MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR
Bart Huffman '88
President, Princeton Club of San Antonio

The Volunteer Leadership Assembly in October was a great success and a testament to the quality and dedication of Princeton’s volunteers and of Princeton’s appreciation and support for its volunteers. I hope that you will take a look at the materials that have been made available from the Office of the Alumni Association if you were not able to attend. (http://alumni.princeton.edu/main/volunteers/volunteer_leadership_assembly/)

Our CORA telephone conference series has continued, most recently with calls addressing community service and careers networking. We welcome your feedback as to topics, timing, and format.

Finally, in response to requests from the field, we are testing a new program for “seed money” to help alumni associations that need funding to get started with mailings, promotions, and membership building activities. You should have received information on this program already, but let us know if you are interested in applying and would like additional information. We hope that, with this program, we can help address start-up costs and other such revitalization issues that a regional association may face.

As always, we want to thank you for all that you do for Princeton. Please do not hesitate to let us know if there are any additional ways that we can support your efforts. CORA wishes you and your regional associations all the best this holiday season and for the new year.

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CHARLOTTE’S TIGER TALKS
Mark Rinker ‘84
President, Princeton Alumni Association of Charlotte

Editor’s Note: The PAA of Charlotte, which represents the nearly 300 Princetonians living in and around that city, received the 2008 John Maclean Award for its significant efforts to reinvigorate alumni activities in the region.

Recently, our most well-received events have been a series of Tiger Talks featuring local alumni speaking to a current topic of interest and guiding the discussion that ensues. These events have caused many new members to participate and created dues-paying members for our association.

Holding the event: We currently schedule two Tiger Talks in the fall and two in the spring. The dates with the speaker and topic are announced in our August and January mailings. We also send out a follow up invitation and reminder using the university’s broadcast email system as the date approaches. We try to schedule these as luncheon events in the same location and same day of the week for consistency and ease of scheduling for the members. We do charge a fee to attend which covers the cost of the lunch and we discount this price for dues-paying members.

Finding the speaker: Your Regional Officers’ Handbook has great suggestions to help brainstorm options for finding speakers within your association. We have used all of these ideas for past Tiger Talks and still not run out of options for potential speakers in our small association.

The reward: Charlotte’s Princetonians love these educational events. By varying the topics, we are able to attract new members to participate. At the last two Tiger Talks, 20% of those in attendance had never attended a local association event before. The structure for these events also encourages members to pay their dues. We provide a discount in the price for dues-paying members attending these events and dues-paying members receive priority for Tiger Talks that may have limited space. We have never had to turn away a member wanting to attend one of our Tiger Talks, but the great interest in these events is encouraging members to pay dues and RSVP early to reserve a space.

In conclusion, our Tiger Talks are both easy and rewarding to organize. Maintaining consistency to the event format has allowed us to create a simple checklist for anyone planning a Tiger Talk. We have also been able to further engage members as speakers, involve new members as participants, and encourage members to pay dues.