



# Membership & Promotion

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Welcome to the third issue of the Membership & Promotions Newsletter!

Who Are We?

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And a Cast of  
Thousands!



## A Message from the Chair

Hello One and All! How can it be the third quarter already?! Where does the time go? I hope you are all keeping cool and enjoying the additional color pages in *African Violet* magazine. Thanks go to editor, Ruth Rumsey for negotiating a contract with more color! Membership & Promotions continues in its charge of increasing AVSA membership. This often means we have to tackle and talk about the subjects that make people uncomfortable. It would be nice if the Membership Fairy over there to the left waved her wand and we never had to worry about membership again. It would just take care of itself. And it would be nice if someone else did all the work and we could just go and socialize and enjoy our affiliates' programs and refreshments. The work part would just take care of itself. *It would be nice . . . It would just take care of itself . . .*

Well, of course it would be nice – but you and I both know that it just doesn't work that way. *We* are the AVSA. *We* are our affiliates. Have you heard this before: "I did my turn, now it's someone else's turn." Maybe you've even thought it yourself – Let me take a leaf from Jane Addams (of Hull House fame) here: "If not here, then where? If not now, then when? And if not me, then who?" She was speaking of the settlement house (Hull House) she founded in 1888 in Chicago. But it's a well-used quote that covers a lot of ground, and I use it here in reference to AVSA membership.

I know it can be frustrating when no one raises their hand to volunteer to take over a job or affiliate office, but let me tell you that **our national membership push is so critical that none of us can sit back and relax**. I mean it. AVSA membership is currently 7% lower than at this same time last year. We must all step up to this challenge.

Here's something I learned early on about volunteering – when they call for volunteers, *step right up* and volunteer for what you want to do. You usually get your first choice that way ☺ I am personally asking you to step up where AVSA membership is concerned. Strive for 100% AVSA membership in your affiliate. Make AVSA your first choice.

I encourage you to stay involved – mentor a new member – share your knowledge – grow your plants – and promote the AVSA every chance you get.

— Adrienne "Annie" Rieck

## Convention Chatter 2006 Online!

This year's annual Convention Chatter piece, written by Carolee Carter and me, is online! There are great photos and lots of useful information there. It's available for download on the AVSA National Convention page, at [www.avsa.org/NationalConvention.html](http://www.avsa.org/NationalConvention.html).

## Your email Contact Info

We have received many emails asking us to change an email address. We are able to do this only for the AVSA M&P emails. To update your affiliate's contact info on the AVSA website, you must contact AVSA Webmaster, Jim Owens, at [jimowens@columbus.rr.com](mailto:jimowens@columbus.rr.com), or Affiliate Chair, Bev Promersberger at [promers22@hotmail.com](mailto:promers22@hotmail.com). Thank you!



Annie (L) and Carolee (R), ready to board the riverboat during the 2005 AVSA National Convention. We keep telling you how much fun Convention is! Plan now for 2006 in Minneapolis!

*Is there something specific you'd like us to cover? Let us know!*



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## NOW What???

Are you a Lifetime AVSA member? If so, I'm sure you're pleased with the value you've gotten over the years, particularly if you joined many years ago. You don't pay annual dues any longer, but have you thought about making a donation to the AVSA? It's easy to do, and the AVSA is a 503(c) non-profit organization, which makes your donation tax-deductible!

## Free Publicity! Sign Me Up!

As promised last quarter, let's talk a bit about publicity this time. This subject was tackled by AVSA Affiliate Chair, Bev Promersberger at the national convention this year, and reported upon in the Convention Chatter report. As mentioned earlier, this report is available online at: [www.avsa.org/NationalConvention.html](http://www.avsa.org/NationalConvention.html).

### What's a Press Release and Why Do I Need One?

A press release is one of the easier ways to garner some free publicity. You should prepare one for any major event you would like to publicize – such as your annual show, or display and sale. Press release copy is basically the opposite of marketing copy. You want the facts in a clear, concise manner that will still engage the interest of your intended audience. Carolee has created a sample press release that covers the basic elements that every press release needs. You can use it as a template to write your own release for your next event.

It is available for download on the Library page of the AVSA website:

<http://www.avsa.org/Library.asp>

### You Said Something About . . . Free . . . ?

Yes, we did, didn't we. All it takes is an email to *African Violet* magazine editor, Ruth Rumsey. She will send you print outs of photos that have run in the magazine (please note that these must be returned to her) to loan to your local newspapers to use to accompany an article focusing on African violets. Ruth will also include a brief history of the AVSA, mentioning the current convention info. The rest is up to you. Use your press release, ask the paper interview one of your affiliate's top growers (a great photo op!).

Remember to plan ahead. Most papers need some lead time for a story such as this. Don't contact them three days before the show; they will most likely need *at least* two to three weeks lead time – and some require three or four. If they do the story, ask that they include it in their online edition too.

Finally, your affiliate can get 25 back issues of *African Violet* magazine at the cost of postage to ship them. These are great to have at your show – staff your AVSA Educational Display during show hours so there is someone there to talk about the AVSA and offer a “free magazine with every AVSA membership.” Annie has used this strategy very successfully in the past.

### Don't Forget the Simple Stuff

In closing, don't forget the simple things, such as half-sheet flyers you can make and distribute to local greenhouses, garden centers, and community bulletin boards. Do you have a local radio station with a “coming events” broadcast? What about your community cable access channel? These are all possible free publicity outlets. We hope these ideas and the sample press release will help you drum up some publicity for your next event. Target your market! Let us know how it goes! ☺

## Next Issue – What's Coming Up?

Our Fourth Quarter newsletter will be available in November/December 2005. Please let us know if there is something you would like us to cover!