

# Membership Ideas

## *Young Serrans in the Lake Area*

By: Penny Perkins

The "Lake Area" of southwest Louisiana is geographically located in Calcasieu Parish. More specifically, near the Texas border in the town of Lake Charles which is the parish seat.

There are many reasons for citizens of Lake Charles to be proud of their heritage. Lake Charles is a laid-back town and has a population of 70,000. The predominant religions are Roman Catholic and Baptist. The leading employer in the area is the petro-chemical industry—an industry which shields this section of the country from dire economic slumps.

One of the most exciting developments to those of us concerned about priests and religious for our future, is the formation of the young Serran Club. The club has had the benefit of Annie Metoyer as its leader. Annie, a dynamic Serran charged with this responsibility by the Serra Club of Lake Charles, has really made the formation of this group a priority in her life. She has the knack! Armed with information about what a young Serran Club was supposed to do, Annie went right to work. She motivated the St. Louis High School administration to allow her time with the students—time she used to explain the Serra purpose and the need to promote religious vocations. She explained the important role each student plays in helping to bring about an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

### **The benefits of a young Serra Club**

These young people responded enthusiastically and immediately began to ask for new ways in which they could help. They have instituted a special Mass, once a month, offered for an

increase in vocations. This Mass is held specifically to urge participation by other school students and local Serrans. It is their belief that all



*(from left): Paul LaRocca, Annie Metoyer, Andy Anderson*

of these efforts are an outward sign to God, designed to show the seriousness of our need.

The young Serrans are also an inspiration to the older counterparts in our club. Their energy level and attitude elevates all who have the good fortune of being around them. They are extremely eager to know more about their religion,

what has happened to cause the vocations decrease in the United States, and how they can help. They are eager to take on leadership roles and put together some positive steps to reverse the situation which caused us to be in such a state of anxiety about the future of our religious.

The young Serrans try to attend one of the regular monthly meetings of the Lake Charles Serra Club and are ready and willing to help at the drop of a hat when asked to participate in any activity. These are the Serrans of tomorrow. These are the people who will have to face the problem of the shortage of priests. They are up to the task. **Every club should take the initiative and invite young people to share in the Serra mission; you won't be disappointed with the results.** We are proud, we are very grateful, and we are blessed.

Thanks Annie and thanks to all of the young Serrans who have answered the call.

*Penny Perkins has been a member of the Lake Charles, LA Serra Club for four years.*

## The Four Step Membership Drive

There are a number of programs that have been endorsed by the USA/Canada Membership Committee, including those where (1) **members nominate their friends and acquaintances** to be considered by membership (Two Today for Serra; 12-Step Program) and (2) **invitations are made to all members of Parish Committees to consider Serra** (Target Active Parishioners). Most recently, success has been achieved for clubs of less than 60 members who have a cooperative chaplain. It is called the Four Step Membership Program: 1)Membership Involvement 2)Invitation 3)Orientation 4)Follow-up

### Step 1. MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Ask your members to furnish the names of at least two prospective members (with one under the age of 50.)

Collect the names of the nominees within two weeks of the announcement letters. The chairperson then calls all members who have not responded three days prior to the deadline to remind them of their obligation.

### Step 2. INVITATION TO PROSPECTS

Select prospects from the submitted names who are then invited to attend the Orientation Meeting. The club president signs a letter extending an invitation ten days before the meeting. The follow-up phone call by the club chaplain (assisted by a Serran) is made three days prior to the meeting to conform their reservation. **The phone call from the chaplain is a very important part of the program.** More people will be open to a phone call invitation from him than from a lay person.

Schedule a date for a second Orientation Meeting about a month after the first one. The caller can then advise of the alternative meeting and promise to furnish details of that meeting in the next couple of weeks.

### Step 3. THE ORIENTATION MEETING

The meeting held to explain what Serra is all about should be handled by the "Team" who are

your best presenters, giving the history of Serra, its objectives, its functions and how it benefits both the Church and the individual members.

The agenda:

6:00 p.m.	Hospitality
6:15	Dinner (not elaborate)
6:35	Introduction to Serra
6:40	Video "Serra-A Family Album"
6:55	Internal Programs (Team member)
7:00	Vocation Programs (Team member)
7:05	Club Operation (President)
7:10	Spiritual Benefits (Chaplain)
7:15	Questions and Answers

Keep it informal and don't try to get signed applications at that meeting. Encourage them to think about it and **don't create pressure.** Hand-out material should be available.

### Step 4. THE FOLLOW-UP

The team contacts the prospects by phone **within three days of the meeting.** Team members are responsible for obtaining the return of invitations from those who wish to join and invite the new candidate to the next meeting.

The President then sends a letter to all new candidates, welcoming them into the Club and **immediately assigns them to a committee of the Club** (get them involved right away).

### RESULTS

Where the program was first tried, 38 names were submitted in the first year, resulting in 11 who joined. Over the next four years, 190 total invitations resulted in 51 new members. Hand-outs and sample letters are contained in the Four-Step Membership Drive packet, available from Serra International. (1-800-488-4008). If the four steps are followed (no substitutions, please) it is guaranteed to work.

Claude Jakes was chairman of the Serra Third Club Partner Membership contest. Charles Daley is the governor of District 51. Both are members of the Lima, Ohio Serra Club.

# Membership Ideas

By: Mary Anne Coor

## A Serra Membership Drive for Women

While we talk of the shortage of vocations, let's also remember that we have a shortage of women in Serra. Is there a connection? Are we shutting out the possibility of increased religious vocations when we fail to encourage women to join Serra?

### Women and Vocations

In the early days of Serra, the problem was the need for prospective seminarians and nuns to get the proper education. Much of the work of promoting vocations was done by two groups of women: 1) the nuns in schools, and 2) the mothers of those in school. The close relationship between the two had a great bearing on the growth of the call on these young people.

### Women in Serra

Restoring this communication network can be assisted by bringing women into Serra. It was the nuns and the mothers on the vocation team that helped make popular the aspiration of a young person to become a priest or nun, or devoting one's life and living doing work for charity.

Women who join Serra can help in getting an effective Vocations Communications System: 1) into the home and to mothers where the idea of vocation develops and where it is nurtured to fruition; 2) to the Catholic schools to bring programs that will initialize an interest in religious vocations among children of all ages; 3) bring the mission of Serra to fellow parishioners.

The materials needed to do this are already in existence. What remains is finding messengers to bring these programs to our young people. Wouldn't it make sense to enroll women in Serra to help administer the Ministerial Potential Discerner Program and other vocation programs to the schools and parish youth ministry programs?

### Seek Women Members

Ways your club can bring more active women into Serra:

1) Announce a club meeting for membership to discuss a membership recruitment campaign.

2) At the meeting, hand out candidate nomination forms asking members to list the names of ten women with the potential to join Serra—ask for phone numbers.

3) Ask members to include their spouse on the list.

4) Announce a "women only" membership drive (followed shortly by a "men only" drive).

5) Plan "sales talks" to encourage women to join Serra. What projects would especially appeal to women? Any new projects?

6) Invite the women to a special "Guest Day."

7) Follow-up with a phone call and invitation to an orientation meeting.

### Solving the Mystery

If your membership has remained the same or declined you should check membership materials to find a program to work for your club.

The answer is to continually build each year by using a program that brings results - and to put emphasis on women members.

"If your membership has remained the same or declined, you should check the membership materials to find a program to work for your club."

Mary Anne Coor is a Past-president of the Washington, D.C. Club and a member of the USA/Canada Membership Committee.

# Membership Ideas

By: Thomas Benson, Trustee

## New Clubs Foster Vocations

Luis Jimenez Franco has set a goal, "More Serra Clubs in order to promote and foster vocations."

### Committee Targets Parishes

The District Extension Committee selects enthusiastic Serrans who will commit to getting a new club organized. They target "hot" areas of receptive Catholics. Pick a club area center which is easy to drive to. Then identify the parishes within a 15 minute drive of that center. A map of parish boundaries, church addresses, and pastors' names are available from the diocesan office.

Ask the diocesan vocation director and pastors for recommendations of a chaplain. Your new chaplain will help identify Catholics in his area. Select a captain of the organizing committee to lead the team. Assign target parishes to each team member.

Ask the bishop to endorse your plan to put a Serra club in the target area and to appoint your selection to be the first chaplain. Include the bishop's endorsement in your communications with the target parishes. It will open doors for you.

### Contact the target parishes

Each team member is assigned a parish. Ask the pastors to give you the mailing labels of active parishioners, members of the parish council, lectors, eucharistic ministers, ushers, R.C.I.A., parish volunteers, and school volunteers. Collect additional names from the Serra club in the area. With the advice from the target residents, select the meeting times for the new club—breakfast: suburban work centers; lunch: work centers; dinner: suburbs. Pick the day of the week to meet (try a Saturday morning). Decide on the restaurant or church hall.

