



# Member Tips

## Growing Rotary Membership



Membership  
Newsletter of  
Zones 27/28

October, 2007

### Re-MEMBER-ing, Bringing Back Former Members

Betsy Demaray, PDG District 6290 - Michigan, USA & Ontario, Canada

As your club is looking for membership growth, one of the most obvious and most overlooked source of members are those people who once belonged to Rotary. So where do you find them?

Your club secretary has the ability to pull a list of every Past Rotarian from your club off the RI website. So what do you do with this list?

First of all, eliminate the obvious...those members who have died or moved to other communities. This leaves a list of people who at some time in the past wanted to be Rotarians and who still live in the community. These folks were once invited to join Rotary by another Rotarian, they accepted that offer and they were part of your club – maybe for a year, maybe for twenty years.

These past Rotarians might have been true Rotarians or they might have been Rotarians in name only. The circumstances in their lives at the time determined how they fit into Rotary, how much they participated and also determined how and why they left. People leave for different reasons.

Maybe their job changed and they couldn't make the meetings anymore. Maybe they lost their jobs and couldn't afford Rotary any longer. Maybe they didn't get along with someone in the club at the time. Maybe their family put pressure on them to be home more and drop out of activities. Maybe the club wasn't doing anything that interested them at the time. There are a lot of reasons why people might quit Rotary.

***But times change.*** Now is the time to review that list of former Rotarians who are still around in your area. Maybe they have settled into that new job and now have the time. Maybe their children are older and they can devote more time to community service. Maybe, just maybe, they would like to be asked back but are embarrassed to say anything because they quit the club once.

The following letter is an example of what you might send to those former Rotarians that you would like. A project like this needs the support of your entire board and your membership committee and needs follow-up, but may just lead to re-growth in your club. Give it a try.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

*This letter is to invite you to rejoin the \_\_\_\_\_ Rotary Club. I know you were a member in the past and were a great addition to the club during that time. Circumstances were such that you chose to leave us, but we are hoping that those circumstances have changed and you might consider joining us again.*

*The Club still meets at (time) on (day), at (location). Our meetings are fun and informative and a great opportunity to network with fellow leaders in the community. At this time we are active in a number of community service projects, including \_\_\_\_\_*

*The more involved folks we have, the more impact we can have on our community. We invite you to come to (lunch, breakfast, dinner) on us, at your convenience and rekindle the friendships and acquaintances you made in Rotary...and make some new ones. One of the members of our Membership Committee will be giving you a call to personally invite you to (lunch, breakfast, dinner).*

*One of my favorite quotes is "Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." Please consider making time to be part of Rotary again. We look forward to seeing you again.*

*Sincerely,*

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*Club President*

### **Reinvigorate to Retain**

Roderick "Rod" W. Thomson, PDG District 5050 - British Columbia, Canada

Discussions about Rotary membership were, for many years, focused on recruitment. The thrust of many Membership Committees was to identify and recruit new members to Rotary Clubs. Attrition was recognized as an issue. However, the resolution of the issue was simply to recruit more actively. In recent years, there has been a new emphasis on retention of Rotary members. Rotary Clubs are encouraged to recruit, orient and engage new Rotarians while providing service and fellowship activities for the entire club.

Senior Rotary leaders are encouraging clubs to strengthen their organization by focusing on the Four Avenues of Service to ensure the experience for new and long-term is meaningful and rewarding. At the Presidential Membership Conference held 10-11 August 2007 in Vancouver, Past RIBI Pres. John Hockin challenged attendees to do more individually to enhance membership opportunities. John showed me the text of an article, which ran in the Link Magazine in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, D-1270. I believe the answers to the questions posed below will help you understand how you and your Rotary colleagues view your club and your service.

*Suppose...*

There comes a time when we all need to reflect on our situation, be it family, work or Rotary; a time to take stock in order to reinvigorate ourselves. So let us do a self-analysis of our Rotary involvement by playing the "suppose" game and answering a few simple questions.

