

PROMOTING MEMBERSHIP AT YOUR MEETING

Each club has its own way of managing things, but here are a few ideas that clubs have found successful for encouraging potential members to become members.

- Have at least two tables set up. One table is the sign-in table. Have both a guest and a membership sign-in list. The other table displays hand-outs. Hand-outs can come from any club member. An extra copy of a commercial catalog, an extra star chart printed by some computer program, extra copies of meteor watching forms, whatever. (You do not need one for every member. A good way to meet people is to ask them to send the copy on to you when they are finished with it.)
- Appoint a rotating “Welcoming Committee” for guests to make sure guests sign in. The committee members should also ask how they heard about the club, if they are experienced or inexperienced, and generally make them feel welcome. The committee members should be sure each guest has a Guest Name Tag.
- Appoint a rotating “New Member Committee.” Members of this committee try to initiate conversation with new members who don’t know many people yet. A New Member Name Tag is helpful. All club members should recognize this New Member Name Tag and try to make the new member feel at home.
- During the meeting, guests can stand up and tell the club about themselves. Assure guests that the most common statement is, “I don’t know anything about astronomy but I am curious” and “I don’t have a telescope.”
- Introduce new members. Ask them to refresh everyone’s memories about how they happened to come to the meeting and what they hope to get out of the club.
- Buy or ask for donations for small door prizes. Paid-up members who are present can put their names in the hat for the prize. (Announcing that paid-up members are eligible for the door prize and then breaking for refreshments is a good way to encourage people to join right then. Have the treasurer stand up before the refreshments so everyone knows who he/she is.)
- Encourage members to wear their observing pins as conversation openers with guests.
- Announce all new members receive a Membership Package to get them started.

Some ideas for New Member Packages include:

1. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of club current members and all office holders.
2. Letter of Welcome from the club president.
3. Dates, places, and times of both meetings and scheduled observing nights for the year. (Include a map showing parking and entrances to use, if appropriate.)
4. An annotated list of beginner’s books, planispheres, charts, and why they are good. A list of what to avoid isn’t a bad idea either. Include the address of the AL Book Service (see last pages of this kit). Remember to tell them they must include a check for the retail price of the book less 10%, and they must state which club they belong to.
5. Club library holdings, borrowing procedures, and phone number of club librarian.
6. Schedule of speakers.

7. List of awards available through the Astronomical League. Include a brief description.
(You may use “Benefits of Astronomical League Membership” from this publicity kit.)
8. Star charts for the year or for the current season.
9. Directions to the club observing site and what to bring (i.e., red flashlight, mosquito repellent, thermos, lawn chair, etc.).
10. Names and phone numbers of club members who observe in their own backyards and would welcome company.
11. List of the current committees and special interest groups and their chairpersons.
12. Any commercial catalogs or hand-outs from any vendor.
13. Copies of Astro Notes (You may xerox your copies for new members. Astro Notes are not sold for profit by the AL. The charges for copies are only for copying costs and mailing.)
14. Club Constitution or Bylaws.
15. Any odds and ends you find about astronomy. The packages need not be identical from month to month or from package to package.