



# Member Tips

## Growing Rotary Membership



Membership  
Newsletter of  
Zones 27/28

August, 2008

### The 2007-08 Rotary Year in Review

By Jim Ives, PDG, RRIMC Zone 28

Well, another year has gone by and we have had varying success on our membership efforts. I am pleased to announce that Zone 27 showed an overall gain in membership of 89 members. That is a great start to turning around the negative trend we have had for a number of years. Zone 28 experienced an overall decrease of 127 members, but I think there is much to be said in looking at those numbers. The biggest issue was a decrease of 3 clubs in Zone 28, while Zone 27 decreased by one club. There were a few districts that had sizable decreases in membership for various reasons, but losing clubs will cause those numbers to jump.

So, what is the answer? I think there are a number of answers that need to be addressed sooner than the Charter being pulled. President D.K. Lee has asked each District to grow by at least 2 new clubs. Why is that? First, there is always the possibility of losing clubs in Districts. Because of that, your membership loss is minimized or even erased by the addition of a club. Second, adding clubs can breathe life into existing clubs. There is an excitement and exuberance when going through the process of adding another club. The new members are fired up and raring to go, unencumbered by past "traditions" or older members that seem to like their role as naysayers. It involves existing clubs helping these new clubs get off the ground and allows for the feeling of helping when they mentor the newer members. And third, there are plenty of opportunities in all our communities to reach out to people who would be willing to serve, but may not be able to attend existing club meeting times or days. New clubs can help expand the availability of Rotary as well as help address more needs in our communities.

Adding new clubs, opening our eyes to people in our communities that would be worthy of wearing the Rotary pin, and making sure our members are all engaged in the club and projects will go a long way in increasing membership. Everyone is on the Membership committee, and we all need to work to bring in new members.

Your membership efforts this year will be supported by the same group as last year with the exception of adding Gerry Jackson of District 6380. Gerry has offered his services with regard to extension. If you have questions about adding new clubs or would like help establishing new clubs, Gerry is more than willing to assist. 10% net growth and 2 new clubs per district is a tall order, but if everyone works to make it happen as we did with the polio initiative, we should be able to make our goal. Thank you for your efforts, and we look forward to assisting you in making your Membership Dreams Real!

### Benoni Aurora's Yearlings Program

By Rais Pearson, Past President Aurora Rotary Club, D9300

*Editor's Note: The following tip comes to us from a club in South Africa, District 9300. PP Rais Pearson made this presentation at the district 9300 Membership Seminar in Johannesburg in October 2007 and has been published in the Zone 10A Membership Energizer newsletter. We can share it with you. Thanks to June Webber, RRIMC Zone 10A and Bryn Styles, RIMZC, Zone 22, editor of 'Membership Matters.'*

"Membership growth is function of four things: Recruitment, Retention, Extension (starting new clubs) and Membership Development, but it is the development of members that is the key to membership. Why is it vitally important to educate new members?"

So that they can become immediately involved in club activities, they feel more comfortable interacting with experienced members at club meetings and fellowship functions, they're in a better position to assume club responsibilities in each of the Avenues of Service, they are better equipped to be more successful in recruiting new members.

### 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.

The next question is: "Why is it important to educate existing members?" An "educated" Rotarian is an involved Rotarian and an involved Rotarian remains challenged, motivated and enthusiastic. We all know that the high turnover rate in Rotary is one of the most pressing membership issues facing Rotary. Education is fundamental to retaining current members because an involved Rotarian is much less likely to lose interest in and leave an active club.

Education starts by orienting members before and after their induction. Benoni Aurora Rotary Club has gone a step further by developing a training program for all new Rotarians in their first year of membership. This is called their Yearlings Program.

This program started in 2001 as part of the club's education and retention strategy. The objective was to inform new and "not so new" Rotarians of the traditions of Benoni Aurora and the workings of Rotary at Club, District, and at an International level. It also provided the opportunity for the development of acquaintance enabling new Rotarians to more quickly develop a feeling of belonging.

