

## Cracking the Code on Recruiting

by Larry P. Cornwell, LaCornwell@aol.com, winner of the Florence Kendall Medal for recruiting the most new members in 2007 and 2008

Regular readers of the "Leader Express" perhaps remember my three articles over the past two years that gave detailed tips on recruiting new members, researching their ancestry, and submitting their applications (archived at sar.org). I've now discovered a new recruiting tool, a poster or flyer that a distant cousin made for me in September 2009 to thank me for sponsoring his membership in the SAR. My flyer shows me in uniform in front of audiences, lists my topics, depicts the types of organizations that would appreciate my messages, and gives my contact information.

The poster can be viewed at [alssar.org/SpeakerLarryCornwell.htm](http://alssar.org/SpeakerLarryCornwell.htm). I showcased it to the Membership Committee at the 2009 Fall Leadership Meeting, and promised to update the Committee at the Spring 2010 meeting on the poster's success. Here's my report:

I've made two discoveries. One, the most prolific sources of prospective members are the organizations to which they already belong. Those members have already proven themselves to be joiners. Two, I've discovered that program chairmen are always looking for guest speakers. My challenge, then, was to find a way to get invited as a speaker, in Revolutionary War uniform, not only to inform the public about the American Revolution, but to also recruit for the SAR.

For the first nine months of 2009, I had only five such speaking engagements. I relied on word of mouth referrals by chapter members. After I received the poster in September, I made color copies and handed them out at my SAR chapter meeting and also e-mailed the poster to chapter members. I asked every member to take a copy to each of his organizations' meetings, hand it to the president or program chairman, and recommend me as a speaker.

Results were swift and spectacular. Within days, I had eight speaking engagements scheduled for the next two months, with more on the calendar for the following months. I was invited to speak before a DAR chapter, Daughters of the American Colonists, the state Society of the Magna Charta Dames and Barons, two church groups, Sons of the Confederate Veterans, a Kiwanis Club, and a Rotary Club. As hoped, many in the audiences expressed interest in joining the SAR, or had family members or acquaintances who might want to join. I was especially gratified when a former chief justice of the state supreme court asked me to help him with his application. I've already submitted

seventeen new applications for approval in 2010, and am working on two dozen more.

I remain convinced that the SAR could grow much larger, if only more SAR members were willing to develop their recruiting skills. These prospective members are "out there," just waiting for you to approach them with the SAR message. My distant cousin, who, by the way, is a professional graphic designer, is very enthusiastic about the SAR and will design a similar poster for any SAR member for a greatly reduced price. A flyer offering your speaking services might be just your ticket to greater recruitment success.