

## Getting & Keeping Membership

Guilds have been around for a long time often with a proven way to do things. However, the quilting world has grown and evolved over the past half century. New and younger members are needed to maintain and to advance the world of quilting within our own communities.

Once a person joins the guild, how do we keep them happy and active?

There are many reasons why individuals join a guild:

to discover the vast world of quilting, to learn how to quilt, to improve their skills and to learn new ones, to make new friends who share the same interests, to work together by creating quilts for others, to network, and ??

New members are often the best influence for other people to join the guild too.

### What do we offer?

- ❖ Regular meetings
- ❖ Workshops & Retreats
- ❖ Intra-guild activities
- ❖ Opportunities to display their quilts – Show & Share, Quilt shows
- ❖ Newsletters
- ❖ Bus trips and information about other quilting events
- ❖ Philanthropic Opportunities
- ❖ Mentoring partnerships
- ❖ Potlucks and other kinds of meetings other than speakers / games
- ❖ Formal and informal undertakings
- ❖ Build a strategy – it's an entire guild function. Work together to come up with a plan. Why do people want to join? Are you offering things they are interested in? What are the "new" people looking for. We can't do what we did in 1980. We need to bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- ❖ List from handout plus things like library, junior memberships, youth sew-ins,
- ❖ **Comments From the guilds**
  - Each one teach one – Camarillo – generally a child
  - Guild has 1 12-year old; some younger children are interested but not old enough so they invite them to the sew-ins.
  - Guild (Desert Quilters of Nevada) has a youth membership – free; no minimum age as long as they have a sponsor; working on programs for the younger members; can have a quilt in the quilt show (junior category); the mentor brings the child into one of the friendship groups. No separate meeting for the kids. Kids go to the "circles" (aka friendship groups). They have 15 circles. Insurance question about junior members.

### How do we spread the word about our guild?

- ❖ Planned recruitment strategy and methods
- ❖ Printed resources at both quilting and community events, quilt/fabric stores, libraries.
- ❖ Local print media and community information boards,

- ❖ Social media – Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blogs, YouTube,
- ❖ New membership button easily accessed on website
- ❖ Personal contact information to answer questions
- ❖ Ensure that you have guild information brochures/postcards at local businesses
- ❖ Add Next Door to your social media
- ❖ Belong to SCCQG to help spread the word about your guild
- ❖ Build your presence in the community
- ❖ **Comments From the guilds**
  - Partner with your local quilt shop
  - Adult education quilt classes
  - Guild has a business card; stamp on the back indicates guest can get in free with the business card
  - Some guilds give those cards to all members to pass out.
  - Senior Centers – adds info to newsletters.
  - Bookmarks with guild information and program information on the back side.
  - Try to do it all.
  - Local craft shows – guild has booth; sells tickets to opp quilt; hand out guild info as well
  - Retirement communities
  - Church flyers

### **Welcoming individuals to our meeting.**

- ❖ Initial contact and welcome / introduction and welcoming gift
- ❖ Welcome Buddy
- ❖ General atmosphere before, during, after meeting, casual to overwhelming
- ❖ Seating arrangement inviting for new and old members
- ❖ Opportunities to mingle
- ❖ Simple application form
- ❖ Membership expectations/requirements
- ❖ Length of business portion of meeting, before/after speaker,
- ❖ Number of tables for various drawings, raffles, and .....
- ❖ Structured meetings that are exciting and everyone has chance to participate
- ❖ Input from members as well as officers valued and thanked
- ❖ New Member Tea
- ❖ Membership chairs provide a “buddy” for the meeting
- ❖ Welcoming gift
- ❖ Follow up with visitors
- ❖ Before, during and after meetings – organize things so it’s not overwhelming
- ❖ Seating arrangement – group seats so that it encourages talk; round tables
- ❖ Opportunities to mingle
- ❖ Be inclusive
- ❖ **Comments From the Guilds**

- Greeter – find them someone to talk to; makes them feel welcome; makes them feel like they are wanted back
- Beach Cities does a twice a year New Members Brunch; invite them to bring a quilt; other guilds do New Members Teas
- Explain what's going on so that new members understand each item discussed
- Ventura MQG – ask current members to escort a new member; give the escort a check list of things to share with the visitor/new member
- Acacia – went to two different guilds meetings – one – welcomed and guided around; second – no attention whatsoever; joined the first one and then was ignored
- Inland Empire QG – ask visitors to share information about themselves;
- Citrus Belt QG – door prizes limited to members with name tags; as a visitor, they should receive a door prize ticket too.
- Pine Needles – guild glossary that explains all the various projects; handed out to new members and visitors
- Acacia/QBS – cliquishness – no difference with chair set up; better to ask the cliques to help make the visitors feel welcome; solve the problem with the whole guild, not just the board
- Opportunities vs. requirements as to things to do in the guild
- IEQG – have a quick session with the visitor, new member after the meeting (or before) to orient them (aka like WW does it.)
- TLC – Abbreviate the business meeting to get to the speaker quickly. Show and Tell at the end.
- Simi Valley QG – change up the order depending on the speaker; generally show'n'tell, etc. At the end.

## **Ways to involve new members**

- ❖ Ask what are new members interested in learning or doing?
- ❖ Encourage ways for newbies to get involved beginning with simple task.
- ❖ Learn what skills and abilities they bring to the table
- ❖ Incorporate new ideas they have as a valuable part of the team
- ❖ Team them up with experienced members
- ❖ Join small groups based on interest or geographic location
- ❖ Have volunteer opportunities within and without guild that appeal to them
- ❖ Survey members to gain their input from speakers to fundraisers to .....
- ❖ **Comments From the Guilds**
  - Santa Barbara – brunch for new members; partner with membership and various program chairs; at the brunch find out what they want to do and help place them where they are needed.

- Desert Quilters of Nevada – keep volunteers involved; they have pins with holes in the bottom; work 4 hours and get the pin, then volunteer time is rewarded with additional stars for the pin.
- Desert Quilters of Nevada – add to the membership form areas where they might volunteer; then follow up and ask them to do it.
- Ask them to volunteer and they will . . . most of the time.

### **Benefits of new members.**

- ❖ Members bring fresh skills and experience that can be used to benefit a guild
- ❖ More members mean that you can do more types of enterprises as a guild
- ❖ Members each have their own quilting talents that can inspire fellow quilts
- ❖ Fresh ideas that can entertain or add to the social life of the guild
- ❖ Contribute ideas and develop new goals that further the organization's objectives
- ❖ Build relationships among members – from strangers to friends
- ❖ Their skills can benefit the guild
- ❖ Fresh ideas for the guilds
- ❖ Social Network Team
- ❖ Create an environment where they feel comfortable to volunteer
- ❖ **Comments From the guilds**
  - TLC Quilters – everyone needs to feel like they have a purpose; management teams seem to need to “do it themselves”; chair should form committees and get the members involved; consider them apprentices for the position

### **Retention**

- ❖ Keep members’ attention by regular communication – emails, newsletters, phone calls, yet watch the quantity/quality of announcements and length
- ❖ Stay attentive and friendly
- ❖ Follow-up at membership time or if there is a fall off of attendance
- ❖ The experience your members have with your guild determines their level of engagement – how to maintain positive engagement?
- ❖ Membership feedback of all kinds positive or need for improvements
- ❖ Diversity of programs that cater to all types of quilters – traditional, modern, art quilters, piecers, appliqués, fiber artists, ....
- ❖ Use age differences to your advantage and show diversity on promotional materials