

Editors Editorial on Club Dues – my opinion only.

Once upon a time (1982 to ~2003) the club dues “as set” in the by-laws were \$24 per year. However around 2003, the club membership was dropping off and money was also getting tight for many members.

Since the club at that time had no recurring expense – other than now and then we did buy things - we voted to drop yearly club dues in hope to retain membership. (It didn’t really work though)

But here it is 2012 and for the last few months we have been thinking of bring back club dues because our treasury as dropped to a couple of hundred dollars. So at the October club meeting and the December Christmas party and meeting, it was voted to charge \$5 per year to help stabilize the treasury for any future expenditure.

This all sounded good, but the question keeps popping up among members and feedback from the newsletters – “[Why do we really need dues](#)”. If there is something we want to buy then just take up a collection.

Well let me give you a “minimum” of three reasons to bring back yearly dues.

1 – The club website and newsletter.

I just got the first notice from my website domain registor company that the clubs domain name – www.SierraRotorCraftClub.org – is with and it is up for renewal. To keep a presence on the Internet and run the newsletter, it cost me around \$200 per year. Since 2000, I have been paying that cost out of my own pocket without any reimbursement from the club. **I have decided not to pay for it any more.** So as of April 25, 2012 we will no longer have a website for the club and I’m not going to send out newsletter like we used to pre-2000.

You may say “No be deal” the by-laws don’t recognize a website anyway and we shouldn’t have one. So let’s go back to the way we used to keep people informed and that was with a monthly paper (hard copy) newsletter sent through the US post office.

Yes - we can do that and we would be in guidance with the by-laws. However, taking into consideration the cost of paper, stamps, printer ink, and the many hours to typing up and print a monthly newsletter is something I don’t want to do and it is quit costly now a days.

Let’s look at the cost of printing a hardcopy of a newsletter:

[Members on our mailing list ~70 people](#)

[Cost of a rim of paper](#) – cheap rim ~ \$8.00 (500 sheets in rim)

[Cost of ink](#) – for my printer ~\$14.00 per cartridge and I have 4 of them in my printer.

[Cost of stamps](#) - ~ 50 cents each (I haven’t mailed a letter in probably 5 years, so I’m just guessing)

Average newsletter size in the past – 3 to 4 pages (280 sheets or half a rim of paper)

Cost to send out 70 newsletters per year. (Remember the yearly cost of our website ~\$200.00 per year.)

Paper - \$4.00 per month or \$48.00 per year.

Ink - Black only (don't need color prints) \$7.00 per month or \$84 per year

Stamps - (70 stamps) \$35.00 per months or \$420.00 per year

And this is not counting the many hours spent putting a newsletter together each month.

Should I continue with the math?

You're Vote - \$552 per year for a paper copy of a newsletter or \$200.00 per year for a website? Note the by-laws will need to be amended to cover a website or we shouldn't have one. – Just my opinion!

2 – Club Helicopter Simulator

The club helicopter simulator still has a lot of work to be done on it. It wouldn't surprise me if we sunk another \$500.00 into this project.

The club helicopter simulator is working somewhat but more money is needed to make it "SAFE TO OPERATE". Constant maintenance is the other thing, just like any other flying machine.

Now that the Simulator is mounted on a trailer a platform of some kind needs to be produced. Mike Woolson thought about the cost of just materials for a basic platform would run about \$90-130. That's plywood, 2x4's, hinges if it were to be folding and screws, nails, paint/stain, ect. Thing add up fast – don't they?

3 – Miscellaneous Expenses

Every now and then the club will purchase something that will benefit the builders in the club. The last thing we purchase around three years ago was a Main Rotor Blade Tracker light system. This idem consisted of two different colored lights attached to your rotor blades. During Maintenance, if your blades are not tracing properly, you will see two distinct light paths – neat. We paid \$75 dollars for this tool.

The club has several great tools available to builder to checkout and use. Our club President is the watch keeper of our tool list.

Other times we like to donate money to various activities. Two activities being the Vertical Challenge helicopter event hosted by Hiller Museum. Another is to Central Sierra Helicopter meet – usually at the end of May – and hosted by Hap and Nancy Miller.

To be a member of PRA (we're chapter 58) all clubs are suppose to pay annual dues of \$100's plus a year. We as a club haven't done that in several years (lack of money) and I'm surprised that they allow us to remain in their database of clubs. We get a lot of referrals recognition from the PRA organization and would be a shame not to be part of them.

One other expense that I absorb is the cost to manage the clubs email database. I use a company called Aweber that manages subscribers and all follow up emails to new members. It also once a week automatically goes into the clubs website and collects all the post for that week and then sends them to every person in the mailing list. I pay \$19 per month for this service. However, I have other mailing list so not all this money is for the club mailing. This is why I absorb all the cost for this expenditure. And yes I hear what you are saying – just use my personal email server, like outlook express or Firefox's Thunderbird. I could, but with 70 plus members on the mailing list, it becomes a bitch to manage. And if you recall, about three weeks ago, I mentioned in the newsletter that my computer hiccupped and I lost my entire email address in Thunderbird. Do you know how time consuming that would be to rebuild and not to mention, no one in the club will ever come forward to offer their help.

In Summary

So I hope you now see the need for a treasury and some of the club financial challenges in the future. There are 70 plus members in the club scattered throughout the United States and other countries. But the balk of the membership is within driving distance to participate in club functions and some 20 members are either building a helicopter or a gyro-plan.

However, most of the members do not come to the club meetings (why – I don't know, this is where you get your help) and there needs to be some form of communications to everyone.

So – thanks for reading this – I know it is a little long.

... Editor – jim burrow

P.S. – If we charge dues from everyone, what do we have to offer to those members that live to far away and will never be able to enjoy the club activates? Or should there be a free members and a paid membership depending on what we have to offer? The clubs president and the board of Directors would welcome your feedback.