its own convention on a container. This committee should aggressively solicit material from local manufacturers and distributors of garden-related products, for the packet. It is recommended this committee work with the Door Prize Committee to enhance each group's efforts.

At the close of the convention, all TGOA/MGCA equipment and material should be packaged and returned to TGOA/MGCA headquarters. This shall be coordinated with the office manager.

SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS COMMITTEE:

SPEAKERS: Selection of speakers, etc., is the responsibility of the HOST, not of TGOA/MGCA. It is advisable that the presiding TGOA/MGCA president and office manager be kept informed.

PROGRAMS: In planning the convention, part of the initial work must be to lay out specific time segments to cover various activities. Time is required for the executive committee meeting; directors' meeting; member meetings; committee meetings; council meetings; seminars; awards presentations; tours. This initial step is necessary in order to construct a workable convention.

TIMEKEEPER: It is advisable to assign a timekeeper to keep programs on schedule. The timekeeper should study the convention schedule to determine the time allotted for the program. The timekeeper might contact the speaker ahead of time, or place a notation on the podium explaining the signal to be given one minute before his time is up. This must be done without attracting attention being intended to keep the program on schedule rather than to restrain the speaker.

ALTERNATE PLANS: Alternate plans should be made for every event. It is recommended the HOST Steering Committee schedule one meeting to discuss actions to be taken if they have to alter/cancel an activity.

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SPOUSE PROGRAM COMMITTEE:

This committee is in charge of special arrangements for spouses. In many cases, spouses will want to participate with the members in tours and assemblies, so do not plan to segregate them constantly. Most TGOA/MGCA conventions have featured at least one separate tour or event for spouses.

It is recommended that this committee search for innovative activities.

Spouses are not universally interested in shopping, taking a tour of a food preparation kitchen, or a fashion show. The committee might consider a bus tour of the city; making theater tickets available as an alternate activity; schedule free time, perhaps for a beauty shop appointment, or resting.

TOURS COMMITTEE:

This committee works out details for tours, and works directly with the Transportation Committee. Divide the tour groups so that everyone is not in the same place at the same time. If buses are used, assign a HOST member to each bus, give the host and the bus driver each a set of directions and time schedule. The HOST member should visit ahead of time and be familiar with the route and places to be toured and be able to point out places of interest along the route. Keep the time schedule realistic and remember most of the convention members are on vacation and they want to relax and enjoy themselves. Don't rush through a tour. Don't overcrowd small gardens.

Tour buses should be air-conditioned, comfortable vehicles with toilets. It is ideal if they have PA system. A specific time-schedule for arrival must be arranged with the provider, with some leeway as to the number of buses needed.

People need to know how to identify their bus when they return. The bus host should be an outgoing, friendly person, who can talk well. The host should know the city, gardens, route, and know how to keep a crowd entertained. The host should also know when it is time to turn off the PA and let the people rest.

It is strongly recommended that private gardens be made available, in addition to public, commercial and institutional gardens. The time for viewing gardens should NOT compete with any other events offered by the convention, as it is unfair to the garden owners and participants.

COMMENT:

The information in this manual is not gospel, but is offered as a guide to accomplish an eventful TGOA/MGCA convention. Supplementing this manual, assistance is available

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from the TGOA/MGCA Convention Site and Planning Committee chair, plus the office manager.

The goal is achievement of a productive and enjoyable gathering of gardeners. We do it together, not alone.

ADDENDUM A

SUGGESTED CONVENTION MEETING SCHEDULE

PRE- DAY ONE:

1. Planning Committee - AM - 2 Hours
Conference table seating (10-12 persons)
2. Executive Committee meeting - PM - 3 Hours
Conference table seating for seven (minimum)
Side chairs for pre-meeting guests

DAY ONE:

1. Committee meetings - AM - 1 Hour
Minimum six meetings
Conference table seating (6-8 persons)
2. Seminars
3. Directors' meeting - PM - 3 Hours
Head Table (7 persons)
Podium w/PA
Class Room seating (50 persons)
4. Photography show after dinner

DAY TWO:

1. Tours
2. Dinner

DAY THREE:

1. Member/Delegate First Session - AM - 2 hours

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Head Table (7 persons)
Podium w/PA
Classroom seating - (check registration
for number of persons)

2. Seminars
Theater seating
(Request presenter equipment requirements)
3. Banquet – sit down meal

AWARDS: Awards are scheduled, usually at meals, throughout the convention. Coordinate with the committee chairperson and office manager to determine which awards are presented at which meals.

JOHN J. KESSEN
Chairman, TGOA/MGCA
Convention Site and Planning Committee

updated: 10/27/04 ajf

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approved: 11/05/04 Exec. Board

changes: 02/17/05 ajf

p.3. Expenses. 1.c. & 1.e., both said Convention patches, omitted 2d one. Changed, his to his/her, he to he/she, and Chairman to Chairperson

updated: 12/17/06

approved:

Updated: 01/26/07

approved:

Updated w/change on page 3: Added new paragraph 6. Changed numbering on paragraphs 6. and 7. Approved at BoD mtg, Nov 7, 2008.

Updated w/change on pages 4.2d – remove insurance requirement; page 4, Income – remove paragraph 1; page 6, last paragraph above Housing Committee – change to vendors may be charged a fee; page 12 – delete Insurance paragraph; approved Exec Committee 10/29/2010.

Updated 1/6/11: Removed Club after Host. Redid Suggested Convention Schedule.

Updated 10/3/16: Removed administrative assistant title and replaced with office manager. Added TGOA/MGCA headquarters receives the registrations, pays the bills, etc. for the annual convention/board meetings.