



# Member Tips

## Growing Rotary Membership



November, 2008

### Off to a Good Start

From "New Member Orientation", RI pub 414en

*Editor's Note: Club membership committees can get new members off to a good start by organizing a memorable induction ceremony. Rotary's "New Member Orientation" publication, available for download at [rotary.org](http://rotary.org), has some great tips for the induction ceremony. We have included sample induction speeches at the end of this issue.*

The day that a person becomes a Rotarian marks the beginning of many years of involvement and achievement. This event warrants a memorable and meaningful induction ceremony to welcome the new member to the club. Invite the club member's family to attend, and encourage all members of the club to participate in welcoming the new member and spouse. Allow enough time after the formal ceremony for personal introductions to every member of the club.

Consider the following suggestions as you plan your ceremony:

- Conduct the ceremony in a special facility other than the club's regular meeting place to add to the formality of the occasion.
- Decorate the room or area appropriately with your club banner and other Rotary items.
- Encourage current members to speak to the group about their commitment and pride in Rotary.
- Ask inductees to prepare a short speech highlighting their personal and professional achievements.

### Why a Squeaky Wheel?

By Pete Snider, RRIMC, Zone 26

A long time ago, I was having lunch with some of my fellow workers, and the conversation came up about how difficult it was to get fast service at the car dealer repair shop. We all were discussing when the best time to go to escape the long lines of the people waiting to get their car fixed. Jim commented that his father never had to wait to get his car fixed, he always went straight to the service advisor and promptly got his car in for service. We all were incredulous. How could anyone always get this kind of service?

We asked when could he go to the dealer to get his car right in to service. "He always goes on Saturday morning." Jim replied.

"Saturday Morning!", we all exclaimed. "Why that's the busiest time at the dealership!"

"Exactly" explained Jim. "My father started complaining publicly and loudly as soon as he pulled up to the service entrance. He made such a fuss that the service advisors rushed him into the service bays as quickly as possible so he wouldn't make all the other customers feel like the dealer was treating their customers badly.

### D.K. Lee's Membership Challenge for 2008-09

- Ten Percent (10%) Net Increase in Membership per Club;
- Formation of Two (2) New Clubs per District;
- Total Net Membership of 1,300,000 Rotarians at the end of RY 2008-09.

Jim's father was a squeaky wheel. He wanted prompt service and he got it. I don't want to suggest that we create a bunch of rude Rotarians just to accomplish our goals, but we need to remember the old adage that in many cases the squeaky wheel gets the grease. (I think Jim's Dad wanted a lube job.)

How can we expect our Rotarians to respond to the challenge of recruiting more members, keeping the ones that we have, and chartering new clubs if we aren't bringing them the message publicly, loudly, clearly, and often. We, the membership teams of our Districts need to take the message of membership to our members on a silver platter. We need to keep the message in the forefront if we expect any results. If we don't keep membership in the forefront, it won't be.

Do your club leaders know the expectations that you have for them? Have they checked the progress on their membership growth for their year?

A reminder on a regular basis may stimulate them to action. Encourage your club leaders to bring up membership at each and every meeting and we'll soon be better serving our communities.

### Membership in a Slow Economy

By Judi Beard Strubing, RRIMC, Zone 23

We're hearing reports that some areas of North America are experiencing resignations from Rotary due to the economy. Because the reports we get from RI are often delayed, we have no way of checking to see if this is true for the districts in Zone 23. (We're also advised that another aspect of this is that we may experience a pull back in giving to TRF.)

This is one of those critical times to work together. I'm asking seven things of you...

1. Please check the district records to see if the economic situation is affecting membership numbers in your district. Are there areas that are being particularly hard hit? Industries that are being affected?
2. Talk with the clubs about sensitivity to those who might be feeling the pinch because of company cutbacks. Offer ways to help the clubs identify those who may potentially leave and be sure those members feel their membership has value and a special meaning to them - i.e. engagement and involvement. (Businesses may also begin to cut expenses and may not subsidize their employee's dues and/or sponsorship of Rotary events. This could have a huge effect on our clubs. )
3. Consider the "New Generations" or "After Five" model in setting up new clubs, which can mean a less expensive approach to meals and venue. Some clubs may also wish to consider converting to this model.
4. Be creative! Dues are not the big expense – food, fines and contributions tend to be what our members find expensive. Consider some of the following:
  - 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the month – “brown bag” at the business of one of the members – make it a Vocational Day.
  - Meet and eat with Interact Club at school – good for connection and communication with our young future Rotarians and school lunches are cheap!
  - Picnic at a local park during the summer.
  - Are there less expensive meeting venues? How about Churches or other town meeting halls? Meals can be “brown bag” or Sub sandwiches.
  - Talk with the restaurant about simpler lunches, i.e. soup and sandwich.
  - Re-evaluate “fining.” Ask each member twice a year for their estimate of personal club fines for that period. Encourage “Happy Dollars” as an alternative.
  - Look for hands-on projects to give members alternatives to just writing checks.
  - Consider setting up “Rotary First Harvest” as a district/club project – great for hands-on and community involvement.

