

# Membership Retention

## Orientation

Orientation is necessary to motivate a member about the organization and the organization's work. Concentrate on providing organizational structure, promotion of annuities and health care for retirees, member benefits, and local community service. Remember that organizational history is much more important to those that helped make it, but much less important to new members who were not involved. Ask new members what they would like to know about the local unit, the district and TRTA. A special meeting for new members might be scheduled to initiate orientation. Use current members to cite facts, data, information about TRTA at meetings.

## New Member Involvement

We are often advised that the best way to keep new members is to involve them in a job. Give them ownership by asking them to accept certain responsibilities in the local unit. This is good advice if the new member wants to become actively involved. Certainly the local units can benefit from additional working members. Consider the opposite position. **Some retirees don't join because they don't wish to attend meetings or accept volunteer responsibilities.** Take care of either situation by being candid with new members. **Tell them their involvement is needed and welcomed, but they need be only as active as they wish.** Also, consider offering the first year free or offer reduced membership for new recruits.

## Magnetic Meetings

Plan meetings for different interests throughout the year. Remember that local units now have members whose ages range from fifty to more than ninety years. That presents a difficult, but necessary challenge in program selection. No member should expect to be excited about every presentation. However, if there is a continuous lack of programs which are satisfactory to certain segments of the membership, expect to see a reduction in attendance by that group. Are both women and men considered when planning programs and activities? Are the meeting times, days and places satisfactory for the most members? Do these factors automatically prohibit certain members from attending? Would a meal meeting attract more members or would that cause some to stay away? One way to plan for the wishes of most of the members is to survey the membership once a year. Ask the questions that will provide the needed information. **Plan fun or light activities from time to time, membership involvement, or different scenarios such as a sports game, visiting a historical site, etc.**

## Community Service

There is no better way to get to know another member than working together on a project. There are many needs in every community. Working with the TRTA Children's Book Project is a wonderful opportunity. The list of other available projects is limited only by the extent of our leaders' imaginations. This volunteer involvement also counts for CVS hours!

## RIFF Tips For Meetings (Relevant, Informative, Fun, Friendly)

- Vary the meetings. Do not do the same thing over and over and expect different results.
- Younger retirees are knowledgeable and communicate electronically by email, web sites, blogs, Face Book, and Twitter. The Internet provides you with free marketing opportunities for your association 24/7, 365 days a year!
- They like to work at their own pace and look for flexibility in their attempt to balance work, family, and volunteerism.
- Keep an up-to-date web site and change the content often.
- Vary your recruitment tactics to include networking at local gathering places. They like networking at least once a month.
- They are looking for a cause, benefits, or legislative answers for their membership dues.
- They want progressive leadership. Leaders must delegate effectively. Poor leadership is the #1 reason why volunteers quit.
- Adopt a local cause to be known for where your members participate. Wear name badges and publicize your participation so everyone can identify your association with the cause. This enables your members to get recognition for a job well done.
- Provide some kind of snacks for a future teachers meeting at the school. Let them know that a state and local associations exist and leave newsletters and contact info with them.
- Publicize meeting calendar.