### Send the Invitations

Schedule the first meeting (Founder's Day) at the club's regular meeting place and time. Prepare the invitation on the parish's own letterhead and deliver to the pastor to sign the letter. Mail it with the bishop's letter and a R.S.V.P. slip. Telephone candidates before the meeting.

Plan a tight program of no more than 1 1/2 hours. Start with a videotape from Serra International, then the "History of Serra," "Spirituality," "The Need for Priests," and "How a Club Works." Have Serra literature available (free from S.I.). Encourage them to sign membership applications.

### Start regular meetings

Within two weeks of the Founder's Meeting, begin regular meetings with top speakers and programs. Run it like your own club meeting. Send a newsletter monthly. Organize committees to work on vocation and membership programs right away. Encourage each new guest to sign an membership card.

It is vital for experienced Serrans to control the meetings until Charter Night or for six months. Call for volunteers as editor, treasurer, and committee chairs. Place on these officers the responsibility to each bring in a new member. You are quickly over 25.

### Apply for a Charter

When the club has 25 members it can apply for a charter. Make Charter Night a big event with mass and dinner, inviting the bishops and the pastors.

Congratulations, you've formed a club!

# Membership Ideas

## Serra Breaks Record Starting New Clubs

by Thomas Q. Benson  
Serra International Vice President

A record 43 new clubs were started through the Serra world in 1990-91, surpassing the previous mark of 29 clubs. The 1990 International Membership Committee has set a goal of 45 new clubs and a number of countries exceeded their goals, including Italy (goal: 4, new clubs: 11) and USA/Canada (goal: 11, new clubs: 12).

### International Expansion

For the first time in Serra history, more clubs exist outside the U.S.A. than the total of American clubs. This trend continues on a 2:1 to 3:1 ratio annually.

### First Clubs in Former Communist Country

Italian Serrans from the Serra Club of Trieste sponsored the formation of a club in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, Yugoslavia. It is the first Serra Club to be established in the changing Eastern European countries. The second club is planned for 1992 and the Italian National Counsel meeting will be held in Warsaw, Poland. Serra International Vice President Luis Jemenez France of Mexico has visited bishops in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland.

### Rome Provides New Encouragement to Serra

The head of the Congregation of Catholic Education, Cardinal Pio Laghi, told the Serra International Board of Trustees at the Rome meeting that his office will intervene with the Papal Nuncio in any country where Serra needs a letter of representation to the local Bishop. This creates tremendous opportunities for Serra International in every Diocese.

At the 1991 Synod in Rome, Serra President Giuliano Rizzerio of Italy was given the honor of addressing the Bishops and Pope John Paul II on Serra's vocation activities, thus significantly advancing the reputation and acceptance of Serra by the Bishops.

### Higher Goals: 74 Potential Clubs

Setting goals for each country helps spur formation activities in 1991. The new goals for 1992 include Australia (3), Brazil (10), Ghana (2), Italy (4), Mexico (9), Puerto Rico (2), United States (20), and Venezuela (3).

## U.S.A./Canada Sets Goal of Twenty New Clubs in 1991-92

by Thomas Q. Benson  
Serra International Vice President

The 1991 Chairman of the USA/Canada Membership Committee, Bob Fornero, has set a goal of twenty new clubs by 1992. Achievement of this record-breaking target will result from a number of factors:

### Increased Leadership by Governors

The improved intensive Governor Spring Training Course focuses on the Governor's critical role in naming the Extension Committee, contacting the Bishop and leading the formation of new clubs. This role was re-affirmed in the outstanding program presented for District Governors at the International Convention at Washington, D.C. attended by 50 DG's. *Each Governor's goal is one new club in each district every three years.*

### Cooperation with Bishops

Serra International hosted a reception for Bishops at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore in 1991 to inform them of the benefits of Serra Clubs. Coordination with the Canadian Bishops conference is proceeding.

### Impact of Extension Committees

Significant success has resulted from an active Extension Committee in each district. Appointed by the Governor and chaired by an enthusiastic Serran, the Committee selects the best areas for new clubs, searches for a dynamic Chaplain, contacts the target Parishes for names of candidates, and hosts the formation meetings.

### New Award for Starting Clubs

The International Board has established a new award for those Serrans who have started two or more clubs: "Jan Berbers Award for a Serra Club Extension." The society of these active Serrans will encourage them to form new clubs.

### You Can Help Break the Record

Every Serran can become active in spreading the Serra movement by organizing a Founders Committee to form a new Serra Club. Share in the tremendous satisfaction of bringing Serra to Catholics, clergy, and religious.

# Membership Ideas

## *Suggested Remedies for Common Club Ailments*

By Walter Naughton

*Past governor of District 10, member of the Houston, Texas Serra Club,  
and past member of the International Nominating Committee*

Is your club afflicted with aches and pains or general listlessness? The cure may be simple! Your club can make substantial progress in improving leadership, membership, attendance, club finances, vocation programs, and speaker programs by examining the symptoms, making a diagnosis, and taking the proper dosage of a sensible prescription.

**Symptom: Low Membership** - To retain members and attract new members, a club must be attractive and desirable to join. Diagnose whether your club has good leadership, well-planned and well-constructed meetings, and a convenient and pleasant meeting place and time. Do you have a steady spiritual program (frequent liturgies, 31-Club program, etc.) and an on-going program of interesting speakers?

Assuming most of the above is in place, organize a concentrated annual membership drive. Think in terms of "Two Today for Serra" and seek women members. Don't forget to conduct an orientation session for new members and prospects.

**Symptom: Low Attendance** - Activate your members! Do not assume that your members will attend meetings simply because of attendance requirements--make sure that the meetings are *really* worth attending. Examine the reasons why your members choose to not attend meetings and take positive action to get them involved. Get their families involved, too. Foster motivation by encouraging attendance at district/regional and international Conventions. Don't overlook the power of a personal touch created by a telephone call committee at meetings and events.

**Symptom: Weak Leadership** - Remember, club officers are managers. Choose the best people available to be your leaders and avoid the rotation system.

An effective antidote to weak leadership is an application of appropriate, meaningful club goals for accomplishment each year. Don't let your club leaders squish alone in their positions; rather, make sure that everyone's club rallies around them and the club goals.

**Symptom: Weak Speakers Program** - The cause of this malady is not lack of available interesting speakers.

The cause is a lack of creativity in planning your speakers program. Consider these sources for excellent speakers: local colleges and universities, parish or diocesan directors of religious education, scouting and altar server leaders, laypersons in diocesan offices, prison and hospital chaplains, directors of social service agencies, staff members of the diocesan vocations office, panel discussions on faith and moral issues, etc. Don't overlook the quality of your own members as potential speakers!

Many excellent videotapes are available from Serra International and other sources. A videotape has the potential of being part of a worthwhile program if the showing is accompanied by group discussion or action. Beware of showing a videotape or playing an audiotape as the only element of a program, because the lack of personal interaction often leads to boredom!

**Symptom: Weak Vocation Programs** - One of the most important responsibilities of all Serrans is to actively work for vocations. A club that is *not* doing this is not fulfilling its potential as a Serra club. Work with your diocesan vocation office, any religious vocation offices in your area, and use Serra International's Vocation Portfolio, which offers a wide range of ideas and projects that will assist your club in its vocation efforts.

Consider: "Explore" and "Insight" programs, Life Awareness Retreat programs, Called By Name, Altar Server activities, Scouting activities, 31-Club, Parish Vocation Committees, birthday and anniversary cards to priests and religious, World Day of Prayer for Vocations activities, vocation poster contests for grade schools.

**Preventative Medicine** - The greatest protection against the variety of illnesses that can befall a Serra club is the realization that each club is an important part of the worldwide network of clubs whose purposes and goals are all essentially the same: to promote and foster priesthood and religious life and to fulfill each member's Christian vocation to service. Share ideas and success stories. Learn from each other.

Never allow yourself to feel isolated! With district, regional, and international conventions, and with all the materials available from the Serra International Office, there is no reason for any Serran or Serra club to be weak or uninformed.

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# Membership Ideas

## New Clubs Now...

### Start With an Extension Committee

By John Marcello

Serra Club extension and membership is primarily the responsibility of the district governor. The Serra International staff and committees are resources for the governor and the clubs. The District Council (Governor, Governor-Elect, club presidents) should form an Extension Committee to provide the much-needed direction to sustain systematic long-term Serra membership growth in the district, serve as a catalyst for all membership and extension programs, and as liaison with the dioceses on all club and membership activities.

**Extension Committee Structure:** This *standing* committee of the District Council is chaired by the governor-elect. The job of the Extension Committee is to review the areas and parishes "covered" by existing clubs. The committee's activities are:

- ✓ to divide districts into logical extension areas.
- ✓ to identify primary and secondary parishes.
- ✓ to target those areas adjacent to existing clubs.
- ✓ to set up a priority system designating the plan for club extension.
- ✓ to work with nearby clubs to form new clubs.