- Consider joint project with County Extension (or whatever group in your community) to teach young families how to do things for themselves: gardening, canning, sewing, home repairs, carpentry (all the things our schools are no longer able to teach.)
  - Big Foundation Gala a tradition? Consider instead a "Subsistence" Dinner (based on a typical Third World meal) with a minimum donation for dinner, but a great program inviting contributions to TRF. Money goes to TRF instead of to a fancy meal and evening for the attendees.
5. Friendship and socializing is an important part of Retention. Plan simple monthly events, i.e. "First Friday" – keep it inexpensive and be creative.
- BYOB drinks and appetizers
  - Potluck dinners
  - Desserts and games
  - Super Bowl Chili Party at one of members' home (or several homes if your club is larger.)
  - Mystery dinners
  - High School ball games
  - Costume parties
  - Access to a farm? Hayrides, barn dance
  - Pumpkin Carving party
  - Christmas Tree cutting with hot cocoa and cookies afterward
  - Divide into 12 groups and each group draws a month for which they're responsible in coming up with a fun and inexpensive social event.
6. Keep your radar tuned to any signs of difficulty.

7. Call on me for assistance, information or ideas -- that's my job!

If we approach this in a proactive way, we may cause a member to put resigning from Rotary or cutting on Foundation giving further down on that list of where they will cut corners!

*An idea to counteract attrition from D5160:*

*Concord, CA Rotary has set up a program called "Shoulder to Shoulder" for proven (their word) Rotarians who have fallen on hard times. The term is six months, renewable one time for another six months. Dues and meal costs are waived, in turn the Rotarian has to commit to attendance and participation in club projects and activities. The thought is that the loyalty will be rewarded when the participants get back on their feet.*

## Your Membership Support Team

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## Appendix: Sample Induction Ceremonies

### Sample 1

Fellow Rotarians, it is my privilege and pleasure today to welcome into membership in our club \_\_\_\_\_, whose name was proposed by \_\_\_\_\_. The proposal has been reviewed in accordance with our club constitution and bylaws. I now ask \_\_\_\_\_ (sponsor) to come up here with \_\_\_\_\_ (proposed new member).

\_\_\_\_\_, we now proceed to admit you into membership in the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_ and to the friendship of Rotary throughout the world. It has already been explained to you that the ideal of Rotary is service. Our principal motto is Service Above Self and the object of this club and all Rotary clubs is to encourage and foster this ideal as a basis of worthy enterprise. You are to share in this effort.

You have been approved for membership in this club because we believe you to be a worthy representative of your vocation, interested in the ideals of Rotary, and willing to do your share in translating these ideals into action. You have agreed to accept the obligations of membership in this club and to obey this club's constitution and bylaws.

Now I have the pleasure of asking your proposer to pin on the Rotary emblem, which we hope you will wear with pride.

Welcome to the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_.

Fellow Rotarians, I am happy to present to you Rotarian \_\_\_\_\_, our newest member.

### Sample 2

Rotarian \_\_\_\_\_, will you please bring forward your nominee for membership in our club.

\_\_\_\_\_, you have been selected by the members of this club to hold active membership and are hereby loaned the classification of \_\_\_\_\_.

The principles, responsibilities, and obligations of Rotary have been explained to you, and you have expressed your willingness to become a Rotarian. No one is eligible to become a Rotarian unless, in his or her business or professional life, he or she endeavors to practice the principles of goodwill and service.

The members of this club have invited you to join them because they believe you are already actualizing these principles. In electing you to membership, we are doing more than taking you into our fellowship — we are making you a trustee with us of Rotary's ideals. Knowing you to be a Rotarian, the world will henceforth judge Rotary by your conduct.

Membership in Rotary is an honor and privilege, and every privilege has its corresponding obligations. One of the special obligations of membership is regular attendance at the weekly meetings; it is the basic method of fulfilling the principle of fellowship as well as a way of representing your vocation.

Every member is expected to perform his or her share of club and community service, and the committees of the club will afford you opportunities to serve. For the rest of this Rotary year, I would be pleased if you would serve on the \_\_\_\_\_ committee.

Last, but by no means least, is our ideal of friendship. As you expect to receive, so give. May you be stimulated by the friendship you find here, and may we in return know you to be an added source of strength to our club.

Will the members please stand.

It is my privilege and honor to induct you as a member of the Rotary Club of \_\_\_\_\_. I also have pleasure in pinning on the emblem of our worldwide association. Wear it always and with pride.

Fellow Rotarians, I present to you Rotarian \_\_\_\_\_, and I charge you not to fail in your duty by giving \_\_\_\_\_ your friendship and helping to make his/her membership useful and happy.