

INTRODUCTION

The Social Director plans activities to enhance the enjoyment, excitement, commitment and community within the lodge. Since quality programs are one of the main factors that help attract and retain members, the Social Director makes a significant contribution to the success of the lodge. In addition, exciting and interesting programming can help promote a positive image of Sons of Norway in the community.

Program Planning

The major responsibility of the Social Director is to plan activities throughout the year that provide opportunities for personal enrichment and fellowship. To assist in program planning, consider the following:

Utilize a Social Committee

This committee can be a great source for ideas, experience and connections to people and organizations in the community. The committee can help recruit members to assist with refreshments at meetings and events and find others who can assist with the logistics of any special programs.

Coordinate closely with lodge Cultural, Youth and Sports Directors.

These positions share the focus on lodge programming, activities and events. By teaming together, the responsibilities to design and execute effective and innovative programming can be shared.

Note: If the lodge does not have a Cultural Director, the Social Director is responsible to ensure that there are equal amounts of social and cultural programming.

Provide a Social Component

Regardless of the type of meeting or program there should always be a social component. Many members joined the lodge because of their interest in Norway's culture and heritage and enjoy interacting socially with others who are like-minded. This fellowship, the welcoming (social) atmosphere of lodge meetings and the friendships that develop will help

ensure their continued association with the lodge and the organization and will help attract new members.

Programming Opportunities

LODGE MEETINGS

No two lodges plan their activities and meetings the same way. However, there are three patterns outlined below, which are quite common.

Regardless of the meeting format, the Social Director typically coordinates the refreshments. In addition, the Social Director may also deliberate with the lodge Musician, other officers, and interested members in the choice of music for the meetings.

REGULAR MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING

Many lodges have one regularly scheduled business meeting a month. Although there is business to conduct, there should always be a short cultural or social program of some kind. In this situation, typically the meeting breakdown is:

Business 10 – 20 minutes

Social/Cultural Program 40-45 minutes

Refreshments/Socializing 45 – 60 minutes

SEPARATE SOCIAL/CULTURAL AND BUSINESS/BOARD LODGE MEETINGS

If the lodge has two regular meetings during a month, one of them is probably more social in nature. Usually the appropriate director(s) will coordinate the social/cultural meeting. The president will be responsible for conducting the business meeting.

LODGE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Lodge events and special programs can take the place of a typical meeting of the lodge membership. This could include holiday celebrations, all lodge volunteer activities, picnics or dinners, an all lodge sporting activity, a barneløpet, a field trip or any activity where the entire lodge is invited to attend. Usually these are open meetings to which non-member family, friends, community leaders and the general public can be invited.

These events and activities provide excellent opportunities to showcase the lodge in the community and enhance the lodge's standing. They also provide outstanding avenues to recruit new members, as well as opportunities for members to connect/bond outside of a typical meeting. The Social Director, a special committee or another Director, depending on the audience for the event, may be responsible for planning.

Special Interest Groups

The Social Director also has the option of organizing special interest groups that are for socialization, for example: book clubs, cooking groups, card groups; rosemaling, hardanger, carving and knitting groups. These groups may have meetings separate from the regular lodge meetings.

CONCLUSION

The Social Director has a unique position within the lodge. Nearly everything the lodge does will have a social aspect. Through the Director's efforts, both in providing social programming and by providing opportunities for members to socialize, a sense of community among fellow lodge members will be created. Having an atmosphere that is inviting and welcoming will help the lodge retain current members and will attract others to join.