The committee implements the leadership role in priority planning, recruiting Serrans and others to form a strong active founders Committee, and to initiate the new club.

**Getting Started:** Unless guided, club extension in many Serra districts will be hampered if: the new club is too far from existing clubs; there are too few parishes to supply members; there is insufficient support or a lack of solid planning; there is a failure to use membership programs (12-step program, Target Active Parishioner Program); there is an existing club competing for the same parish or territory; there is too much time before chartering.

The extension committee needs a "vision" of where the organization is headed within the district. It also needs a process by which new data, current issues, resources, and evaluation mechanisms are congregated together in an organized fashion.

Form your extension committee NOW and get started on an-brand-new Serra club!

*John Marcello of the Serra Club of South Bay, California, USA, is past chairman of the USA/Canada Vocations Committee, and a former member of the Serra International Board of Trustees.*

## Success Story...

### Development of Leaders to Establish New Clubs in Mexico and Central America

By Luis Jimenez Franco

The greatest number of new Serra clubs in any country in 1989 was in Mexico with the development of eight new clubs. Mexico also had 217 new members, the third highest in Serra. This 30% increase in members placed the country among the leaders of the Serra world. The goal of our National Council is to have 92 clubs by the 1992 Serra International Convention in Guadalajara. Here are some tips for organizing new clubs:

**Identify the Area for the New Club:** First obtain the approval of the local bishop in the area selected for the new club, and then inform the local clergy.

**Develop Conscientious Leaders:** Select a group of Serra associates who will commit themselves to the establishment of the new Serra clubs. They must be properly trained to develop new clubs: enthusiastic and able to answer and clarify all questions and doubts.

**Develop Leadership Program for Organizers:** As a leader, work with the organizers with patience and professionalism. The program for the initial organizers meeting should include a maximum of five minutes on each of the following topics: Serra history and objectives, the commitment of Serra, profile of the ideal candidate to membership, the club officers, and the dedicated apostolate.

**Obligation to Complete the Formation:** The organizers must understand that in becoming responsible for the organization of the Serra club, they are also responsible for frequent personal visits to monitor the club's performance. A club is the responsibility of the organizers until it officially receives its charter.

*Luis Jimenez Franco of the Serra Club of Guadalajara, Mexico, is a member of the International Board of Trustees and is the area trustee for Mexico and Central America, an area that has tripled the number of clubs in 3 years (11 to 37).*

### Financial Aid Available to Start New Clubs

Grants are available for reimbursement of expenses on establishing new clubs which are more than 50 miles from an existing club or in another diocese. Reimbursement for printing, postage, travel, and lodging expenses up to \$500 are available through Serra International as part of a Serra Foundation Grant.

# Membership Membership

Extension is one important topic of discussion at every district council meeting. Two questions are raised: "Shouldn't we be forming a new club in the district this year?" and "How will we form the new club?"

Membership is a principal topic of discussion at many club board meetings. How do we attract, involve and hold new members — especially a few in their thirties?

There are answers to these questions when we believe that at the heart of any successful membership effort is our belief that our Serra club is worth sharing with others. There are answers when we are convinced that the few hours we spend together in prayer, discussion, education and activity each month make us better Christians. When we have a challenging meeting program and meaningful vocations projects, extension and membership questions can be answered.

Following are a few success stories which can be adapted in your district or club. They were compiled by Pete Gorman of Vancouver Serra and Matt McCloskey, Philadelphia Serra.

## When the Bishop Wants to be Personally Involved

In some cases the bishop wants to be personally involved in the formation of a new club or in a special membership effort. When he does, the program usually goes like this:

Bishop writes all pastors, tells them of the value of Serra, of his interest in having Serra represented in each parish, and asks them to suggest three parishioners as potential club candidates. With the letter is a response form for the name of the potential candidate, address, telephone, and parish. The letter asks for reply in three weeks.

Serra members contribute names to the list of potential members.

Bishop and Serra membership chairman write their own letters to each nominee. Serran's letter gives information about Serra International and local club, and includes a Serra pamphlet. Candidate is told that his name has been put forward by his pastor or Serran as a potential Serran and he is invited to a special membership meeting. A self-addressed stamped envelope is included. The Serran calls nominee to confirm attendance.

In his letter the Bishop tells of his interest in Serra, encourages the nominee to attend the meeting, and tells that he will attend.

## MEETING AGENDA (90 minutes)

- Opening Prayer
- Welcome by vice president, membership
- Introduction of Serrans and guests
- Remarks by bishop

Speaker. — on history of Serra, spiritual benefits, what Serra membership means

Remarks by president on what club does

Remarks by vice president—on personal commitment, attendance requirements, financial requirements, etc.

Questions and answers

Invitation to membership

Closing Prayer

Refreshments and time for informal discussion

Each candidate present should fall into one of three categories:

1. I am ready to apply for membership
2. I am interested but I want to think it over.
3. I am not a candidate.

Try to obtain a written reply of one kind or another from all candidates in attendance. Have forms available.

In the past few months, a version of this approach has been used in Spokane, Washington; St. Joseph, Missouri; and Illinois Valley, Illinois. It works.

## Full Club Effort

This membership plan does not have the bishop as a central figure. It is low key, but depends on every club member.

It developed in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, after meetings where all Serrans agreed that if Serra was to continue to grow and flourish in Vancouver, it was necessary to add a few more active members.

The membership committee compiled a list of potential members from three sources: former members of Serra; men who had been contacted in the past, but who had not joined; and finally, new candidates recommended by members.

Each Vancouver member was assigned to a two-man team. Each team contacted its potential candidates personally or by telephone to ask only for an appointment. The teams told the full Serra story at a luncheon, dinner or evening meeting with each nominee, and invited potential members to a regular club meeting where they met all Serrans and learned more about Serra. The program was a success because every Serran helped.

Vancouver Serrans report that another reason for their success was the changing of their meeting schedule from two luncheons each month to one lunch and one breakfast meeting following mass each first Friday. Mass and meeting before the business day has great appeal to many potential members who have difficulty scheduling luncheon meetings.

*Continued on page 11*

# Serra Should Support New Ministries

Jim Dulan, Executive Director  
THE ADVOCATE, the archdiocesan newspaper of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, recently wrote the following thoughtful column on Serra's mission in light of "the new expanding ministries."

"The Church needs the Serra Club. May God continue to bless your work."

Those are the words of Pope John Paul II to the officers of Serra International, an organization founded in the United States in 1935 which now has over 400 affiliated clubs around the world and a membership in excess of 14,000.

Serra's work is not so well known as it should be. Even to those who recognize the name, many think of it as merely a helping hand to directors of vocations. Indeed it is that, but it is called to be so much more. Its future depends on the extent it renews itself and seeks out new membership. Today it may be on the verge of breaking new ground and making an even greater contribution to the Catholic Church in the latter part of this century.

Bishop Dominic Marconi touched on this in a talk to members of Serra's Union County West, New Jersey Club. Speaking about the challenge of the 1980s, he recalled a

statement made at a recent convention of Serra International: "Serra must develop programs to support all church ministries and build up great Christians."

The bishop said: "I have a question for Serrans of the future. What can you do today and tomorrow in helping to promote the mission of the church and to support the new expanding ministries?" He listed a few of these: parish council work, youth ministers, religious education directors, music ministers, the permanent diaconate.

He recalled the words of Archbishop Jean Jadot, former Apostolic Delegate in the U.S., now reassigned to the Vatican:

"We must study the problem of the lack of vocations. If bishops and priests are willing to use deacons, nuns, brothers, lay men and women in the service of the church, we can accomplish much together. But if we do not search for new ministries, we will not be able to meet the needs of the people in the coming years."

Bishop Marconi suggested that Serrans reflect on what has been happening with priestly vocations in the past 15 years and the "new phenomena" of growth in other ministries. He said: "If we believe the Holy Spirit is working in the

church, the Spirit will provide us with the resources. This is one way the Holy Spirit is allowing us to respond."

Serra is already organized for this. Back in 1968, in recognition of the Vatican II guidelines, Serra International restated its objectives as two-fold:

□ To foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood and all religious vocations in the Catholic Church.

□ To further Catholicism by encouraging its members, in fellowship, through education, to fulfill their Christian vocation to service.

Interestingly enough, the prayer Serrans have been saying daily these last 45 years asks God to "increase the laborers for your church." It doesn't specify any particular type of ministry. This is what it says:

"Oh God, who will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech You, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Saint Joseph her spouse, and all the saints, an increase of laborers for Your church, fellow laborers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls."

