

Section

# 1 The President

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*Prayer of a president—  
“Please make my words be true  
and pure, for at question time  
I may have to eat them.”*

## WHAT IS A PRESIDENT?

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A president in Altrusa is a leader whose influence affects all members in her/his club. The level of morale, enthusiasm, and dedication of the club members is in large part a measure of the president's leadership qualities.

Because none of us is infallible, you will make mistakes. The worst mistake you can make is not to face up to your errors. People are forgiving when you do and they will respect your integrity.

There may be times when you feel that the leadership responsibility is too heavy. Be of good cheer; these lows are more than offset by the rewards that will come to you in little ways.

Keep in mind the reason you became a member of Altrusa, the principles and objectives of membership, and the inspiration you can give to others to rise to high levels of leadership.

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### Presidents are...

- P**repared Plan your meeting well in advance and prepare an **agenda**. Statements such as “I forgot” or “I left that at home” reduce your effectiveness in the eyes of the members.
- R**esourceful Never have a bewildered look. If the speaker fails to arrive or the panel “falls apart,” wing it, always have an “ace in the hole.”
- E**nthusiastic Look vibrant, interesting, and alive. The lack of enthusiasm or its abundance can be as contagious as “the 24 hour virus.”
- S**ympathetic Lend an ear, but do not over do it. You owe your time and energy to all and not just to a few. Beware of the constant complainer!
- I**nterested Do not spread yourself too far or you will not be effective in any area. Keep your eye on what you wish to accomplish.
- D**evoted Devotion to the club is necessary; however realize you are not “married” to it. Possessiveness can be fatal! You belong to the club, it does not belong to you.
- E**nergetic It takes a lot of energy so utilize your members. Delegate so you will not have a nervous breakdown during your term.
- N**eutral As president, you are an impartial judge. Do not try to influence. Hear both sides before giving your opinion or making a decision.
- T**actful The ability to get along with people is a valuable asset. Do realize—your members are giving of their valuable time and money to the organization.
- S**incere Believe deeply in your club. Do not use the office as a stepping stone for personal advancement. Give praise generously—it helps to make your job easier!

## **CLUB PRESIDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

As the club's top officer, the president holds the club's most challenging position. At the same time, the office of club president offers the most reward as it is the office most able to move the club forward. With the help of the board and individual committee members, the president can help the membership attain exciting new service achievements as well as gain greater community recognition for the club. In addition, presidents develop the type of leadership skills that are needed and drawn upon by the District when slating officers and appointing committee chairs and by International when making committee appointments.

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### **President's responsibilities to the club**

- Assume the leadership role of president.
- Prepare a written agenda for all club meetings.
- Preside with enthusiasm at meetings.
- Express appreciation for club achievements.
- Follow approved parliamentary procedure.
- Make sure your club has a strategic plan and that it is being implemented and monitored yearly.
- Share District and International communications involving membership.
- Share pertinent information from District and International mailings with officers and committee chairs as soon as possible.
- Oversee the proper functioning of club committees.
- Sign all membership certificates.
- Serve as the club's community representative, attending functions where Altrusa should be represented, or appointing another member to serve as the club's representative.

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### **President's responsibilities to the board**

- Schedule a time and place for regular board meetings.
- Prepare an agenda for board meetings and advance a copy to every board member.
- Preside at board meetings and follow approved parliamentary procedure.
- Allow time for full discussion of business.

- Prepare or assist another board member in preparing the board’s actions and recommendations in concise and clear language before presenting them to the club for its approval.
- Give advance notice of business to be considered by the club when the Bylaws so specify.

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**Responsibilities to the District**

- Keep lines of communication open between District Officers and Committee Chairs.
- Work to have the club’s full delegation of representatives attend District Conference.
- Ensure that the club submits entries for District award competition.
- Keep club members aware of the scope of their membership by encouraging participation in District functions.
- Send recommendations approved by the membership to the District Bylaws, Resolutions and Recommendations Committee Chair for future consideration by the District Board of Directors or delegate body.
- Make sure that all District reports are filed on time.
- Direct the arrangements for the official visit of the District Representative. Once the time of the visit is established, it is the president’s responsibility to do the following:
  1. Advise the District Representative of any club problem or concern that should be addressed during the visit.
  2. Provide the District Representative with a current yearbook and several back issues of the club newsletter.
  3. Oversee the local arrangements, such as accommodations (paid by the District) and publicity.
  4. Arrange for the District Representative to meet alone with the board of directors.

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**Responsibilities to International**

- Implement the Altrusa International Long Range/Strategic Plan by making the biennium strategies an integral part of the total club program.
- Keep members “thinking International” by raising their sights to the scope of their membership.
- Relay any International Bylaw or Policy change or other International Board or Foundation decision to the club membership.
- Work to have the club’s full delegation of representation attend International Convention.

- With the approval of the club membership, send written statements in support of candidates to the International Nominating Committee.
- With the approval of club membership, send recommendations to be considered by the International Board of Directors or delegate body to the International Bylaws, Resolutions and Recommendations Chair.
- Make sure that all reports required by International are filed on time.

