

S★M★A★R★T

MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLAN

September 2011

Section I

INTRODUCTION

In May 2011, recruiting and retention figures for the period beginning on September 1, 2010 were released by the SMART Headquarters Office. These figures are shown in table 1. Below.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION			
Member Status	Add	Delete	Delete
New Members	147		
Reinstated Members	27		
Dropped Member - Not Chapter Members		105	
Dropped Member – Chapter Members		135	
Dropped Member – Member for 1 year			61
Dropped Member – Member for more than 1 year			179
TOTAL	174	240	240

Table 1. Recruiting and Retention for the period of Sept 2010 thru May 2011

These figures show a decline in the membership of SMART in that the number of deleted members exceeds the number of added members. This is a trend that must be reversed if the club is to remain solvent and viable.

This SMART Membership Action Plan details methods that could reverse this trend and add and retain valuable members. The basis of this plan is compiled from input received from the members of the Membership and Publicity Committee, the Executive Committee, various members of the Board of Directors, and from individual members of SMART. All of the input received was based on individual concern for the future of the club and personal ideas and recommendations. This input has been forwarded to me over the past six months and is presented in the following Sections: Section I, Membership Improvements, and Section II, Support and Justification.

This plan, detailed in Section I, consists of 4 parts that provide the actions necessary to attract and retain members in SMART. Part 1 is a membership offer that provides an incentive for new members to join SMART. Part 2 provides an expanded one-year free membership offer to any member of SMART for every five members that join SMART. Part 3 is a sponsorship program, often used in the military, to welcome new members and ease their transition into the club. Part 4 provides an increased promotion and awareness of the STAR program, including the STAR Chapter and STAR Award recognition.

In total, the parts of this plan present a total package to promote membership and continue the commitment to the ideals of SMART as a lifestyle in the RVing community.

The intent of this plan is to vitalize the membership roles of SMART and create a viable club for many years to come. Part 1, Membership Offer, may be offered for only a specific period of time and may be reintroduced periodically as a method of promoting membership in SMART.

Section II

MEMBERSHIP IMPROVEMENTS

Part 1. Membership Offer. This membership offer is valid only one time per new member. It cannot be applied to previous members requesting reinstatement or members with lapsed periods in their membership. This offer is only extended one time to a new SMART member and is available only to the member eligible to join SMART in their own right and is not extended to spouses or partners. This offer consists of:

Reduced Cost Two-year membership. The standard fee for initial membership as stated on the SMART Membership Application would apply. Chapter membership is also required to begin during first three months of initial membership and continuing throughout the two years of membership. However, chapter membership fees are not part of this offer and must be paid by the member and spouse/partner as applicable. Chapter Presidents will be required to validate active chapter membership of those members accepting this offer. Those persons applying for membership under this offer are required to complete a form, supplied in the New Member Packet, stating that they understand the terms and conditions of the membership offer. Also, the President of the chapter joined will certify their membership in that chapter. These members will have three months from the date of joining SMART to join a chapter, obtain the Chapter President's affirmation of membership and return the form to SMART Headquarters. The member and Chapter President will be required to again certify active chapter membership at the beginning of the second year of membership. If the member fails to maintain active chapter membership during the first year, the second year of membership will be withdrawn and the member will be required to pay the membership renewal rate in place at that time.

Additional Years Membership. SMART membership for a third and additional years membership would be at the renewal membership fee in place at that time.

Part 2. Free Membership For Recruiting. A one-year free membership will be given to any member of SMART that recruits five members into the club. To receive the free membership for recruiting, the SMART member must have their dues currently paid and have a Member Number. Spouses/partners are also eligible if they have their own Member Number and their dues are currently paid. To receive the free membership, the member recruited must be either a new member, a person that are eligible to join SMART and have never previously been a member, or former members that have been dropped from membership in SMART. Former members are eligible to be included in this offer only if they have been in dropped status for at least six (6) months and have never previously been recruited from dropped status. There is no limitation to the number of one-year free membership that a SMART member may receive for recruiting.

Part 3. Sponsorship Program. Each new member that joins SMART will be assigned a Sponsor. The Sponsor will serve for one year, and would ideally be the person that sponsored (placed their SMART Member Number on their application). However, the Sponsor could be a member of the chapter the new member joins. The Sponsor will be assigned by SMART Headquarters based on the recommendation of the President of the chapter that the member joins. The Sponsor will be responsible for informing the member about SMART membership, chapter membership, SMART Musters and SMART Caravans. The Sponsor should accompany the member to as many of these functions, as possible, during the first year of membership. The Sponsor would introduce the new member to other members, and promote their active participation in various SMART activities.

Part 4. SMART Tops at Recruiting (STAR). STAR is a two-fold program that recognizes members who achieve specific recruiting goals and a chapter whose members have all received this STAR award.

STAR Award. The STAR recognition program will be upgraded to a more prominent position in the SMART club. Members who receive Stars in recognition for their recruiting efforts will be formally recognized, on stage during formal ceremonies, at both the National Muster and the Regional Muster in the area they reside. The member(s) being recognized does not need to be present to be recognized, but a presentation ceremony should then be arranged at a chapter muster or meeting. Recognition will also be made in “The SMART Traveler”, SMART E News, and on the website.

STAR Chapter. The STAR Chapter is a critical component of the recruitment and retention (R&R) within SMART. To enhance the chapter’s role in R&R, the following changes are required:

1. Elevate the STAR Chapter to SMART Standing Rules, Group 7, Committees and National Appointed Positions status, and designate the chapter as a National Service Chapter.

2. The Chapter President would be a permanent non-voting participant of the National Board of Directors per SR 06-10.

3. The National Recruiting and Retention Coordinator would be selected from the membership of the STAR Chapter and be nominated by the STAR Chapter President. Article 7 of the Corporate Bylaws, Article 7.02 specifies that the President of SMART makes the appointment. This will be done through the advice and nomination of the STAR Chapter.