## Membership

*Continued from page 10*

### A Continuing Program

The Philadelphia club success is credited to excellent meetings, the personal attention Serrans give to potential members and an active vocation plan. Following are the ideas which have helped.

- \* Drop all inactive members. Even though inactive, dues-paying members may help a club financially, their non-attendance hurts the club.
- \* Get a commitment from each club member that he will do something about sharing membership. Be convinced that Serra has much to offer.
- \* Be certain that the membership committee meets monthly to plan and initiate all special membership plans.
- \* Divide clubs into groups of five with a member of the membership committee as chairman of each. Each group bring two guests to each meeting.

- \* Determine how club will greet and follow up with prospects. Follow-up is a key to increasing membership. Even after a candidate has joined Serra — especially then — other members must do all they can to help him enter into the spirit and activities of the club.
- \* Ask club chaplain to invite guests to attend another three meetings. (Club officers do the same.)
- \* When prospect shows enough interest, and has been approved by membership committee and Board of Trustees, invite him to a special luncheon meeting — give more information about Serra and extend invitation.

The program outlined above has helped add several members in their twenties and thirties. Many were introduced to the Philadelphia club at the same time. Some were business associates who now are happy to invite their peers to Serra meetings.

# THE TEXAS CHALLENGE TO SERRA

Feb '87

By Bill P. Cicherski, President-Elect of Serra International

In 1983, Serra International in the state of Texas consisted of 800 Serrans in 20 clubs involving three districts. By mid-year 1986, Serrans in Texas numbered 1,140 in 27 clubs in six districts. What was the cause of this growth?

## District Governor Leadership

At the Area Trustee's meeting of August 1983, it was agreed that each District Governor would evaluate the strength of Serra in his district. From that evaluation it was determined that *each governor would start a club in his district before the conclusion of one year.*

## Forming New Clubs

Serrans worked hard to charter clubs in all areas of the state. By June of 1984 a club was in formation in each of the five districts in Texas, and the first new club, in Harlingen was chartered. In 1985 clubs were formed in Brazoria County, near Houston, Laredo, near the Texas-Mexican border, and two clubs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In 1986 the Serra Club of Bryan-College Station was chartered, followed by the Kingsville club.

## Starting New Clubs In The Same City

The Metropolitan Dallas club formed a new club in the northern part of Dallas with *eight members from their own club* and additional men from the target area to form the North Central Dallas club. The Fort Worth Club used its members who lived in the Arlington area to charter a new club in that suburban community. Both of the donating clubs were so invigorated by this challenge that they *replaced those members in less than one year.*

## Forming New Clubs Nearby

The Houston club was mainly responsible for chartering a club in its neighboring Brazoria County made up of several communities in that county.

## Forming New Clubs With Cooperation From Two Existing Clubs

When they saw the opportunity in Bryan-College Station, the existing clubs in Austin and Waco cooperated to form this Central Texas club. Corpus Christi and Brownsville worked together in organizing the Laredo club.

## Forming More Than One Club

Not only did Corpus Christi help charter Laredo, but the following year it was the mother club of Kingsville.

and plans are currently under way to establish a club in the remaining diocese, San Angelo.

## Encouraging Participation By The Bishops

The bishops of Texas take an active role in supporting the growth of Serra. They are invited to, and attend, Serra meetings and conventions, and encourage new Serra clubs.

## Programs To Strengthen Weaker Clubs

The District Governor was instrumental in assisting the Serra Club of East Texas when its membership declined. At the International convention in Milwaukee, it was honored for the greatest percentage growth in Serra in the 1985-86 year. The chaplain of the Northwest Houston club worked with the downtown Houston club and club membership grew from 11 to 31 Serrans.

## Holding A State-Wide Convention

In order to build Serra strength throughout the state, Texans hold a *State convention* for all six districts annually in the Fall. The location of the convention rotates to a different district each year. In 1986 over 500 Serrans and guests participated in the Dallas convention.

## Goals For 1987

The current District Governors have all agreed to *form new clubs in their areas* of the state, as well as *increase membership by 10% in existing clubs.* Potential sites for the new clubs include the NASA Bay area near Houston, a third club in Houston, the University of Dallas-Las Colinas-Irving area near Dallas, Wichita Falls, Temple-Belton, a second club in San Antonio, Alice and Orange County.

## The Challenge To Other Serrans

There are fewer Catholics in Texas than in many areas of the country. Yet, they wish to share their enthusiasm with other Catholics in their diocese and state and are *continuously looking for new members and potential sites for clubs.*

The growth of Serra continues in earnest in Texas. The goal is to have the largest number of Serrans from any state in the U.S.A. by 1990. *Is there another state which cares to take up this challenge?* Serra International will benefit from your response.

*Bill Cicherski is President-Elect of Serra International and a member of the Metropolitan Dallas Club*

## RETENTION OF MEMBERSHIP

BY RICHARD J. STOLLY, Serra Club of Lima, Ohio  
SERRA INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The principal goal of a Serra club membership committee is obviously to obtain good, active members. While all clubs will lose some members through death, serious illness and moving from the area, too many new members are lost for reasons due mostly to *neglect*.

Too often, we welcome a new person into the club ranks, collect his dues, and promptly forget about him. These members will hang on for a while but gradually will lose interest. They were told that Serra was an action organization, but apparently their action was not called for—only their dues—so they have dropped out.

### The Solution: Involve All Members

If we involve all our members we will retain the otherwise forgotten Serrans and recognize each member's individual importance to the overall objectives of the club.

### Implementing Serra Work

There is much work to do in Serra. We generally categorize internal and external activity along with an active membership committee. Do not make the mistake of assigning the principal activities to the vice-presidents of these divisions and leaving it to them to choose their committees, as they may find only a few people active in the real work of Serra.

### Assign Members to Jobs

One successful method involves "slotting" the membership. The job slots change slightly from year to year but the Serrans can change each year based on their wishes and abilities. Based on the individual club activities there could be more slots in addition to the officers. There are a number of chairman and assistant chairman jobs.

### Don't Be Afraid to Delegate

Don't just ask for volunteers. New members seldom fall for that petition as they don't want to be tagged as an "eager beaver" in a club they just joined. You must assign them to jobs.

### Assignment by Club President

The club president should be responsible for assigning all the members to slots, after 1) soliciting the requests of the officers, and 2) distributing a list to all members asking them for their preference.

### Assignments by Committee Chairmen

Committee chairmen can look to specific people for reports on the activities assigned to them. The committee chairman should consult with the president to fit the right job to each member. Each officer knows that he will have a full committee to work with and that the work to be done will have someone assigned to the position. His job will be to monitor, not to perform the various tasks himself.

### Responsible Assignments Make Better Members

If a member is given a responsible assignment, he is more likely to feel a part of the organization. Accountability becomes a reality of the club and will make for more efficient club operation. A "nothing" type job will probably produce a "nothing" response and a big job with little or no help might frighten a new member out of the club.

### Assignments in the Program Committee

- Chairman
- Program Development Assistants
- Speaker Invitation Assistants
- Social Program Chairman
- Social Program Assistants for Arrangements, Speakers

### Assignments in Vocations Committee

- Vocations Activity Chairman
- "I'm Waiting to be Asked" Chairman
- "I'm Waiting to be Asked" Parish Coordinator
- Retention/Support of Existing Religious Chairman
- Seminary Visitation Chairman
- Parish Vocation Efforts Coordinator
- 31 Club Chairman
- Altar Boy Programs Chairman
- Liaison with Diocesan Vocation Department
- Liaison with Area Deanery
- Liaison with Retired Priests

### Assignments in the Membership Committee

- Membership Chairman
- Orientation Chairman
- Induction Ceremony Chairman
- New Members Coordinator
- Name Badge and Welcome Chairman

### Serra Assignments in Special Areas

- Club Newsletter Editor
- Publicity/Media Chairman
- Serra Foundation Coordinator
- International Convention Coordinator
- District Conference Coordinator

### Role of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee should try to mix old with new wherever possible, allowing the new members to get a feel for the club operations from the inside. Do not expect the new member to be next year's club president. Select the officers from those people who have done well in their job slots on the committees.

### Conclusion

To avoid losing good Serrans we need to assign them to responsible jobs and assist and support them. When all members contribute to the club, they are happier and the entire club benefits.

## SUCCESS STORIES:

Jan 1988

### ONE SERRAN CAN FORM A CLUB

by Peter J. Baltus, Sr.  
Serra Club of Downtown Cleveland

The success of one individual in chartering three clubs in the Diocese of Cleveland demonstrates the impact that a one-person operation can have on success of organizing a new club.

#### Getting Started

Start by selecting the area that the new club will cover (such as three deaneries) and secure the approval and support of the bishop. Select a meeting area near a major road for easy access. Select a convenient meal time.

