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Club Group Travel

by Warren Redford

Some years ago the members of the Tidewater Gem & Mineral Society of Norfolk, Virginia, decided to travel by bus to Washington, D.C. This first trip was for the purpose of visiting the Hall of Gems and Minerals in the Smithsonian Institute.

The cost of the charter bus was determined and the average cost per passenger was calculated. The next step was to set up a Family Rate Plan, whereby the first two members of a family paid the average price, but a third member paid somewhat less than the average price and a fourth or fifth member of the family still paid less. The club then paid the difference for these few members. In almost every case these third and fourth members were junior members. This subsidy allowed more families to go on the trip. The club members believed that this subsidy was an excellent way to encourage family participation in club activities as well as to promote junior member interest. The club members said "we couldn't spend the money in the treasury in a better way", and "club treasuries are not just for the sole purpose of accumulating money and interest, but to also provide support for activities of an educational nature and to promote civic interest in our fascinating hobby".

With the quoted views of these club members in mind all our clubs might want to consider using the club's treasury as a means to promote activities such as the one just mentioned.

But lets continue group travel. The field trip to the Smithsonian Institution not only proved interesting and educational but also provided many opportunities to enjoy conversations and fellowship with other club members during the bus rides. Additionally most members brought along some special cookies or snacks which were enjoyed by all. Both going and on the return trip.

One other aspect of that trip was that a survey was conducted among the group by asking the question "if you did not ride the bus today how would you have traveled?" "How many of you would have traveled together?" and "how many miles per gallon does your vehicle deliver per gallon of fuel?" the bus was a 43 passenger bus that was about 90 percent full. After all of these facts and figures were assembled (including the fuel for the bus) and calculations produced it was revealed that by traveling together in this manner 366 gallons of fuel were saved.

The second group trip from Virginia Beach, Virginia to Claymont, Delaware for the Delaware Mineralogical Society Annual Show. This trip was taken by the Old Dominion Earth Science Society in a 14 passenger rented van with 12 club members participating. This trip was in 1984. Four members were signed on by the rental car company as drivers and the van was rented for two days.

The cost per person for travel on this trip was \$ 25.00 which included van rental and fuel. The motel cost were additional, however, a group rate was negotiated prior to departure for the show which helps to minimize the travel cost for this group.

Your club might want to consider a trip similar to these just described . They are enjoyable, they promote club unity, no one person does all the driving and subsidizing family travel to shows provides an excellent use for some of the club's money. Some clubs do not have the money to do this, but many clubs can afford to use some of their funds in this manner. Many organizations, once they have a sizable treasury just like to see that treasury continue to grow. Don't let that happen to your club. Plan a club group trip. Most likely if you do plan a first trip it won't be long before members will be thinking about and talking about and maybe even planning that second club bus trip.