## **BASIC TOOLS OF THE JOB**

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Be knowledgeable—be familiar with and have copies of each of these important pieces of material.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Altrusa International Encyclopedia:*** Contains everything you will ever need to know about Altrusa, except for Bylaws and Policies.

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***Bylaws and Policies:*** International and District Bylaws and Policies, and local club Bylaws are to be used in conjunction with your club policies. Have this document at all club meetings.

***Point of Order:*** A useful booklet containing the basics of parliamentary procedure.

***Club President's Handbook:*** Contains information about leadership and planning.

***Altrusa Accent:*** A communication sent by the International office to club presidents. Make sure you distribute information in the *Altrusa Accent* to the appropriate officer, chairman, or member.

***Calendar:*** A necessary tool for you to work efficiently. Make one for yourself incorporating the dates in the *Club President's Handbook*.

***The gavel:*** Meant to be used only at the appropriate times.

***Classification Guide:*** Includes membership and classification help.

***District Service Bulletin:*** Keeps you informed concerning matters in your District.

***Altrusa Accent*** and ***International Altrusan:*** Keep you attuned to matters at the International level.

***Club History:*** Contains History of club.

***Brochures:*** Include *The Altrusa Tradition*, *What is Altrusa?*, the *Sponsors Guide*, as well as locally prepared brochures.

## PRESIDENT'S MONTHLY CHECKLIST

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### June

- .. Present budget at business meeting for adoption.
- .. Present club calendar for the year at business meeting.
- .. Begin having committees develop projects.
- .. Develop yearbook with Yearbook Committee.
- .. Publish first newsletter.
- .. Club's fiscal year begins
- .. Remind treasurer to send \$20.00 to International for Convention fee (billed with dues).
- .. Dues must be mailed by June 15 to avoid penalty.
- .. Discuss proposed Bylaws and Resolution changes and Nominees to be presented at the International Convention.
- .. At Board Meetings, approve new Bank Signature Authorizations.

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### July

- .. Attend International Convention (odd years).
- .. July 10: last day for members to pay membership dues before required to pay reinstatement fees
- .. Begin selection of Make a Difference Day project.

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### August

- .. Start encouraging members to attend fall workshop.
- .. Following International Convention, review Bylaw changes with members (odd years).
- .. Report from delegates to International Convention (odd years)

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### September (Literacy Month)

- .. Celebrate International Literacy Day on September 8.
- .. Review club responsibilities for the visit of District Board member.
- .. **Prepare for fall workshop.** Plan to attend.
- .. Evaluate the first three months of club activities and attendance; make changes if they are needed.
- .. Plan and publicize activity for Make a Difference Day.
- .. Send copy of club yearbook to District Officers and one copy to the International Office.

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### October

- .. Attend fall workshop.
- .. Remind treasurer to mail any contributions to the International Foundation Grant Program.
- .. If necessary, file IRS Form 990 by October 15. (If the club has a Local Foundation, two Form 990s may be necessary.)
- .. Send Make a Difference Day pre-report to International Office.
- .. Work on member recruitment.
- .. Participate in Make a Difference Day.

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### November

- .. Reports by members attending workshop
- .. Begin work on election of club Nominating Committee.
- .. Send final report on Make a Difference Day report to International Office.

<b>December</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Half-year dues for new members December 1 through March 31</li> <li>.. Observe holidays with meaningful program.</li> <li>.. Midyear review of Strategic Plan</li> <li>.. Midyear evaluation of Club Program</li> </ul>
<b>January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Elect club Nominating Committee.</li> <li>.. Have Bylaws, Resolutions and Recommendations (BRR) Committee start work on changes in Bylaws.</li> <li>.. Elect Delegate/Alternate to District Conference at least 60 days prior to Conference. Send names of Delegates and Alternates to the District Secretary.</li> <li>.. If club has Local Foundation, send Local Club Foundation Annual Report to International Foundation by January 15.</li> <li>.. Add An Altrusan Day</li> </ul>
<b>February</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Report of club Nominating Committee</li> <li>.. Start campaign for Conference attendance.</li> <li>.. Watch District literature for due dates for Mamie L. Bass, Letha H. Brown and Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun award applications.</li> </ul>
<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Election of Officers and Directors</li> <li>.. Have secretary send list of newly-elected Officers to District Governor and International Office on forms provided within 10 days of election.</li> <li>.. Give copy of Incoming President's Calendar to newly-elected president.</li> <li>.. Start work on club's activity report (due May 31).</li> <li>.. Encourage incoming president to select Committee Chairmen.</li> <li>.. Plan to attend District Conference.</li> <li>.. Incoming Committee Chairs meet with outgoing Committee Chairs for committee update.</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Celebrate Altrusa Awareness Day on Altrusa's birthday, April 11.</li> <li>.. Elect International Convention delegates and alternates (odd years). Send delegate list to International Office at least 90 days prior to Convention.</li> <li>.. Solicit club contribution to Altrusa International Foundation Endowment Fund.</li> <li>.. Meet with incoming and outgoing Board to transfer materials.</li> <li>.. Request Officers/Chairmen prepare annual reports.</li> <li>.. By 4/30, send list of newly-appointed Chairmen to District Governor and International Office on forms provided.</li> <li>.. Assist incoming president and Finance Committee with budget.</li> <li>.. Members initiated between 4/1 and 5/31 pay full-year dues good through 6/1 of next year</li> <li>.. Plan installation of new Officers and Directors.</li> </ul>
<b>May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.. Preside at annual meeting and installation of Officers.</li> <li>.. New board in charge immediately following installation.</li> <li>.. Club Activity Report due May 31. Send a copy to District Chairman and International Office to be considered for Distinguished Club award.</li> <li>.. Community Leadership Award nomination to International Foundation</li> <li>.. ASTRA Club Service Award entry due to International</li> <li>.. Dues and International Convention fee are due by June 1.</li> </ul>