The organizer's own club must give moral and financial support on the project. With that support, *one Serran alone* can set about to organize a club without a committee. Allow nine to eighteen months to make sure the club is organized, chartered, and operating successfully.

#### Recruiting New Members

The contact of prospective Serrans results from a number of sources:

- Priests who will give you names of individuals who would be interested
- The bishop who will hold a meeting of the priests and the deanery to encourage participation
- Parents of seminarians and newly ordained priests
- Initial members who will contact their own friends and give you additional names

Send a newsletter to all candidates prior to meetings.

#### Initial Meetings

At the first meetings, programs should include a Serra chaplain speaking on the purposes of Serra, and an orientation meeting based on the Serra manuals and how Serra works. Meetings should start with a meal and candidates giving an explanation of financial obligations. Invite diocesan department heads and vicars to speak.

Plan a dinner meeting and request the bishop to send personal invitations to all potential candidates. Ask the bishop to appoint a chaplain.

Train the newly elected officers and trustees in the importance of conducting solid meetings. Begin conducting board meetings in members' homes with the chaplain present and keep business separate from the club meetings.

Speakers of high quality should be scheduled for all meetings and the club will begin to gel.

Apply for the charter when you get close to 25 members and formalize its presentation at a special dinner with the bishop and a Mass. Serra International will provide all the charter documents.

*One Serran can organize a new club from start to finish—find the most eager Serran in your district and encourage that individual to start a club this year.*

### NEW TRENDS: COUPLES AND BREAKFAST CLUBS

by James Carpenter     James Smith  
Ben Clark                     Joe O'Conner

Within a 90 day period three new clubs were chartered in District 79 in Southern California. The development of the new clubs resulted with the use of several ideas that may benefit other Serra districts.

#### Strong Leadership

##### Sponsoring Clubs

Each of the clubs was sponsored by an existing club that helped in calling the meetings and recruiting the new members.

##### Individuals

In each of the clubs, one individual took charge to organize the club, attend the Masses, sponsor the meetings and railroad the matter to completion.

##### Vocation Director

In each of two dioceses the vocation director committed himself to organize five parishes to form a nucleus for a Serra club. The director provided names of potential members, mailing support, and spoke at other parish and diocesan meetings to encourage the organization of the Serra club.

#### Breakfast Clubs

The new clubs found a greater acceptance when they sought to organize during the breakfast hours. The advantages are:

Meetings can begin with Mass.

Potential candidates find it easier to attend because they do not have business conflicts.

Meals cost less; therefore dues are lower.

The typical procedure involves a 6:30 a.m. Mass, 7:00 breakfast, 7:30 program and adjournment by 8:00 or 8:15. One Southern California club of 66 members changed its meeting time from lunch to breakfast and increased its average attendance by 50%.

#### Husband and Wife Members

Significant changes in membership makeup have resulted from the bylaws change admitting women members. In the new Serra Club of the City of Orange, consisting of 38 members, there are ten couples. The recruiting efforts have included husband and wife teams who invite other couples to join them.

Couples who attend daily Mass, are parish leaders, or are involved in vocation work are receptive to Serra. Other potential couple members are participants in Marriage Encounter Groups. Pastors and vocation directors can identify these couples for you.

One club has reduced dues for couples and offers the breakfast on a "donation" basis for those in attendance.

#### Challenge to the Serra World

Southern California challenges other parts of the Serra world to charter three clubs in ninety days. We stand ready to give you assistance.

# MEMBERSHIP • COMMITTEE

## How to Form a Serra Club

By Louis D. Bonanni  
Serra International Trustee

In order to form a Serra club you must consider the area population density and keep in mind that very few people will travel more than 10 to 15 miles twice a month to attend a Serra meeting. Select a center which is a 15-20 minute drive from home or business. Once you are beyond that driving range, it is time to form a new Serra club.

### CONSULT THE BISHOP

No one should begin forming a new club without first enlisting the support of the bishop of the diocese.

### CHOOSE THE CHARTER TEAM AND TARGET AREA

The charter team should consist of not less than four members who are Serrans with track records of successful projects. The team should pick a captain who will be in charge of conducting all of the formation meetings, formulating the programs and running the show. Fellow Serrans must assist the team by attendance at formation meetings.

Survey the target area. The chancery office has all the pertinent information you need on the area including the number of Catholics, name and number of parishes, addresses, phone numbers, pastors and number of families. Work closely with the director of vocations.

### CHOOSING THE CHAPLAIN

Rating the importance of all matters from 1 to 10, the chaplain would rate a 10. Search out the chaplain of *your* choice; talk to priests with whom you are familiar and ask their suggestions. Submit his name for appointment by the bishop.

### CHOOSING THE MEETING PLACE

Take time to choose a place to hold the club formation meetings. Find an acceptable place that will keep the price of meals within a \$6.00-\$8.00 range. Many prospective members will be lost if the meals are too high-priced.

### INVITING CANDIDATES

A letter directed to the pastors from the bishop indicating his support for your program goes a long way towards obtaining names of candidates and arranging a successful Founders' Night. Personal phone calls to local pastors by the chaplain and the Vocations Director account for the greatest number of attendees. The founding team formulates a letter to be sent to all prospective candidates and pastors, inviting them to attend Founders' Night.

### FOUNDERS' NIGHT

Founders' Night is the first meeting and the one in which you will receive the largest attendance. The best way to instruct candidates about Serra and its aims is by a panel of speakers on the following subjects: The History of Serra, The Spiritual Aspects of Serra, The Critical Need for Priests, The Mechanics of Serra, Specifics (who, what, where, when) of what is expected of a candidate.

It is very important at every meeting to invite the candidates present to commit themselves to Serra. *Give them a membership application card and encourage them to complete it before they leave the meeting.*

### PUBLISH A NEWSLETTER

A member of the charter team acts as editor composing newsletters to send to candidates announcing the next meeting and recounting what transpired at the previous meetings. Strive for excellence. Stress color and warmth.

The team captain adds his promotional letter with each mailing before each meeting. It should tell of progress and success and be a selling job on why a candidate would commit himself to Serra. *Do not treat it lightly.*

### THE CHARTER TEAM REMAINS IN CONTROL OF MEETINGS

Start holding meetings on an established schedule. The team captain holds

the gavel and runs the show until the club reaches 20 members. Even after the officers are elected they do not take full directorship until Charter Night. The purpose is to school the officers-elect by veteran, experienced officers.

### IMPLEMENT YOUR PROGRAM RIGHT AWAY

You must get your members active in worthwhile vocation programs quickly or else you will lose them. If you do not have excellent internal and external programs you will lose them.

### ELECT NEW OFFICERS

When the club has 20 members call for an election of officers. Nominations come from the floor and are voted in secret ballots. Elect officers to 10 positions and then place the responsibility on them to each bring in one new man. You will now have 30 men and are ready for a charter.

### PREPARING FOR THE CHARTER

When a club has 25 members it can apply for a charter from Serra International. Contact Serra International for the Charter Application, Charter Agreement and proposed Bylaws.

### CHARTER NIGHT

Charter Night is one of the most important events in Serra. Be sure to make it a gala event, inviting the bishops in your area, pastors, the members and their wives. You owe it to the new club to make this event special.

### KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Smile at your meetings. Motivate, promote achievement and encourage action. *Stress recruiting.*

Strive for excellence in all you do. Remember, *nothing happens until someone does something.*

*Louis Bonanni, a Serra International trustee and member of the International Membership Committee, has chartered eleven Serra clubs. He is a member of Serra Club of Trenton, New Jersey.*

# MEMBERSHIP • IDEAS

## SPONSORABILITY: DANCE WITH THE ONE YOU BRUNG

By John Gordon  
U.S./Canada Internal Program Committee

Your Serra club is a spiritual community and being a member is a great honor. We must bring in new qualified members with a love for priests and religious who will help us in our Serra goals.

### A Friend Drops Out of Serra

When your friend entered Serra the club president said, "Please give a round of applause to welcome our new member." But did you neglect the member after that? If the member drops out it is because of "Serran neglect."

New members are anxious to do something for Serra—but they are not asked. If they miss a meeting, no one calls to say they missed him or her. They feel they aren't needed.

### Every Member Contributes

To prevent "Serran neglect" we should all participate.

The club president has the responsibility to immediately assign every new Serran to a committee.

The vice president for membership should recommend how each new member can help the club.

The club chaplain makes every new member feel welcome.

### The Sponsor's Job - "Sponsorability"

Sponsors have a special responsibility—more than sitting next to the new member. You can help:

*Make Introductions* - Introduce your friend at meetings.

*Use the Newsletter* - Write a club newsletter article about the new member. Have the new member contribute to the newsletter.

*Confirm Committee Assignments* - Confirm that the new member is assigned to a committee.

*Plan Informal Events* - Introduce the new members to Serrans, priests and religious at a gathering at your home.

