

Greetings TOPS Members-

I hope that each of you had a Joyous Holiday and a very Happy New Year's! With everything new comes a fresh start in the sense of a new beginning. Every member (unless you are a KOPS that was out of leeway the last weigh-in of December) has an opportunity to record a weight in black that first weigh-in of the year. Let's focus on making 2010 our year to Take and Keep Off Pounds Sensibly in effort to reach and maintain our goals!

For most of us 2010 came in the fashion of a cold winter storm! The snow was falling almost as quickly as the temperatures! I know the weather man is predicting much colder than normal temperatures and even more snow fall for the remainder of this week. I encourage you to meet as frequently as you can during these bad weather conditions. According to TOPS national rules, each chapter is allowed two "No Meetings" before they have to call me with explanation as to why they are cancelling the meeting. The importance of why I am mentioning this is because the year has just begun to use your two "No Meetings" right off the bat. As some of you may recall, some time back, I sent out a questionnaire asking each chapter to grade them selves on a scale of one to nine. The purpose of the questionnaire was to evaluate each chapter at TOPS Club Inc. for 1-800 number interested member inquiries and referrals. The evaluation of each chapter makes it much easier for the 1-800 operators at TOPS Headquarters to make referrals to successful chapters. One of the questions each chapter is graded on each year is how many "No Meetings" each chapter has. I take the number of "No Meetings" directly from the weight sheets you send at the end of each year with your resume and then key it into TOPS database. Understand that your member's safety is the most important issue, no injury from falling on ice is worth the risk. However, I do want to bring to your attention the importance of what happens when too many "NO Meetings" are called on the chance of bad weather or because of cold temperatures.

Again this year, a lucky chapter that decides to host an "Open House" during the months of January, February and March, and sends me their information regarding the "Open House" will be drawn from a Missouri State Wide drawing for reserved special seating at SRD in St. Charles for their entire chapter! All chapters hosting an open house during this time period will be entered into a drawing. One lucky chapter will be awarded special seating for every registration that they purchase for SRD 2010! Good luck and happy planning for your Open Houses! Remember that your field staff is available to assist you with this event and would love an invitation to attend if it is at all possible with their schedules.

Some chapters have had a delay in getting members memberships to me for processing. As a result of this, members run a risk of a lapse in membership that can result in that member being ineligible for awards at all levels. In addition, these members will not receive the TOPS News during the time that they are Inactive due to lapse of membership. In some instances, that can be several editions. One situation that occurred as of the last couple days, was a member that had not paid their National Dues back from February of 2009 but was attending the entire year. This member has missed out on several TOPS News magazines. Please take a look at your "Highest Weight" report. This was included in the packet you would have received either at Fall Rally or that was mailed to you the first part of November, 2009 along with your maintenance and workshop fund assessment. On this report you will find the

renewal date for each member. To every member, when your renewal arrives from TOPS Club Inc. it come approximately 5-6 weeks before it is due. If you submit immediately at that time along with your payment to your chapter treasurer, then it can reach me in a timely manner before it is actually due. By submitting this upon arrival, it does not alter or change your renewal date. The renewal date remains the same, so you will still be getting the full years membership. I am not sure if anyone else is like me or not, but if I put something away for safekeeping until a later date, the only thing it is generally safe from is me since I can never remember where that safekeeping place was 5 weeks ago!

Chapter resumes are beginning to pour in! I am so excited to see all your successes from 2009! If you have not submitted your chapters resume, it is due to me postmarked no later than January 8, 2010. Please respond quickly to get this processed and to me. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. It is extremely important to get your resumes in and postmarked before the deadline to help ensure that your winners are not disqualified. Some chapters took advantage of meeting with their field staff for assistance in getting their resume completed. On January 2, 2010 we held a working resume workshop to assist chapters with the resume process or to drop off their resume. Those that attended were very excited to immediately find out the end result of their resume and to have it approved and to receive their winners certificates on the spot. This new trial process was an over-all success and we will plan more times and locations next year for the entire Western MO area to attend. Please wait until you receive your final resume approval and your winner's certificates from me before you honor your winners. Plan something special to honor those that worked so hard to earn either "Royalty" or "Division winner" status in 2009.

Even though it is cold and snowy outside, I realize this is the time for a fresh start and a clean slate. As the snow plows remove the snow from the streets, I watch and imagine that I too can clean my "streets" of all the things that are hindering me from succeeding in my weight loss journey. This New Year has been given to me as a gift. I can do with it what I wish. I can own my own actions and take control of the situation and get myself and keep myself on track to the road of healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. Or I can sit by and do with this year what I have chosen to do with several others in the past. "The Choice Is Mine", because it is "My Time"!

TOPS Hug,

Randy Paul