4. Standing Rule SR 7.02, National Recruiting and Retention Coordinator, would be changed to STAR Chapter. The text of SR 7.02 would be changed to define the expanded role of the STAR Chapter within SMART which would include STAR recruiting recognition program, the National R&R Coordinator, and the role of the STAR chapter working with the Membership and Publicity Committee.

5. The role of the STAR Chapter will be redefined to that of a national service chapter to SMART.

6. The STAR Chapter President, or representative, will be given a place on the agenda of all National and Regional Muster formal ceremonies, opening or closing. This agenda entry will provide the opportunity to formally recognize the contributions of the STAR chapter to the membership strength and health of SMART. Recognition of STAR award holders present should be made and those holders thanked for their support of the club.

Section III

SUPPORT AND JUSTIFICATION

Part 1. Membership Offer. Membership in SMART must be an attractive offer. In this current uncertain economy, value received is of primary consideration to everyone. The value of the product, in this case membership, must be perceived as a worthwhile investment. Once joining SMART becomes financially attractive, the value of membership becomes more apparent. This membership offer may be for an extended period or defined for a limited period and determined prior to implementation. It consists of a two-year SMART membership plan in which the first year of membership is paid at the current rate followed by a second year of membership with no fee. This fee structure coupled with chapter membership is considered, a key to continued membership. Chapter membership fees are not considered are not considered part of this offer and are paid by the new member and spouse, as applicable.

Chapter membership has always been recognized as a key element in maintaining members in SMART. A common feeling among SMART members is that if you can get a person into a chapter and into their second year of membership, you have them for the rest of their RVing life. Those that drift and never join a chapter tend to fall away and leave SMART as quietly as they joined.

We, SMART, must get new members active in the club and in a chapter, and keep their participation level at a peak.

What will this offer cost? This is a question that must be asked when considering the cost and benefit. The HQ staff looked at the costs involved in membership and reduced those numbers to the lowest common denominator. There is no change in the cost and benefit of the first year of membership. The cost of the second year of membership can be broken down to:

1. The cost to maintain a member for one year equals the cost of mailing "The SMART Traveler" to that member. No other direct cost can be associated with a member that can't be amortized within the club itself. The benefit would be revenues that member would generate through participation in Regional and National Musters, SMART Caravans, purchases in the SMART Store, and a spousal membership.
2. The cost associated with losing a member includes loss of revenue from SMART Regional and National activities, sales store purchases, preparation and postage for delinquent and lapsed membership mailings and other administrative costs associated with dropping a member. There is no benefit received from dropping a member.

Part 2. Free Membership For Recruiting. This part of the plan expands the current recruiting reward incentive to include members of SMART that have dropped their membership. This is a category of member, the dropped member that often goes unnoticed

and forgotten. This added recruiting effort not only brings valuable past members back into the club, but provides incentives for doing so.

Part 3. Sponsorship Program. Sponsorship programs are nothing new. Many organizations use this approach to orient new members and maintain active member participation. This type of program has been successfully used in the military for decades. Sponsorship programs are used to overcome the initial reluctance to participate that everyone feels when they join a new organization. Programs such as this draw the new member in and make them feel part of the organization.

A sponsor would ensure that new members receive orientation on SMART and the chapter they join. The sponsor would make them feel welcome and a part of the club and the chapter. Sponsors ease their participation in the club, answer their questions and address their concerns during the first year of membership. As a National appointee, the Sponsor would receive the full support of SMART Headquarters and BOD.

Part 4. SMART Tops at Recruiting (STAR). STAR was created to recognize recruiting efforts within SMART. The STAR recognition program is an important tool in maintaining membership levels in SMART. The program which includes the STAR Award and the STAR Chapter recognizes individual recruiting efforts which are of vital importance to continued success of the club. However, recognition of those individuals that achieve one of the various STAR award levels is often relegated to minor recognition. Additionally, the STAR Chapter does not receive the recognition that the chapter and its members are due. As a result, the chapter is perceived as being a limited member social chapter rather than service chapter that benefits SMART. The presence of the STAR Chapter at SMART functions should be promoted without creating the appearance of a special class of SMART member. This could be done by hosting (not paying for) an activity/luncheon/social at club activities open to all SMART members. This could be done through meal preparation, serving line attendees, welcoming and greeting, or other prominent activities within SMART.

STAR Award. Although the added benefit of 1-year free membership for recruiting efforts is desirable from increasing membership, it is not the driving force behind recruitment. Recruitment by SMART members is driven by three factors. The first is the desire to see SMART grow as a self-sustaining organization. The second, although not openly acknowledged, is the recognition that comes with attaining recruitment levels recognized with the presentation of the appropriate STAR award. Third is the 1-year free membership that a member receives upon recruiting 5 new members or multiple thereof. This third factor, although desirable, is not as motivational to the average member as the first two.

STAR Chapter. . The STAR Chapter is beneficial to the organizational health of SMART. The feeling among many members is that the STAR Chapter promotes itself rather than the ideals and goals of the club. By elevating the chapter to National status and placing their President on the National Board of Directors would give the chapter the prominence that is required. These changes would bring the STAR Chapter to the forefront

in energizing the membership of the club and ensure the continued organizational health of SMART.

The National R&R Coordinator will be selected from within the STAR Chapter and will be someone well-versed in recruitment and retention. The members of the STAR Chapter have all proven that they possess the attributes required for this position. Having the National Recruiting and Retention Coordinator come from that Chapter and working with the Membership and Publicity Committee, the chapter would serve as a central focal point for recruitment and retention issues and guidance.