

## **Beatrix Farrand Society: Membership**

**DRAFT**

Arthur Keller: September 6, 2012  
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### Increased Emphasis on Membership is Important:

1. Annual revenue needs to be increased, and an greater focus on membership will help, especially over time.
2. Increasing membership can create an additional pool of people for Board positions and Volunteers.
3. New members, once interested and committed, can move up to higher membership levels and will perhaps become donors.
4. A higher number of members will help obtain grants.

### Action Plan Possibilities

#### **Strengthen Existing Membership**

Develop Personal Relationships. Many organizations (the Neighborhood House and NEH Library are examples) develop personal relationships with their members. Contact via mail throughout the year comes from the organization, but with a personal note from a Board person to the member. It's always the same Board person.

BFS could ask, or require, Board persons to "adopt" members they know, or are acquainted with. Correspondence would include a personal note, especially with the Membership and Annual Fund campaigns.

Enhance Membership Experience. People love to be recognized – it's human nature. Consider the following:

- Special events, small gifts, and private tours of Board persons gardens, are a few examples.
- Publish members names in the newsletter annually, but democratically, using alphabetical order regardless of the size of gift.
- Higher level membership, and/or an additional significant donation, is recognized with something special such as a gift, or lunch with the President, for example.

#### **Effort to Recruit New Members**

Establish a goal for new members at the \$35 level in 2013 -- 30 new members, 50 new members? Ideas:

- Board persons can purchase memberships – for friends, people involved with gardens or historic preservation, neighbors.
- BFS can give away memberships to people on lists developed by Board persons.
- Work with the Island Land and Garden Preserve to give one year memberships to all of their members.
- Give memberships to all MDI and Bar Harbor Garden Club members, of course requiring a renewal fee for subsequent years.

*The objective here is to expose BFS to a selected group in the hope that after one year people will renew on their own.*

#### Effort with Former Members

- Review BFS membership lists for the past five years and write to those whose membership has lapsed asking them to renew.
- A form letter is sent to all former members – “The terrace garden has been fully restored and you should see how beautiful it is. And by the way, we’d love to have you return to us as a member, etc.”
- For those whom are known to Board persons, write personal letters, and perhaps a phone call too.

#### Add members from the prominent year around MDI community:

Give honorary memberships, for example, to:

- Businesses that Donate Pro Bono Work
- COA Leadership
- Bar Harbor Politicians
- MDI Maine State Politicians
- Jackson Lab “Movers and Shakers”
- MDIBL Leadership
- Maine Community Foundation Leaders.
- Owners of Landscaping & Nursery Companies
- Others, such as: Real Estate Brokers, Clergy, Heads of Libraries, Neighbor Hood house, business leaders.

*The point here is to get those prominent local names on our list and have them associated with our organization.*

### **Targeted Recruitment for Potential High Level Donors in the Summer Community.**

BFS has only a very few members who are high-level, local, summer community, donors with other organizations. Develop a list of potential high profile members for BFS.

Though there are over 100 hundred charitable organizations on MDI, there are two which are primary. One is the Friends of Acadia, and the other is

Maine Coast Heritage Trust. The College of the Atlantic is beginning to enjoy the same stature. Among the "social set," being involved at some significant level is essential. Other organizations, such as the NEH Library have large donor lists that are in part maintained by the social pressure of peer group pressure to join.

- Review the lists and with the oversight of the Executive Committee, come up with a small number of people/families to approach about membership. It could be ten or a few more.
- Using personal contacts between the Executive Committee persons and these selected potential members, invite people to lunch to discuss BFS, or to Garland Farm for lunch and a private tour. This works only if it can be one on one and very personal.

*The point is to get started. This not "Development", asking prominent people for lots of money. This is to establish interest, get important community people as members on our lists, even at the opening membership levels, and get them to events using the personal friendship approach. Two things may result:*

- 1. Beginners move to higher levels, both in giving and in increased participation.*
- 2. The "crowd effect" will eventually kick-in. We should have as a goal becoming a charity that large contributors from the social set are "expected" to become members of.*

\*\*\*\*\*Note\*\*\*\*\*

Yet to be written is a section on implementation. It should address the role of the Board, the Executive Committee, and the Membership and Development Committees.

Realizing that I am not a member of those groups, I humbly submit these ideas in the hope that they may be helpful, but knowing that I am unable to participate in the implementation, at least until the next summer season.