## TIPS FOR THE PRESIDENT

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The following in no way precludes studying the remainder of this handbook, but is an effort to point out some of the essential factors that will keep your year as president running smoothly.

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### Preparation for becoming president

- Become familiar with *Point of Order*, *Altrusa Encyclopedia*, *International Bylaws and Policies*, and this handbook.
- Study all up-to-date Altrusa publications. Share with appropriate Committee Chairmen.
- Orient your Officers/Committee Chairs and give them written job descriptions.
- Study your club's Strategic Plan, District Strategic Plan and the International Long Range/Strategic Plan. With your members or a committee, write your club's **yearly action plan**. Make sure all Committee Chairs know and understand what is expected of their committee in the plan
- Work with your newsletter editor concerning your first edition; consider including a president's column, distribution time frame, types of articles you want to include, and format.

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### The meeting

- Preside from an agenda. Prepare a new one for each meeting. When preparing the agenda, contact your Officers and Committee Chairs if they will be expected to make a report.
- Try to avoid the use of the personal pronoun "I." Write the word "chair" in the margin of your agenda where you will see it. That will remind you to refer to yourself as "the chair."
- Call to order—give **one rap** of the gavel.
- Keep the meeting moving. Interest slows when action slows. The chairman sets the standard, the pace, and the quality.
- Be enthusiastic—it's contagious.
- Refer to Section 3, Effective Meetings, for more information.

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### Trouble shooting

- Keep your sense of humor. You may need it!
- Follow the monthly checklist for the president (pages 6 and 7).

- If a member of your Board does not perform satisfactorily, handle the situation promptly. It will only get worse if you don't.
- Try to be available for all functions—service projects, fund raisers, Committee meetings, etc. If you cannot attend ask the president-elect or another officer to go in your place. This is the best way to know what is happening in your club. Don't assume Committees are functioning!
- Offer club members an opportunity to indicate their like or dislike for projects. Develop a midyear evaluation.
- Include the president-elect or first vice president in as many phases of the organization as possible. You are her/his mentor. Prepare her/him to take over after your term is finished.
- Check with the treasurer periodically to be sure that all new member information and address changes have been submitted appropriately.
- Half-year dues are in effect from December 1 through March 31. New member dues paid in April and May cover the remainder of the current year, plus all of the next year.
- Are your members aware that they may attend Board meetings? Make them all feel welcome.

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### **Communications**

- Relay all International, District, and local correspondence promptly to the appropriate member. Pay special attention to each piece of information in the *Altrusa Accent* sent to club presidents from the International Office.
- Answer all mail promptly.
- If funds permit, share club newsletters with all District Officers, the International Office, and the International President. At a minimum send copies to the District Governor and the International Office.

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### **Special events**

- Strive to enter all District and International award competitions.
- Announce and promote all upcoming meetings, workshops, District Conferences, and International Conventions. Encourage your members to be active on all levels of the organization. Ask delegates to give a report.

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### **Evaluation**

- Plan a midyear evaluation and end-of-year evaluation of your strategic plan and yearly action plan.
- Evaluate your personal performance against personal expectations.
- Periodically evaluate your Officers/Committee Chairs.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?

You are on the right track when you can answer “yes” to the following questions:

- ⌞ Am I at peace with myself?
- ⌞ Do I have enthusiasm and a positive attitude in everything I undertake?
- ⌞ Am I flexible and adaptable, not bound by preconceived notions, nor stymied by unexpected road blocks?
- ⌞ Is my vision broad enough so that I am concerned with more than solving problems and directing people and can spark new ideas, look ahead, and anticipate?
- ⌞ Do I have a well-developed sense of empathy so that I put myself in another person’s place and see her/his situation as she/he sees it?
- ⌞ Do I have patience so that I can let a person gain experience by doing rather than jump in and take over?
- ⌞ Do I encourage and fairly consider the ideas of others?
- ⌞ Do I take suggestions and criticisms without feeling resentful?
- ⌞ Do I have a sense of humor so that life is not all “do or die” and I can laugh at myself and admit my own mistakes?
- ⌞ Am I generous enough in sharing the praise that comes with a job well done when it involves the efforts of others?
- ⌞ Do I discipline myself in the ways needed to do the job and maintain purpose and balance as a leader in life?