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Subject: Collecting dues this year
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To: Stephanie sae1581@gmail.com

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Welcome to Seedlings
***A newsletter devoted to helping Ikebana chapters
in the North & Central American Region
(NCAR) thrive and grow!***

We hope that you have had an opportunity to talk with your [Regional Advocate](#) about your chapter. They have most likely reached out to you. If they left a message, please return their call as they do have ways to help your chapter. If you have yet to connect, try contacting them yourself. Here is a [link to their contact information.](#)

We are very aware of the many cancellations of Ikebana events in the NCAR

due to COVID-19. Chapters have cancelled everything from chapter meetings, board meetings, to major exhibits, luncheons and demonstrations.

We are also aware that this is the time of year when many chapters collect dues and they rely on doing so in person at their chapter meetings. So, we put on our thinking caps on how this could be done at a time of self quarantine and social distancing. Here are a few ideas on how you might streamline your dues collection with a primary goal of maintaining (if not increasing) your chapter membership numbers.

- **Drop requiring forms -**
 - Many of you have forms to be filled out when collecting dues, this might be the year to drop the form and just collect a check if the member has no changes in important information. Send an email to your members asking them to mail a check to your treasurer and be sure to give them the amount due and the address of where to mail the check. If there are important changes in contact information, simply ask the member to email the new information to whomever keeps your membership records.
- **Set up alternative electronic payment forms**
 - Your chapter can set up a [Zelle](#) or [Venmo](#) account (or Interac in Canada) connected to your chapter bank account. Check with your bank to see if they take Zelle and/or Venmo first. Then, tell your members you can accept payment that way. If they have a Zelle or Venmo account, the member just sends the chapter the money. Use your chapter email address for this convenient method - not a personal cell phone number! **No fees, no envelopes, no stamps, nothing in the mail.** The chapter will receive a confirming email telling them who paid their dues.
 - Set up a [PayPal](#) account. Lots of members have PayPal. Just increase the dues a little bit to account for the 2.9% plus \$.30 per transaction fee that is paid by the receiver not the sender. An \$80 dues payment would yield about \$77.47 (2.9% of \$80 is \$2.32 plus \$.30 cents for a total fee of \$2.53)
 - Consider taking credit cards by establishing a Square account. The reader is free and you can take the credit card information over the

phone for a 2.5% fee. (A \$2.00 fee on an \$80 charge). The funds go directly to the chapter bank account that is provided when the account is set up. [Here is a link](#) to the Square website. It will take a few days for receipt of the reader and the account to be set up. If you wish, add a couple dollars to the membership fee when paying with a credit card. Your members will appreciate this convenience. One call to the member who has the Square reader and voila - dues are paid!

- **Offer incentives**

- Consider earlier payments with a reduced membership fee. (e.g. 10% or \$5).
 - Or if you charge for meetings - consider one free meeting with dues paid by a certain date.
 - Or put all the names of those paying by a certain date in a hat for a drawing of a free luncheon or vase donated by a member.
- Announce a membership referral program \$5 off this years/next years dues for one referred member; \$10 off for 2 referred members and \$25 for 3 or more. However, the new member must renew for at least one year!

Keep Communications Open

Communicate any or all of this via email to your chapter members (using your chapter email address of course). If you have members that don't have email, set up a calling tree to connect with everyone. In fact, what a great way to promote "*friendship through flowers*" at this historic time. Set up a calling tree and have everyone be contacted to check on how they are doing, how are their families and do they need help.

As an alternative to in person meetings, consider setting up a conference call. It's free through freeconferencecall.com. All you need is a phone contact and email address. You receive a conference call number you can give to anyone you are inviting to attend the meeting along with an access code. Very easy to setup and use. Special numbers available for our Canada.

Finally, remind your members of just how much Ikebana and their many

"friendships through flowers" mean. Here is a list of just a few of the benefits of membership on the Ikebana International headquarters website.

1. Three issues of Ikebana International Magazine annually
2. Access to all past issues of I.I. newsletters viewable online through the website of I.I. Activities Publication page and Sakura News (I.I. Members Only page)
3. Eligibility to participate in Ikebana International World Conventions and Regional Conferences
4. Eligibility to join Ikebana International's 161 chapters worldwide, to participate in chapters monthly meetings, ikebana demonstrations, exhibitions, workshops, fairs and activities
5. Opportunities to share ideas about ikebana and explore the meaning of our motto Friendship through Flowers by making new friends around the world.

In conclusion, your Regional Advocates want you to know that we have contacted Ikebana International headquarters and requested an extension on paying chapter dues. We have asked the deadline to be extended to July 31, 2020. The I.I. board will have to meet to discuss this request. They did not meet in March due to the corona virus. We will advise you of their decision as soon as we know!

If you need more help on how to set up any of the payment methods or free conference calls or whatever, please contact your [Regional Advocate](#). We are here to help you.

Oh, by the way, we kindly ask that you do not unsubscribe to these mailings and if you happen to forward this message to your chapter members, please ask them not to unsubscribe either. It is our best way to communicate with you.

In friendship through flowers,

[Magdalena Tamura Reid](#) - At Large

[Elizabeth Biddle](#) - East

[David Staats](#) - Midwest

[Susan Cano](#) - South

[Patricia O'Reilly](#) - West

[Stephanie English](#) - Communications Chair



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