



# Member Tips

## Growing Rotary Membership



Membership  
Newsletter of  
Zones 27/28

March, 2009

### How Are We Doing?

By James Ives, PDG, RRIMC Zone 28

*Editor's Note: Please see the membership report at the end of this issue for current statistics by district.*

As we look at our Zone, we see that our membership is slipping at a rate greater than we expected coming into the year. However, there is a similar trend in other Zones as well, which is unlike previous years. It is easy to get trapped into thinking that the economy is causing the losses when there are some that are leaving because of economic hardship. However, in business we try to manage by fact, and in Rotary, many times the facts are hidden.

One example of hidden facts came to me at the All Ohio PETS. It was mentioned to me by an Assistant Governor that there are clubs that still don't know about the change in attendance requirements, which took place 2 years ago. He said that he still has clubs that don't know that there is no longer a Senior Active status, that attendance was reduced to 50% from 60%, and that members have a leeway of 2 weeks either side of the missed meeting to make up. It is easy to assume that when a member leaves the club saying it is for economic reasons that we presume it is because of the cost of Rotary. One of the mistakes we make is not looking at all aspects of the member's interaction in the club. It is easy to cut expenses of things we no longer find value in. If the member is no longer engaged in helping on fundraisers or service projects, or doesn't understand what the purpose of the club is, it is an easy expense to cut. Golf clubs are finding this same challenge as people realize they aren't using the club as much as they use to, and feel membership isn't worth the expense.

The same applies to Rotary membership. We need to look at how we do business in our clubs. Examine what benefit we bring to our members, and if we are meeting their expectations. Many clubs are starting the Visioning process as a way to renew their focus, achieving buy-in from the members in the process. Others are putting together focus groups to enhance projects they are currently doing, or starting new clubs as a way to start fresh with new unencumbered enthusiasm.

The important thing is to do the analysis. Look at yourself in the mirror and readjust your way of doing things when needed. Make sure your members know what Rotary is so they can develop a relationship with it. If one truly knows Rotary, it will sell itself over and over again. Don't fall into the trap that everyone is tight on money in a hard economy. There is a majority of your community that is not associated with Rotary. And while we may have an unemployment rate of 10%, that means we have an employment rate of 90%. So, determine if your glass is half empty or half full.

### Making Up the Easy Way

By Fred J. Luckenbill, PDG 2003-04, District 6420

Education, attendance and active participation are keys to the maintaining of an active Rotarian. The "book" requires at least 50% attendance by all Rotarians unless excused, on an approved leave of absence or the 85 rule is invoked. Former Rock Falls Rotarian Linley White changed communities and employment and could have applied for a leave of absence until settled in his new community and involved with a new Rotary Club. Instead he continued his perfect attendance making up on line via E-clubs. Below are excerpts from Linley's experience in making up via E-clubs. Make up occasionally via an E-club and share a new concept or a new program with your club.

### 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.

"Accessing the online club [rotaryclubone.org](http://rotaryclubone.org) through the Rotary6420.org website link became my weekly adventure for most of the make ups. The routine is very simple. You go onto the eclubone website and select two or three programs to review. Some are short videos and others are a short read. When the programs are completed, you log into a makeup form page where you type in your secretary's email address, your email address, and the titles of the programs you watched or read. You are asked a couple of simple questions and hit submit at the bottom of the page. Your club secretary will receive a copy of your make up and you will also.

The programs are very diverse in their topics. I learned about the history of Rotary, water projects, testimonials from several successful club programs, personal and professional development. You are virtually guaranteed to learn at least one new idea that can help you personally or professionally.

For a total of seven months, I was able to attend a virtual meeting and maintain my relationship with the family of Rotary. I still communicate on a regular basis with the members of the Rock Falls Club, and my wife and I are very happy with our new club in Hickory Hills, Illinois. The Internet minimizes the effect of geography and provides a means where every Rotarian can maintain perfect attendance if they so desire."