The program is attended by the current Yearlings in the club and any other member who feels that they wish to better inform themselves on the topic that is being discussed. Yearlings are also encouraged to bring their Rotary Ann or Rotary Partner to the meeting. The club has proved that it helps Rotarians to settle in more easily when their Ann or Partner also has a good understanding of the workings of Rotary.

The program is run on the 3rd Thursday of every month at the convener's home. It is casual and informal gathering typically made up of Yearlings and other interested members and is often supported by the President, Incoming President and the Chairman of the Membership Committee, starting at 7:00pm and is finished by 9:00pm. The presenters are SME's (subject matter experts) e.g. past and / or current Directors, District Committee chairpersons, etc.

At the meeting members are encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of day-to-day Rotary life in Aurora relating to the Weekly meetings, Committee meetings or District events. In addition to this they are also encouraged to bring any matters that they feel needs to be explained and/or discussed to the attention of their Sponsoring Rotarian or to the Yearling's convener.

The program and its content are published in the club bulletin and the convener sends out reminders to the Yearlings by way of email before every meeting.

The content of the program is:

July	No Meeting	Jan.	Vocational Service
Aug.	Structure of Rotary and Members' Obligations	Feb.	New Generations
Sept.	Rotary Foundation and Rotary "events"	Mar.	Community Service
Oct.	Club Services	Apr.	International Service
Nov.	Administration and Cost of Rotary	May	Fundraising
Dec.	No Meeting	Jun.	Rotary Information – all levels

Since 2001, 44 Yearlings have gone through the program of which 8 have served as Board members. Considering that there are 60 members in Aurora, there is no doubt that this program achieves its objectives. Perhaps this Yearlings Program could work in your club. Why not try it?

## Hi, would you marry me?

By Carlos Früm District 6440 Membership Committee Chair

"Hi, would you like to marry me?" is as silly a question as "Hi, would you like to be a Rotarian?" yet some of us are still trying to court new members this way.

There is a process, not unlike courtship or good salesmanship, that will secure an "I do!" from a candidate.

### **The First Date**

The first step is to get a date. Invite somebody to your club's meeting. This is quite simple if you help the decision by giving two alternative dates, for example "Is this Wednesday or the next one more convenient to you?" The operational idea is to avoid a question that can be answer by yes or no. People will find it easy to say no to a single date and can give a very plausible reason. It is more difficult to give negative reasons to two alternatives.

The reason for the invitation must be stated. For example, "I would like you to meet some of our members." Or "We have a couple of programs coming up that you may enjoy."

## Getting To Know The Candidate

At the meeting seat the candidate between you and a member that can provide good conversation and answer questions about the club and Rotary. Plan this step in advance and provide your helper with background information about the candidate. The questions must be broad so the candidate has an opportunity to talk about his or her feelings about service. "What type of service organizations have you been involved in the past?" or "What have you learned about Rotary so far?" are two examples.

## When Will We See You Again?

The next step is trying to ascertain interest. Again the question must request a choice between alternatives: "Would you like to come back next Wednesday for the program on "X" or would you prefer the following week for the program on "Y"?"

It is a slow process but the steps are sure, methodical, and prevent waste of time and effort. One can determine early on if there is interest and if the candidate understands the commitment to service. The information about Rotary in the club must be spoon fed so as not to be overwhelming.

## Asking For the Hand

After three or four visits the club and the individual know about each other and you can proceed to make a formal offer. A well designed orientation process will ensure that the candidate understands the commitment and helps retention in the critical first year. Much like planning a future together before the wedding!

## The Wedding

Would you have a wedding without relatives? We hope the candidate will make Rotary a lifetime commitment and we should make the induction an event to remember. Family, special friends, and even a business associate or two should be invited. The presence of the District Governor or a governor representative will add weight to the proceedings. There should be a master of ceremonies with a well prepared monolog, a photographer, and the appropriate documentation, name tag, and pin. The idea is not to induct a member but accept a new Rotarian. Make it lightly and so it will be taken!

Remember that, except for Paul Harris, everybody else was asked to attend a Rotary meeting!

# Your Membership Support Team

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