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Summary for web page: celebrate those ubiquitous awards, kudos and recognitions at class and family reunions.

Hi. I'm Edith Wagner and I'm editor of *Reunions magazine*. I hope these podcasts will help with your reunion planning. Feel free to add your ideas and suggestions for us to share with other reunion organizers like yourself. Let us know what reunion topics you're interested in learning more about.

The purpose of this podcast is to celebrate those ubiquitous awards, kudos and recognitions at class and family reunions.

During summer reunion season, one frequent request we receive is to suggest awards and prizes. These are ideas and answers to those harried questions I get late on Thursdays just before reunion weekend. "I need to give out awards. What should I do?"

All reunions need a program. Most commonly someone engages classmates with memories and families with history. Many reunions have a list of awards as well. The reunion committee decides which awards to give and whether they should be funny or serious. Being able to laugh at yourself is extremely important for these awards.

Presentation can be Oscar-like, with two different members giving each award. This draws more members to the podium. A handsome bald man can give the "Most Hair

**Award,” and members-married-the-longest can give the
“Newest Newlywed Award.”**

Few reunions miss the opportunity to award special people and special deeds. Members of the National Association of Reunion Managers (NARM), the professional class reunion planners, are responsible for these suggestions: First or Last to Register, Biggest Lottery Winner, First to Retire, Best Brush with Greatness Story, Turned Out Just as Expected, Still Drives (or is still restoring) the Same Car, and Lives Closest to School.

Kathe Murphy, Classy Reunions, Inc., Sandpoint, Idaho, contributes (sometimes dubiously) to this list with these additions: Never Left Home, Never Married, Woman with the Youngest Husband, and Most Body Piercing.

One way to collect information about who deserves which awards is to design your registration form to collect "quantitative" information. You'll know who qualifies for the Most Children, Youngest Child, Oldest Child, Married Longest, and Newest Newlywed awards. Then there are always qualitative awards, such as Changed the Least or Biggest Beer Belly, Biggest Flirt, Still Most Likely to Succeed. The reunion committee can simply choose who gets these awards, or the class can take nominations from the floor and do an "applause-meter" vote. You might want to limit the number of nominations from the floor. If giving an Eligible Bachelor/Bachelorette Award, invite nominees to the microphone to present their "campaign platforms."

One class committee gave just "hair" awards including:

No Hair, Big Hair, Same Hair, New Hair, Gray Hair and Hair-that-Traveled-the-Farthest.

The Curtis/Butler Family Reunion offers categories you can't dispute, like oldest, youngest, most children, most grandchildren, first to register for the reunion, and first to arrive at the reunion. They also have lots of award categories for which members can nominate others or even themselves: longest and shortest hair, most gold teeth, weirdest occupation, biggest feet, strangest musical talent, traveled farthest, oldest car, strangest hobby, most educated, longest time in the military, lives closest to the reunion, funniest or most unique collection.

One year the Utley Family Reunion of Jackson, Tennessee, made these awards: most miles traveled (857), youngest person (20 months), couple married longest (57 years), couple most newly married (3 years), most grandchildren present at the reunion (6), most great-grandchildren present (2 people each had 1), branch with the most descendants present (34).

The Howitt Family Reunion provides some very special prizes for very special members. Some prizes are silly, but others are carefully selected and represent the family's Scottish heritage. At one reunion, Bob and Jean Bartholomew received a rope heart with a Scottish bow tied in a knot representing their 60 years of marriage, the longest at the reunion. At the other end of the age spectrum, baby Andrew Johnson, the youngest person, received a

rattle with a Scottish bow. The tallest person received a 15-inch pencil; the winner for “shortest” was a tie and they received vitamins to help them grow. The person with the most change in his right pocket received a shiny, new freshly-minted dime. The person with the least hair received a comb and a child with a loose tooth received a toothbrush. A Hot Wheels car celebrated a new driver’s license, and a small American flag was presented to the person with the longest military service.

A trophy for the Rowland/Geist/Wilson Family Reunion bears an image of Rodin’s “The Thinker” painted in gold, seated on a white “seat.” The traveling trophy is called “The John” in honor of a family member and a memorable story about him installing the first indoor plumbing. It is awarded for best in talent show. Before the reunion, family members challenge others to perform, urging them to be “discovered” at their own family reunion. Instead of saying, “We’re going to the Oscars” family members say, “We’re going to the John.”

With that bit of silliness, we can only add that, of course, you’ll always want to honor reunion members who have served in the military.

We hope these are some ideas you can incorporate into your reunions.

We are always looking for ideas you’ve tested at your reunions. What awards and prizes have made your reunion more fun? Email your ideas to reunions@execpc.com or

send them to *Reunions magazine*, PO Box 11727, Milwaukee
WI 53212, or post them at our forum at

<http://forums.reunionsmag.com>.

There are lots of ways to communicate about reunions.

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