*Speak at Meetings* - Invite the member to speak at your meetings about a study group or give committee announcements.

*Remember Anniversaries* - On the anniversary of a member's induction into Serra put a notice in the newsletter, make an announcement at a meeting, send a card or take the member to lunch.

*Listen* - The new member may have questions or experience dissatisfaction with Serra.

Your ideas can get the Serran involved. More practical steps are in the Serra Membership Manual.

### The Honor, the Treasure, the Dance

It is an honor to be a Serran. It is a treasure that we can share with a new Serran. But remember to "Dance with the one you brung."

## TEACHING AS JESUS DID WITH AN OFFICERS' ORIENTATION MEETING

By Richard Lind  
International Vice President for Membership

Is training important? Is prayer important? Is Serra important? Yes, yes and yes. But too often Serra does not make sure its club officers are properly trained. We must do that! Call it the Officers Orientation Conference. Call it the Policy Meeting. Call it anything you want, but call the meeting to order.

### Teaching Each Other

Scholars agree that in the Sermon on the Mount we have the essence of the teaching of Jesus to the inner circle of his chosen ones. Serra must follow the example of Jesus. We must teach our inner circle, our club officers. How? Organize Officers Orientation Conferences. Here are a few ideas taken from 23 meetings held in the last 23 years in district 80, a district with seven clubs that spans three dioceses.

Meetings are usually held on a Sunday in April. Between 75 and 150 Serrans and spouses always attend. One bishop always attends--sometimes two.

### A Program that Works

A typical program runs as follows:

Registration is held from 9:30 to 10:45, with coffee and cakes served to promote fellowship.

The bishop celebrates Mass at 11:45 and gives the homily.

Brunch is at 12:45. Use chaplains from other clubs for the invocation. The district governor should make a speech, as well as other Serrans making "remarks." Do not forget the bishop!

Workshops run from 2:15 to 3:30. Each one is in a different room, with a chairperson from each club. There should be nine workshops for: the presidents, one for each of the four vice presidents, secretaries, treasurers, trustees and chaplains. A spouses' program is organized during the time of workshops.

At 3:45 the group gathers together. Get summaries of all workshops and remarks, introduce the president of the past district governors council, hold the election of the new district governor-elect. Ask him to make a brief speech.

The cocktail/social time begins at 4:45; Serrans and spouses are seated for dinner at 5:30. Again, use Serrans from all the clubs for various talks, remarks, toastmaster, etc. Announce the date and place of next year's meeting and adjourn.

### Our Spiritual Family History as Volunteers

Remember, we are all volunteers. Volunteering should come naturally to Serrans. It is our "spiritual family history." Father Junipero Serra was a volunteer. Jesus Christ was/is the ultimate volunteer.

Serrans must follow the example of Jesus. Serrans must teach and be taught.

# Forming a New Club in a Metropolitan Area

Oct. '89

By Robert Schellman, Serra Club of North Metro Atlanta

In our metropolitan area we determined that there were many lay persons in outlying suburban areas who were interested in Serra, but were too far from the downtown club to be able to attend regular meetings.

## Getting Started - Charter Team

Five Serrans who live in the north suburban area of Atlanta surveyed eight parishes with the help of their pastors, and determined that those eight parishes would easily support a new club. The Atlanta Club designated the five Serrans as the Charter Team and selected a former district governor as the club founder. This strong Charter Team was a major element in the successful chartering of a club in a "mission" area. The Serra International "Organizing a Serra Club" manual was used as a guide with considerable adaptation to our area.

## Getting Names in the Targeted Parishes

The Charter Team worked with pastors and other priests in the eight targeted parishes, getting names of Catholic leaders who could be contacted and invited to attend an orientation. Members of the Charter Team also made nominations.

## Orientation/Founder's Meetings

Four orientation meetings in the area parishes were held over a period of six weeks, which produced additional well-indoctrinated candidates willing to work on the formation of the new club. This thoroughness gave the expanded Charter Team time to organize with properly prepared members.

## Unique Features: One-On-One Effort

One-on-one effort was more productive than an area campaign with a "sign up event." Periodic "orientations" for small groups of candidates were carefully planned. At these meetings the candidates were given the opportunity to ask questions and to hear in-depth discussion. As a result, new members were well prepared to assume full responsibility, retention was higher, and losses were low. By involving the sponsor in this orientation process, a continuing relationship with a candidate developed and strengthened the new club.

## Start Regular Meetings

Regular twice-a-month meetings were held, with the founder as acting president. The secretary and treasurer came from the Charter Team. Four Serrans from the expanded Charter Team helped teach the candidates how to organize the new club, conduct meetings and acquire new members. A request was made to the Archbishop for the approval of a chaplain selected by the new club. He was approved immediately. New members were continuously indoctrinated.

## Establish Programs and Procedures

While "in-formation," the club sponsored a parish level vocation program (Called By Name) in cooperation with the sponsoring downtown club. This expedited the club achieving charter, as the candidates saw first hand and took personal part in the program. This also increased parishioner awareness and support of the new club.

## Start a Newsletter/Collect Dues

Newsletters were published monthly, supplemented with "information memorandums," which covered special Serra information and supplemented member orientations. News releases and photos of events were distributed to the media. Prescribed Serra administrative procedures were followed from the start. Membership rosters were published. Initiation fees were collected (adequate to cover operating expenses and initial Serra International dues). The Serra International staff was most helpful in providing orientation kits, manuals, *The SERRAN*—all at *no cost to the new club*.

## Selecting Officers

A full slate of officers (including the president and vice president for program from the Charter Team) and new Serrans to fill other officer positions were selected early. The fully operational board of trustees began meeting monthly.

## Application for Charter

It took nine months from the first of the four founders' meetings to twenty-five members/charter status. Application for charter was sent to Serra International with a roster of members' names and initiation fees (\$5.00 per member) and prororation of Serra International dues (\$12.50 per quarter).

## Charter Night

A successful and impressive charter night resulted from cooperation with the downtown club, which assisted in planning and funding. Invitations were extended to the Archbishop, Director of Vocations, Area Trustee, District Governor, Executive Director of Serra International, chaplains, clergy, all Serrans from both clubs, family and guests.

## A Solid New Club

The time spent in orientation and one-on-one effort resulted in well-prepared members and a solid new club for the Serra movement.

*Bob Schellman is former district 18 governor and served for several years on the Serra International U.S.A./Canada Membership Committee.*

# Membership Ideas

## *Every Serran is on the Membership Committee*

By Louis D. Bonanni

*Past Area Trustee, recipient of the 1988 Harry J. O'Haire Award,  
member of the Trenton, New Jersey Serra Club, and organizer of 13 Serra clubs.*

Serra has a group of excellent, successful, tried and tested membership programs. Motivated and enthusiastic leadership, combined with enthusiasm of the individual members, enables the programs to be successful. Good programs alone won't bring new members to your club: you have to invite each and every one!

Membership is a club responsibility. It is the responsibility of every Serran. If a membership problem exists in a club, I can assure you, it is because the individual members do not take their responsibility for recruiting new members seriously enough.

### Rule 1 - Believe in Serra

In my opinion, there is not one Serran who can look me straight in the eye and try to convince me that he or she cannot enlist *at least* one new member.

If we are sold on Serra, then Serra is easy to sell. If we are not convinced that Serra is valuable in our lives, then why do we stay in? *Of course* Serra is important to us and *of course* Serra will become an important part of the lives of the members we enlist!

We must learn how to explain Serra to others. All of us must manifest our enthusiasm and joy we feel in Serra. We must be living examples of what it means to be a Serran. Our enthusiasm will make others want to join.

No one denies the need for more members and more clubs. In the same way, no one should deny that enlisting new members is the responsibility of each and every member. How can it be so difficult to tell prospective members that they will experience spiritual growth and development? Or that they will develop meaningful, enduring friendships. Or that they will be part of an international movement of Catholic laypersons united in the ideals of Serra?

### Rule 2 - Enlist One at a Time

Over the years, we found that the best way to enlist new members is with a one-on-one approach. Every member searches out one person to work on. Can you imagine this: if every member honestly, sincerely, and diligently undertook this simple approach, we could double our membership in no time at all. What boggles my mind is why we don't do it.

### Rule 3 - Just Ask

Serra is easy to promote, all you need to do is ask. Be a part of it. There is no membership problem. If it exists, then we Serrans are part of the problem. Good ideas don't work unless you do.

### Rule 4 - Ask Younger Candidates

How do we enlist younger members? Here again, there is no magic formula or miraculous new program that will do the job for you. The solution is simple: you simply go out into the marketplace, search them out, and ask them.

In our Serra membership, we find ourselves with an average age of somewhere in the mid-60s. This is no accident and it just didn't happen that way. No, we created it. Older members naturally tend toward enlisting older members. Their peers are more readily available to them.