1. Suppose the membership in your Rotary club was limited to 20.  
**Would you be in or out?**
2. Suppose membership in your club was only good for one year and re-election depended upon the service you gave to your club, your community and the international during that time.  
**Would you be re-elected?**
3. Suppose you were called upon to tell why you thought the club should keep you as a member.  
**Do you have a record of helpful participation to offer in your defense?**
4. Suppose every member of your club did just as much as you are doing.  
**Would your club be one of the most active in the district or would it disappear into obscurity?**

By analyzing the above 4 questions you should be able to tell whether you are a RINO (Rotarian In Name Only) or a TIGER (Totally Involved Generous Energetic Rotarian). Having carried out this

personal self-analysis, it should be a simple matter to know whether you need to reinvigorate yourself in Rotary or whether the time has come for you to move on.

Once you do this self-analysis, spend a little time considering how you can become a TIGER, or if you are one, how will you help others in your club to Tiger up! You, your club and Rotary will be the better for it and you might be the one who starts a new retention program without even trying. Just suppose what would happen then.

### **A Look at the New Rotary Website**

Dennis Dinsmore, PDG, District 6330 – Michigan, USA & Ontario, Canada

Have you visited the Rotary International website ([www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)) since October 1, 2007? The site has a new, clean look and feel which makes it more user friendly and enhances Rotary's image as a leading service organization.



An often heard criticism of the old website was that it was difficult to find relevant information. The new site addresses that issue by making all major sections, Service & Fellowship, Students & Youth, Members, etc., tabs on the homepage. Selecting a tab brings up a sub menu of the topics under that section. For example, to find best practices information on member retention, click the Members tab, select "Running a Club" and then "Membership Development Best Practices"...3 clicks!

The search engine has also been greatly improved. Displayed in the upper right hand corner of every page, it is a useful tool for finding some of the more obscure topics. Suppose you are looking for the current mileage reimbursement rate from RI, enter "mileage" into the search box and click the little spy glass icon. Also, for us tired-old-eyes folks, the search engine box includes a gadget for changing the font size on any page.

Also worth note is the "Member Access" link. This is the private portion of the website which must be accessed with a login and password. Upon secure login, every Rotarian can access information about his/her own personal history with Rotary including Foundation giving and Paul Harris Fellow status. Depending on the user's role in Rotary, a wealth of additional information is also available in this section. If you do not have a login and password, click on the "Member Access" link and follow the instructions under "Register Now".

All Rotarians and non-Rotarians will find the new site helpful and interesting, district and club officers will find it essential. Take a look today at the new <http://www.rotary.org>

### **Conferences inspire Rotarians to boost North American membership**

Dean Golemis, Rotary International News - 11 October 2007

Speaking at a series of conferences in the United States and Canada, RI President Wilfrid J. Wilkinson warned that Rotary club membership is declining in North America and the Caribbean and called on Rotarians to recruit and retain new members.

The seven Share the Magic of Rotary Presidential Conferences, held in July and August, were organized at Wilkinson's request by current and past RI directors, other senior leaders, and Rotarians. The events were

targeted to Rotarians at the club and district levels to promote membership development and growth in North America and the Caribbean. More than 2,900 Rotarians attended the meetings in six U.S. cities – Philadelphia; Nashville, Tennessee; South Bend, Indiana; Denver, Colorado; San Jose, California; Fort Lauderdale, Florida — and Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Though Rotary club membership is increasing worldwide, it's lagging in North America.

To reverse the trend, conference chair Ron Beaubien, 2007-08 RI Membership Development and Retention Committee chair and past RI director, promoted the "member get member" approach: Every Rotarian in every club should recruit one new qualified member each year.

Beaubien said Rotary and other traditional service organizations, including Jaycees, Kiwanis, and Lions, are losing members even though volunteerism is on the rise among 25- to 54-year-olds. He called for "progressive" changes that will give Rotary a more flexible structure to attract younger people with busy lives. "New members will not join boring Rotary clubs that just meet and eat," Beaubien said.

Wilkinson encouraged all clubs to use a new-member sponsor pin and follow through with a strong mentoring program until new Rotarians become a committed and active part of their clubs.

Other conference speakers addressed aspects of membership recruitment and retention and new club organization. Participants also studied current demographic and lifestyle trends, best practices and success stories, and methods for properly informing and inspiring new members.

At the Vancouver conference, RI Director Monty Audenart explained that a newly chartered club needs about three years to stabilize and become solvent.

"A new Rotary club, just like any Rotarian, needs four things to retain them in Rotary: fellowship, an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution, ongoing education, and recognition," Audenart said.



### Your Membership Support Team

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