

As the Northeast Heather Society enters into 2017, we have made a decision which will affect whether or not we are still here in 2025. In order to enter into the age of digital media, we are spending money to upgrade the NHS website. The annual cost of this is the equivalent to 11 new members and then keeping this same number or more for each succeeding year. In order to do this, all of us need to be thinking of ways to increase our membership. Frank Kirk had a good idea which is to promote new memberships in New York at our annual Fort Tryon Trimming Party at the culmination of Scottish Week by offering a free heather plant to everyone who signs up for a membership in the NHS. In our meeting after the Trimming Party, we will solicit additional ideas and suggestions. If you can't join us on April 8th in NYC, feel free to send me via email any ideas you might have which you would like us to discuss.

The back side of the gamble of spending approximately \$ 165 / year on the website is that if we don't add new members, unless we make other changes to our cost structure, we will deplete the funds required to keep the NHS going. We are not the only club or association facing problems with falling memberships. Companies such as ESPN (Sports Cable Channel) which is owned by Disney is also losing money every month and if faced with the prospect of cutting several hundred staff in the coming months. Another hobby which consumes time is golf. Dicks Sporting Goods as well as Nike are dropping the sport because people just don't have the time any more to spend 5 hours on the weekend playing a round of golf and paying the greens fees associated with the sport. The NHS is not an organization which takes a lot of time (or money) on an annual basis. We just need to figure our a way to increase our membership by a few people so that we can maintain a positive bank balance.

Over the next few days, most if not all (my location in Southern Delaware may be the only one to escape the coming snow storm) of you are going to be hit by a Spring snow storm. In addition, many of you have probably already had several days in the 60's and the ground may have thawed in spots where the sun has a direct hit. You may have already seen tender new growth. Along with high, cold winds - these are the types of spring weather conditions which can adversely effect your heaths and heathers. Let us know how your plants have faired this winter and if possible, whether or not the late cold weather had an effect on your plants.

Good luck and All the best,

Bill Dowley