Have we lost our zeal? Are we too satisfied with the *status quo*? I encourage you who have a membership problem or wish to increase membership not to sit back and wait for the other guy to do the job for you. He is waiting for you to do it...and you know what that accomplishes...nothing. *Remember, nothing happens until somebody does something!*

## Membership Notes:

Excellent resources are available to assist clubs in increasing their number of members. The Serra International Office in Chicago offers videotapes, manuals, brochures, orientation kits, club activity programs, and more! These resources will help your club in all aspects of its operation, from efficient administration to tried-and-true club programs. It is often said that an active, informed club is a club that gets and retains new members!

Remember, a limited number of grants are available for reimbursement of expenses (up to \$500) incurred while establishing new clubs which are more than 50 miles from an existing club or in another diocese.

# Membership Ideas

## Try Creating a Selective Prospect List

Not all of us are blessed with the ability to recruit, market, follow-up, and patiently persist in bringing new members into Serra. But the task can be greatly simplified if a club develops appropriate informational materials to tell the Serra story. These materials, coupled with a system for follow-up, will make the process much easier and more efficient.

### Supplying the Facts

The typical club information kit will include: a club brochure, copies of the most recent club newsletters, dues obligation information, an invitation to a Serra meeting, a letter about Serra from the local ordinary, copies of local newspaper articles or photos about Serra or Serrans, and a club membership roster. As each kit is given to a prospective member, a contact control sheet is filled out to set a schedule for follow-up contacts and record the results of phone conversations or meetings.

A week after the kit has been given, the first follow-up call is made to ask the candidate whether he or she has any questions about the material or about the club. Periodic calls can then be made (as long as the candidate continues to be interested in Serra) to offer invitations to meetings or events.

### Reaching the Target Audience

Who gets the kits? The kits should be offered to individuals whose names have been recommended by parish priests or Serra members. To develop a list of prospective members who should be offered an information kit, target a parish or several parishes and consider lay ministers, lectors, ushers, parish council members, and parish volunteers. You will thus create a pool of practicing Catholics who are already active in Church affairs.

### Reaping the Benefits

How well does it work? From data taken from contact control sheets, approximately 30% typically accept the invitation to a meeting, and an average of 15% of those who receive information kits become Serrans. The result of this selective listing and personal contact approach is well-informed membership candidates and one-on-one relationships.

By Mike Reitzel, Membership Chairperson of the Serra Club of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

## Success Stories

### Run Your Campaign by Deadlines

*Dallas, Texas* - The "Twelve Steps to a Successful Membership Campaign" proved instrumental for the University of Dallas Serra Club, as it brought in a 92% increase in members recently. Jay Heim, the club's vice president for membership, provided a few observations that enhanced the campaign:

- (1) Assemble a large list of prospects (in this case, a member hosted several luncheons for area pastors and from them accumulated 118 names—25% of whom eventually became members).
- (2) Provide incentives (such as a coffee mug with the Serra logo) to sponsors of new members.
- (3) Adhere closely to the deadlines detailed in the Twelve Step program to keep everyone from procrastinating and keep the momentum going.
- (4) Host three guest days.
- (5) Sponsor two informational meetings to ensure well-informed new members.

### Increase Parish Representation

*Minneapolis, Minnesota* - When the Serra Club of Minneapolis South Suburban, Minnesota found itself with half of its members from a single parish and the other half dispersed through 23 other area parishes, they decided it was time to increase the number of Serrans from each parish.

One Serran from each under-represented parish was assigned to contact the pastor and ask for prospective Serrans from among the parish's teachers, counselors, youth ministers, and other active individuals. The names obtained were contacted by telephone and letter, and invited to attend a special "guest day" luncheon.

After the guest day, all prospective members were contacted again and asked whether they were interested in joining. "As a result of this campaign, 17 new members were inducted," concludes Gerald P. Nichols, incoming governor-elect of District 7.

### District-Wide Membership Campaign

*Los Angeles, California* - All nine clubs of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are instituting a four-month standard membership campaign ending with an Archdiocesan induction ceremony. "We need to keep developing new and creative ideas to excite and challenge clubs to do a thorough job of tabulating the results," say John Marcello, Serra Club of South Bay, California and past Serra International Trustee.

# Success Story: Increase Membership by Meeting on Saturday Morning

By: Thomas Q. Benson  
Serra International Vice President

A suburban Club in a metropolitan area found its membership falling from charter strength down to 13 members, mostly older, qualifying them for "Review and Evaluation" by Serra International and threatening to take away their charter.

Many of the members were retired and their pool of friends didn't produce new members by inviting them to the meetings. Worse, changing meeting times to breakfast or evening didn't improve membership growth.



## The Magic of Saturday Morning

As a suburban area, most potential members commuted out of the community early in the morning and the many young families couldn't attend evening events. The Club president took a gamble by moving the meeting to 8:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings twice a month. Combined with a parish-oriented membership drive, the change had a dramatic positive effect. The Saturday morning meeting had unique advantages:

- \*Convenience for suburban areas close to home;
- \*Parents of small children could attend, leaving the other parent at home;
- \*Couples could attend;
- \*Relaxed atmosphere made a special event on a Saturday;
- \*The program concluded at 9:30 a.m., before other weekend events commenced.

## Lowering the Dues

The Club met in a restaurant that had a private room and Serrans were able to give individual food orders. This convenience helped the Club:

- \*As the person paid for their own meal, the cost dropped from \$50.00 to \$25.00 per quarter.
- \*A member could purchase a cup of coffee and a big breakfast depending on appetite and available funds.
- \*The lower cost encouraged couples at \$25.00 per quarter for husband/wife;
- \*The attractive surroundings made for a pleasant time.

## Target Active Parishioners

Inviting potential members from a neighboring parish to attend a meeting, the Club requested the mailing labels of the active parishioners: lectors, lay ministers, ushers, and council members.

- \*All were invited to a "Guest Day" at the regular meeting time;
- \*A strong program gave a good impression;
- \*Serra information was included in the program;
- \*Membership applications were distributed to the guests;
- \*A follow-up phone call was made.

*Almost 15% of the 120 invited candidates came to "Guest Day".*

## Results: A Stronger Club

The first targeted parish added 11 members, the parish drive brought the membership to over 30. The average dropped to 48. 40% of the new members were women and often brought their children on Saturday morning to the program or meet Seminarians. More members allowed for vocation projects.

# MEMBERSHIP • IDEAS

## HOW TO GET YOUNGER MEMBERS

By Paul J. James

Serra Club of Greater Little Rock, Arkansas

Serra needs young members for the continuity of the organization and to promote vocations among those individuals most desperately needed by the Church - the youth. Perhaps young Serrans would be able to relate better to young Catholics considering vocations.

### Benefits to Young Catholics

The young Catholic lay person needs the guidance and example set by the older, more experienced Catholic Serrans to better cope with the ethical and moral issues that arise in everyday life. The association with older, more mature members and the quality programs offered on a semi-monthly basis have been particularly beneficial to the younger Serrans in our club.

### Your Club Must Act

Many young people are hesitant in joining, believing that the Serra Club is an organization for those over the age of 40. However, a club can increase its members by seeking changes in its organization.

•*Club Commitment* - the members must be committed to recruiting young "new blood" into the club.

•*Identify Catholic Tradition* - target those youths in Knights of Columbus, youth groups, youth ministers, etc.

•*Personal Invitation* - invite each candidate through direct contact. Take the candidate to the meeting yourself.

•*Invite as a Group* - when three or four younger candidates

are invited on the same day, they feel more comfortable.

•*Attractive Club* - at your Guest Day, show the quality of the programs, the fellowship between members in your commitment to the goals of Serra.

•*Get Them Involved Early* - appoint the young members to committees and get them involved.

•*Membership Chairperson* - appoint a young member as the membership chairperson, encourage those members to recruit their friends.

•*Expose to Serra* - educate the young Catholic population about the existence and purpose of Serra; take your own children to Serra conventions and conferences.

Recruitment of a few younger members has had a snowball effect on our club and the number of members under the age of 35 has increased from one member to nine members as a result of the club's commitment. Serra International will help by publishing the pictures of your younger members in the SERRAN magazine and furnish you materials on membership.

*Paul J. James, an attorney in Little Rock, was invited to join Serra at the age of 25.*

### \*\*\* Financial Aid for Forming New Clubs! \*\*\*

Foundation Grants are available for reimbursement of expenses on establishing new clubs which are more than 50 miles from an existing club or in another diocese. Reimbursement for printing, postage, travel and lodging expenses up to \$500.00 are available. Contact Serra International.

## FOUNDATION REPORT

Here is your update as of April 19, 1990. Close to 2,000 Serrans and their friends, through bequests, insurance policies, annuities and cash, have contributed \$163,000 to the Serra International Foundation since June 1, 1989. The market value of Foundation investments is \$1,840,000.