Thanks Linley for sharing your experience,  
PDG Fred, District Membership Chair

### Paired Clubs

By Geoff Ellershaw, RC of Woodville, District 9500, Australia

*Editor's Note: I found this excellent idea in an Australian membership newsletter. Australian Rotary Districts are huge in geography but have about the same number of clubs as our districts which means the opportunity for interclub fellowship and projects is rare. They came up with a great way to remedy this with the paired club concept. Maybe we could put a similar concept in place by pairing clubs between districts or even other zones.*

In D9500 there are great distances between Clubs. DG Roberta Waterman decided that a system of Club Pairing would be a start in providing emotional support. Not only this, but a system of home-stays could be offered (we know how well this works for international travelers) to country folk who needed accommodation for emergency hospital or other city visits.

The District covers from Alice Springs to the south – almost all of South Australia. The ratio of city to country clubs is about 2:1. Therefore Roberta grouped in many cases, two city clubs with each country club, and began the pairing at the start of her DG year. This was to give city Clubs and Rotarians a better understanding of what rural Clubs and their members were experiencing with the effects of the drought.

The initiative was embraced immediately and the results have been spectacular and far ranging. Only 5 months into her year, Clubs are sharing projects (some doing Matching Grants together); are consulting and sharing ideas for local community projects, have increased their friendship bases and are creating social activities together. Last week the R/C of Gawler Light and the R/C Port Pirie held a one day 4WD picnic through off road terrain and starting at Clare (a midway point) using local knowledge and contacts, and invited outside clubs to share the fun. It was a huge success.

The importance of emotional support and ties is very important. Talking about, and facing the realities of drought and its repercussions with fellow Rotarians is opening up hope and real assistance in many ways. Rotarians are famous for providing International humanitarian support – but it can begin at home, and it should begin with Rotarians.

Roberta will be delighted if other arms of our wider community in Australia can use the model to eliminate unnecessary waste of lives that have given much to others in the past, and who as confessed volunteers will go on to help others in the future.

## Reaping The Benefits...Alumni!

By Judi Beard-Strubing, PDG, RRIMC, Zone 24

We invest lots of time and money interviewing and training young people to represent us in other countries as GSE team members, Ambassadorial Scholars, Peace Fellows and University Teachers. We ask them to fill out evaluation forms of their experiences – including a question about whether or not they'd join Rotary if invited (and their overwhelming response is "Yes!") ... and then we ignore them, aside from perhaps inviting them to give a program at one of our club meetings.

Are these not the very type of qualified individuals we're seeking for membership? They're service oriented – they've seen Rotary's work first hand – they're young (!) – they've already been "vetted" by the simple fact that they went through an interview process to even get the assignment in the first place.

Yet – we seem more intent on looking for the "ideal" people that may not be so easy to reach – those that may not even know what Rotary is – those that may not understand service at all.

In researching this topic among the districts within our zones, I found that lack of real follow-through with our Rotary Alums is common. In fact, it seems to be common throughout the Rotary world.

### **Do our Rotary Alumni want to join Rotary?**

(From the March 2006 "Report on the Recruitment of RI and TRF Alumni as Prospective Rotarians")

*"Current program participants and (past) Rotarian alumni were asked about their interest in joining a Rotary club either now or in the future. A large percentage of both current program participants and program alumni are interested in joining a Rotary club. However, the interest in joining Rotary is generally lower for former participants than current participants, perhaps indicating a loss of enthusiasm after leaving the program as years pass with minimal or no contact from Rotary. As more years pass after leaving the program, fewer and fewer alumni remain interested in joining a Rotary club."*

### **Startling Statistics:**

- Only 2.9% of existing Rotarians are Alums
- 58% of our clubs don't recruit Alumni
- 84% program participants are interested in Rotary!

