

## Long-Range Planning Committee Report From Executive Board Focus Group Meeting

October 18, 2013

### Membership Criteria (Members-at-Large)

**ISSUE:** The autonomous nature of Chapters means that each has established its own criteria for membership – the only common denominator is that a person may only attend two **Guild** meetings in a given year before they are required to join a Chapter (i.e., the Guild). Should the Guild consider a policy regarding minimum membership requirements or leave it to the Chapters?

#### ACTION STEPS

- 1) Currently, members join a Chapter and the Guild together. Each Chapter establishes its own membership restrictions. Generally, renters are welcome to come to Chapters but **short-term** renters usually do so as guests, not members.
- 2) One Chapter requires attendance at three full meetings before being offered membership and then they must join or stop coming.
- 3) Members may move from Chapter to Chapter; Guild dues paid but they may need to pay the new Chapter's dues. They should notify their Chapter President or Membership chair. This should be documented in the Guild's Standing Rules for Membership.
- 4) Would like the sign-up sheet at Guild meetings be by Chapter.
- 5) An application form for membership to be used Guild-wide should be kept by the Membership chair or Chapter Membership chair (every Chapter should have such a person who would liaison with the Guild Membership chair). The application form would include:
  - a) Attendance requirements
  - b) Yearly updated contact information, including emergency contact
  - c) Snowbird contact information for summer months
- 6) Keep membership informed through communication by:
  - a) Email
  - b) Blog (dropbox)
  - c) Newsletter
  - d) Google group (Allamanda)
  - e) Hard copy
  - f) Phone

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### **Diversity among Chapters (Members-at-Large)**

**ISSUE:** A lot of discussion occurred during Focus Groups about the different needs of established Chapters versus new ones; and of our older members compared to younger ones. The Guild needs to craft an organization that supports all of its members and recognize that we are an aging community. How do we communicate and involve members?

#### **ACTION STEPS**

- 1) Communicate through emails and, for those who don't or won't use email or the Internet, have copies at Chapter tables each month with member's name on it. That should be the responsibility of a Chapter Secretary. Recognize that some members will not pick it up.
- 2) To involve members who do not participate, invite them as a guest to a committee meeting (Showcases, Programs, etc.) so they'll see firsthand how the Guild functions.
- 3) Mentor new members; encourage them to join you at a table.
- 4) **Some Chapters require members to serve on at least one committee.**
- 5) Short term renters can attend as guests of a Chapter so long as there is room. If present long enough to meet Chapter membership requirements, they may join. There is no set Guild policy for short term renters.
- 6) Chapters can reach out to members who feel disenfranchised through sunshine and welcome committees and membership. Being aware of what is going on in a person's life (illness, etc.)
- 7) It should not be a burden to small Chapters to have a member act as liaison to Guild committees; everyone should be asked to serve.
- 8) Guild Standing Committees should have notes of what was discussed and decided and those should go to the Executive Board. This only improves communication. Use QGOTV website and remind members.
- 9) All committee representatives should report at Chapter meetings so that information is shared with members. Use Bulletin Boards for workshops and classes.
- 10) Involve new faces: don't always ask the old, trusted members to do something. People generally will say yes, if asked.
- 11) Training is a matter of mentoring new people in a position; follow-up. Have shadows serve with current reps to learn.

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### **Communication (Members-at-Large)**

**ISSUE:** An overlapping theme from all previous Focus Group discussion includes issues with lines of communication: downward from the Guild to Chapters and members; and upward, from members back to Chapter officers and the Guild. Poor communication results missed opportunities and bad feelings.

New Chapters (and many members) do not have a clear understanding of what the Guild does for them; what in-house resources are available, how to get them and why; there seems to be a disconnect sometimes between the Guild and Chapters when, in fact, the sum of the Chapters is the Guild

#### **ACTION STEPS**

- 1) Generally, people felt they liked the closeness of Chapter meetings; each Chapter has its own method for communicating information to its membership. This may include standing up at a meeting and reporting on events or sending out emails and newsletters. The only way to actually know if all of this is working is to survey members for feedback.
- 2) As to how you get information from members, you have to ask people to speak up, to discuss and participate in Chapter meetings and then bring that information forward to the Executive Board/Standing Committees.
- 3) A membership survey should specifically ask how the member prefers to receive information about their Chapter and Guild events and activities.

**NOTE: “Guild pushes charity quilts too much ... new members have left already because they couldn’t keep up the pace and they joined to quilt or to learn to quilt, not to just do charity work.”**

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### **Publicity (Members-at-Large)**

**ISSUE:** Despite naming Publicity as a Guild Standing Committee in the Bylaws, there has not been a chair for some years; individual committees create subcommittees as needed. This means there is not one, cohesive policy, procedures or even guidelines for those who volunteer or who are assigned this task.

#### **ACTION STEPS**

- 1) Publicity is an important function to meet two of the Guild's core purposes: to share the art of quilting and to serve our community. Although a named Standing Committee for some years, no one person has ever volunteered to assume the responsibilities and duties of Publicity Chair. Therefore, we recommend creation of a Publicity Advisory Board. Such a Board would:
  - a) Consist of five to seven Guild members with prior experience in the field of public relations, marketing and/or sales. The members would nominate a Chair for the Guild President's consideration. That individual will serve at the President's pleasure. The Board will create a written document: Publicity Guidelines for the Quilting Guild of The Villages.
  - b) At a minimum, the Guidelines will include a list of appropriate media contacts, including the appropriate print outlets (i.e., newspapers and quilt magazines), local radio and/or television contacts and the Guild and other websites. This list should include an indication as to which functions each type of contact would be most appropriate (e.g., MarketPlace, Showcase, a Chapter event or a retreat, among others).
- 2) The Guidelines will help assure consistency for Guild outreach by including a list of the type of information to be included on all press releases and other print or electronic outreach materials.
- 3) The Guidelines will be published on the Guild website so they can be widely used as a resource for event volunteers and Guild/Chapter officers.
- 4) The Publicity Advisory Board shall review the Guidelines on an annual basis or more frequently, as they deem appropriate.
- 5) It is hoped that creation of an Advisory Board of five to seven Guild members will provide a way to enhance outreach by the Guild without over burdening any one individual. It also will create a body with built-in succession planning. If this concept works well, it may become a model for the future, for other ideas that would be too burdensome for one person to take on, alone.
- 6) To create the first Advisory Board, the Guild President will ask each Chapter President to send her brief descriptions of the prior experience of any of their members who would be willing to serve.