

Notes from Joint Membership/Communications Round Table
October 22, 2020

Facilitated by Joan Graham and Carol Thomas

(Notes from October 10, 2020 Communications & Membership Round Table incorporated.)

Membership and Communications (ie. guild websites, newsletters and social media) have a synergy during the COVID19 pandemic. Guilds are struggling and often succeeding in changing operations to meet the current challenges of maintaining the structure and charter of their organizations. Zoom meetings have taken on the burden of putting on meetings, lectures, workshops, philanthropic endeavors and social gatherings for our guilds. Discussions centered around how to engage members via these tools.

Some guilds have reported drops in membership and meeting attendance as well as the unintentional exclusion of some members due to a lack of interest or knowledge in the technology of Zoom and/or other electronic media or personal bias. In contrast, some guilds report the return members who have moved away from their respective guilds and attendance by some who no longer wish to attend in person.

How do we engage the maximum number of guild members for the purpose of continuity of our organizations?

- **General meetings** – opening up to non-members in order to increase membership. Some charge visitor fees or limit number of visits before paid membership is required. Options for Zoom meeting were discussed including registered meetings, invitations, waiting rooms, etc.
- **Incentives for membership renewal and participation** –
 - Spending some guild monies to hire a widely known speaker/teacher to entice members to renew (Westside Quilters)
 - Random drawing from renewals for a prize (basket of donated fabric, etc.) – (Marguerite McManus, Quilters Connection).
 - Increase contact via personal phone calls or emails,
 - Weekly eblasts
 - Sew-ins – hold at different times and days of the week. Poll members to see who wants to meet and sew, when.
 - Virtual Happy Hour
 - informal coffee break meetings with activities such as sewing room tours, layer cake challenge, show and tell, etc.,
 - a holiday quilt show “challenge” where the members hang quilts from front porch, they are photographed and made into a power point for voting at the general meeting (Coastal Quilters),
 - Virtual lectures and workshops
 - Donated fabric sales to generate income
 - Personal phone calls to members who are not coming to Zoom. Contact former members who have moved away and invite them to come back to the guild.
 - Hold a socially distant tailgate meeting in a (safe) parking lot. One group did this at the church where they meet. Another group brought chairs to a

corner of a large parking lot, near a Starbucks and met. It was also convenient to a Whole Foods with a public bathroom (no public restrooms at Starbucks then).

- Social Media –
 - Regular posts to **Facebook** and **Instagram** with interesting photos (member quilt projects especially), tutorials and links to interesting websites, online workshops, QALs (quilt a longs), blogs, current philanthropy donations and ongoing projects and virtual quilt exhibits and shows
 - **Website** - Make sure all pertinent information is up to date and interesting to members and outsiders looking to join a guild.
 - **Newsletter articles**, show and tell, philanthropy projects, etc. Keep up with all the “normal” activities of your guild and remain flexible with the details. Highlight members and their activities – everyone likes to be acknowledged.

- Attracting younger (and other) members (Quilters Connection)
 - Community outreach via press release in local papers with articles about the activities of your guild
 - Reach out to non-quilting mask makers who may decide to take the next step
 - Offer mentorships to budding sewers

- How to get it all done?
 - Guilds that are reaching out to members on a **frequent** basis, not just once a month at the general meeting, are finding more engagement and involvement on the part of members.
 - **Enlist teams** of people – don’t try to do it all yourself. Personally ask people to be on the team(s). They usually will say “yes”.

Remember that even with the best efforts, not everyone is going to participate in a virtual world. The goal of guild leaders is to help the majority of our members to adapt to these changing times. We will not be able to please everyone – ever - but we can try our best to fulfill the mission of each of our guilds *for most of us*.

Additional discussions included elections, Zoom polls, setting up Instagram accounts, etc.,

Some helpful Website Links:

www.quilters-calendar.com (Marguerita McManus) – Various roundtable discussions and information sharing with members from quilt guilds throughout the US and Canada

www.globaquiltconnection.com (teachers/lecturers) – Meet the teacher presentations and upcoming webinars and workshops tailored to your specific group

www.canyonquilters.com (excellent newsletter)

www.mailchimp.com (free email templates - newsletter, etc.)

www.themodernquiltguild.com