### **How Do We Change This?**

Appoint a strong District Alumni Committee designated to

- keep in touch with the Alumni
- maintain current contact information of all Alumni (old and new)
- advise clubs which Alumni reside within their areas
- go with the newly returned Alumni to visit clubs, introducing them and following up with clubs regarding the Alumni's interest in membership
- refer Alumni who move to another district
- follow up with the clubs as well as the Alums

Consider offering a one or two year "scholarship," perhaps in the form of reduced dues to returning alumni. Let's get them in the Rotary Family while their experience is still fresh! The contributions they will bring will be well worth a little more investment.

And let's not forget the Youth Exchange and RYLA students as well as Interactors and Rotaractors we so carefully cultivated with the anticipation that we were creating Rotarians of the future!

Recruiting ALL those qualified for Rotary membership is certainly still our goal – we need all the qualified hands possible to do the work of Rotary – but let's start with the easy ones – our Rotary Alumni – who we already know are abundantly qualified, interested, and educated about Rotary!

## Membership Report Zones 27 & 28

District	Zone	2007 - 08		2008 - 09			
		Net Inc / Dec # Mbrs	Start of Club Yr. July 1, 2008		Midterm Club Yr. February 28, 2009		Net Inc / Dec # Mbrs
			# Clubs	# Mbrs	# Clubs	# Mbrs	
5650	27	37	45	2,391	46	2,434	43
5950	27	-14	60	2,957	60	2,900	-57
5960	27	49	64	3,310	64	3,305	-5
5970	27	65	56	2,977	56	2,932	-45
6000	27	-1	62	4,235	62	4,227	-8
6220	27	-51	41	1,972	41	1,931	-41
6250	27	-44	60	3,347	60	3,357	10
6270	27	-9	58	3,318	58	3,276	-42
6420	27	16	49	2,234	49	2,197	-37
6440	27	47	70	2,659	70	2,643	-16
6450	27	-6	65	2,316	65	2,268	-48
6290	22/28	-92	61	3,163	62	3,144	-19
6310	28	11	32	1,481	32	1,472	-9
6330	22/28	-6	60	2,143	60	2,105	-38
6360	28	-10	58	3,015	58	2,958	-57
6380	22/28	-5	53	1,920	53	1,887	-33
6400	22/28	22	50	1,805	51	1,798	-7
6540	28	17	55	2,790	55	2,767	-23
6600	28	-21	67	4,071	67	4,001	-70
6630	28	19	56	2,379	56	2,368	-11
6650	28	-43	48	2,170	48	2,135	-35
7090	22/28	-63	73	2,790	73	2,742	-48
7280	28	-16	43	1,453	43	1,431	-22
7300	28	-15	49	1,286	49	1,301	15
7330	28	30	43	1,321	43	1,278	-43
		-83	1,378	63,503	1,381	62,857	-646

## Your Membership Support Team

<b>Zone 27</b>	RRIMC	Terry Mueller, PDG	6201 N. Wyndwood Dr. Crystal Lake, IL 60014	815-459-2176 <a href="mailto:roterry@sbcglobal.net">roterry@sbcglobal.net</a>
	RIMZC	William "Bill" Rust, PDG	4701 Clark Ave. White Bear Lake, MN 55110	651-429-1913 <a href="mailto:brust@rustarchitects.com">brust@rustarchitects.com</a>
	<i>Districts 5640, 5950, 5960, 5970, 6000, 6220, 6250, 6270, 6420, 6440, 6450</i>			
<b>Zone 28</b>	RRIMC	James "Jim" Ives, PDG	1130 Livernois Troy, MI 48099	248-588-7005 <a href="mailto:jives@att.net">jives@att.net</a>
	RIMZC	Dennis Dinsmore, PDG	PO Box 273 Clio, MI 48420	810-687-7870 <a href="mailto:dennis@dinsmoregroup.com">dennis@dinsmoregroup.com</a>
	RIMZC	John "Jack" Young, PDG	3303 Twain Circle Brunswick, OH 44030	440-759-4000 <a href="mailto:jack1villa@aol.com">jack1villa@aol.com</a>
<i>Districts 6290, 6310, 6330, 6360, 6380, 6400, 6540, 6600, 6630, 6650, 7090, 7280, 7300, 7330</i>				