

Heineman to coordinate 'Robin'

by Harold Hopkins

Harry J. Heineman has volunteered to serve as the coordinator for the Society's popular Round Robin letters.

Their similarity to chain letters or the pyramid craze is only skin deep. There are no shells, no bills, no something for nothing, no nothing for something.

The Round Robin letters can probably take more credit for getting many members acquainted with each other and maintaining a continuing fellowship and interest in magnolias than any other Society activity. The Round Robin letters, by kicking around ideas among the participants, have spawned several proposals that at some later point have turned into positive Magnolia Society programs or actions.

The Round Robins were suggested and inaugurated by Ginnie Melnick, during her service as secretary and treasurer over many years. They consist of a continuing or instalment series of letters passed around as a package among the participating Society members—which can be a half dozen to a dozen individuals in various towns and cities.

Each member of a Round Robin group receives the package of letters—containing individual contributions from all the other members—and sits down for a couple of hours of enjoyable reading, gardening tips, and strongly held opinions concerning matters of common interest. The recipient removes his last letter from the bottom of the pile and writes a new one, a combination of response to

any or all of the other letters as well as the introduction of new subjects, and sticks it into the mail. And so it goes. The package always comes when it's least expected, thus is a perpetually pleasant surprise.

There are several Round Robin groups. Offhand, I don't know the count, but Harry Heineman can tell you. It takes awhile for a Round Robin to make a complete circuit because of the vagaries of the U.S. Postal Service, the well-known difficulty most people have of coming in out of the garden and sitting down to a hot typewriter, and perhaps writer's block. As one consequence, some members yield to their yen to read still more Robin intelligence by joining two, three, even more Round Robin groups. This can create more deadlines too, so don't say I didn't warn you!

When a particular Round Robin group keeps adding new converts, the coordinator sometimes suggests spinoffs or cell divisions to keep the number of people (and perhaps the size of the package) from growing unwieldy.

The rules of the game are easy and simple. The toughest is to keep the subject matter from wandering too far off magnolias (a problem that also besets the editor of this journal).

Anyway, you get the idea. Harry and the regulars and the newcomers would like to have you aboard the Robin flights, and the membership is free. Write and apply. Harry's name and address is given on the inside back cover of this and subsequent issues, next to the bottom of the page.