This year the Foundation made grants of \$145,000 to further the objectives of Serra. The audited financial report and description of grants will be distributed at the Cleveland convention and published in the post convention *SERRAN*.

Thanks to so many who were able to do a little more for Serra.

People ask, "How and why did the Foundation begin?" In 1951 it was difficult for Serra to do what we wanted to do to further our objectives. We had relatively few members and low dues. Serrans decided to establish the Foundation so the proceeds could help meet some basic Serra expenses including rent and postage, nothing dramatic.

By 1960 Serra International operating expenses were met by dues so the Foundation was put on a back burner.

However, in 1968 club delegates voted to reemphasize the Foundation. Serra wanted to be truly international but dues income, though growing with inflation, could not support efforts to bring Serra to other countries and could not help even the most worthwhile vocation programs that would come to our attention.

Serrans and their friends were asked to help Serra by contributing to the Foundation if they could. And Serrans did respond.

We hope to have in every club a person who will remind us occasionally of the good the Foundation makes possible. If you are interested in being that person, write to the Serra International office. If Serrans are convinced the Foundation is doing good things we should be able to average \$1,000 in contributions from clubs.

## SUCCESS STORIES:

### 'TWO TODAY FOR SERRA' WORKS!

by Robert Conner, Allentown, PA

The "Two Today for Serra" program was announced at the convention in San Diego. The results from many clubs have indicated it is a viable program to increase membership and to spark existing clubs.

#### IT WORKS IN ANY SIZE CLUB

When the program was initiated, the Serra Club of Allentown had 18 members—after the program, they more than doubled their size to 45 members within a matter of months.

#### "TWO TODAY FOR SERRA" CARDS

The program calls for the distribution of "Two Today for Serra" cards which allow for members and chaplains to nominate two prospective members.

The committee decided to challenge the members by calling for *eight* names from the parish that each member was assigned to cover.

The vice president for membership sent a letter to each Serran containing the nomination cards with a return addressed envelope, asking them to complete them and bring them to the next club meeting or mail them back. *They were given a deadline* to complete the task: *two weeks*.

*Two hundred and five names* were submitted; sixty seven names by the chaplain and twenty seven by another priest. The prospects were reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

#### SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP GUEST DAY

A letter was sent to all of the prospects, signed by the Chaplain, inviting them to the special meeting with dinner.

The bishop of the diocese also wrote a letter, on the Serra club stationery, encouraging them to attend the meeting.

Members of the club were sent a list of the prospects for them to telephone and confirm their attendance at the special dinner meeting.

At the dinner meeting, sixty-one prospective members came to hear the words on Serra.

#### SPECIAL PROGRAM

The presentation team at dinner consisted of the Chaplain, five Serrans and the Bishop. Each gave a reason as to why one should become a member of the Serra club. The program consisted of:

1. Program overview explaining Serra
2. Importance of vocations
3. Quality of programs
4. Importance of spirituality
5. Value of fellowship
6. An invitation to join

On the tables at the dinner were membership applications—*prospects were urged to sign up immediately*.

Twenty seven new members joined the club as a result of the "Two Today for Serra" program.

### A NEW CLUB IN RECORD TIME!

by Howard Dietz, West Omaha, NE

The Serra Club of Omaha formed an additional club in its own metropolitan area, the Serra Club of West Omaha, in record time.

#### DECISION TO FORM A NEW CLUB

When Serra International announced its "Two Today for Serra" program, the Omaha club, with more than 100 members, decided to apply the same principles to form a new club. The past district governor conducted a feasibility study of forming a new club in West Omaha or in the Omaha suburbs in response to the drive for membership.

Announcements were made at two regular meetings calling for Serrans from the existing club to have input in starting a new club. The Archbishop was contacted and did not have objections to the new club. A committee of six Serrans reviewed a target area, meeting place and feasibility.

Serra International forwarded information and a new video tape entitled "How to Form a Serra Club," which was found to be very helpful.

The Board approved the plan to form a core group from the parent club to get the new club "off and running."

All members were given notice of the intent to form a new club and asking whether they were interested in transferring their membership. To the surprise of the committee, *over 25 responses indicated an interest in the new club*.

#### FORMATION OF NEW CLUB

The Archbishop considered the request for Chaplain and appointed the Chancellor of the Archdiocese.

Existing Serrans were asked to submit a request for approval to transfer and a *total of 30 members were found* for the new club. Within a few weeks, regular meetings were held at which time officers and directors to serve for an interim period were appointed.

It was decided to go directly for a Charter with the number of members exceeding the 25 required and Serra International forwarded the necessary materials.

The celebration was a huge success attended by members of surrounding clubs as well as the new members and their spouses.

#### EFFECT ON EXISTING CLUB

What has been accomplished has been good for *both* the Omaha club and the new Omaha West club. The parent club now has breathing room and can reorient its remaining members and stimulate them to greater participation. The new club is comprised of individuals who, like Father Serra, agreed to leave the place where they were happy and comfortable in order to make it possible for more fine Catholic citizens of the community and surrounding communities to join the Serra movement.

# SUCCESS STORY: THE FIVE SERRA CLUBS OF ST. PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Feb 188

BY JEROME HALLORAN, PAUL JAEGER and FRANCIS McGRATH

The Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota support five large Serra clubs with a total membership of 425 members—in clubs with memberships of 40, 90, 95, 100 and 100 members. The strength of all of the clubs and their ability to attract and maintain high membership and positive results is one of the success stories of multiple clubs in a metropolitan area. What was the cause of this success?

## FOUR PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR SUCCESS

1. Chaplains who are committed to the work of Serra
2. A close working relationship with the seminaries and the Diocesan Vocation Office
3. Good programs at each of the meetings
4. The importance each club attaches to bringing in new members

## IMPORTANCE OF CHAPLAINS

*Where to find them:* The chaplains in the Twin Cities include rectors and directors of spiritual formation of the seminaries, beloved parish priests and a director of a spiritual organization.

*Attendance at meetings:* It is a rare occurrence that a chaplain of any of the five clubs misses a meeting. They make a special effort to attend and give guidance to the club.

*Spiritual quickening:* It is the practice of each of the chaplains to give a one or two minute homily at each meeting and this is always a highlight of the meeting.

*Support from Archbishop:* The Archbishop, a former Serra chaplain, visits each of the clubs annually and participates in the social activities. The five club presidents meet together annually with the Archbishop to review the work of Serra.

## IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH VOCATION OFFICE

*Coordination with Vocation Office:* The presidents of all the clubs meet quarterly with the head of the Vocation Office and with the rectors of the seminaries to become involved in their activities (e.g., a live-in weekend at the seminary for students interested in learning more about a religious vocation).

*Support for seminaries:* All clubs plan programs involving the seminaries and seminarians (e.g., a symposium and dinner at the seminary with seminarians invited as guests—over 600 people attended).

*Spring training conference:* The annual leadership training conference is held at a seminary, culminating with Mass with the seminarians.

*Sharing with seminarians:* Serrans share the progress of the seminary students on a first-hand basis and work with both the seminarians and the Vocation Office.

## IMPORTANCE OF GOOD PROGRAMS

*Keep it interesting:* Interesting, challenging and informative programs are vital to the success of the club. Serrans are busy people who are committed to the work of Serra, but will find other ways to achieve their goals if the meetings are dull and uninformative.

*Sharing program ideas:* The program vice-presidents of the clubs meet on a regular basis to share programs that they have found to be particularly successful.

*Use a theme:* Each of the five clubs recently sponsored talks on the bishops' letter on the economy that featured five separate talks on the subjects of (1) poverty (2) labor (3) agriculture (4) solutions, reasons and questions (5) a consistent vision.

*Well-planned programs:* It is important that programs will leave the members with the feeling that they do not want to miss the next program.

## IMPORTANCE OF NEW MEMBERS

*Emphasize growth:* Each of the clubs make a special effort throughout the year to seek out new members. They emphasize that good programs assist in attracting prospects.

*Prospective members reception:* The clubs annually host a late afternoon reception at a restaurant where current members bring prospects to learn about Serra in an orientation program.

*Follow up on prospects:* The Membership Committee phones all prospects to attend meetings and sends membership applications to them with return envelopes.

*Induction ceremony:* The clubs annually honor new members in a special ceremony at a meeting or dinner.

*Start new clubs:* The district is planning the formation of a sixth club in an area south of the Twin Cities.

## THE CHALLENGE TO OTHER SERRANS

The Twin Cities have led the way to show how a metropolitan area can support many strong large clubs and involve their members in joint events and joint planning on programs, vocations projects and membership. Every large city should have a number of strong Serra clubs! Can your area match what Minneapolis and St. Paul have done?

*Jerome Halloran, Paul Jaeger and Francis McGrath are past district 7 governors.*