

Cultural Director

INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Director plans activities to contribute to members' understanding and appreciation of Norwegian heritage and culture. Since quality cultural programs are one of the main factors that attract and retain members, the Cultural Director makes a significant contribution to the success of the lodge. In addition, exciting and interesting cultural programming can help promote a positive image of Sons of Norway in the community and help community members understand the mission of the organization.

Program Planning

The major responsibility of the Cultural Director is to coordinate events and programs throughout the year that enhance members' understanding of, and appreciation for Norwegian and Norwegian-North American culture. To assist in program planning, consider the following:

Utilize a Cultural Committee

Lodge members who share a passion for Norwegian culture and can help plan specific events/programs or set up special clubs and groups can be a great asset. This committee can be a great source for ideas, experience and connections to people and organizations in the community, as well as assistance with the detailed tasks associated with planning and executing a program or event.

Coordinate closely with lodge Social, Youth and Sports Directors.

These positions share the focus on lodge programming, activities and events. By working together, the process of designing and executing effective and innovative programming can be shared.

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 atmosphere of lodge meetings and the friendships that develop will help ensure their continued association with the lodge. It will also attract new members. Typically, the Social Director will coordinate refreshments for any event or program, even if the content is planned by the Cultural Director.

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.

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/cultural 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 with a cultural focus can take the place of a typical meeting of the lodge membership. 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 providing outstanding avenues to recruit new members, as well as opportunities for members to connect/bond outside of a typical meeting.

Special Interest Groups, Clubs and Classes

The Cultural Director also has the option of organizing special interest groups to enhance member's understanding of and appreciation for Norwegian heritage and culture. Such groups can include book clubs, cooking groups, Norwegian skills groups (rosemaling, hardanger, carving,

knitting groups, etc), genealogy study, Norwegian language classes, etc. These groups can hold their own meetings separate from the large lodge meetings.

Resources for Programming Ideas

1. Idea Bank
Found on the Sons of Norway website, the Idea Bank is a library of ideas for lodge activities.
2. Information Bank
Found on the Sons of Norway website, the Information Bank is made up of reference materials on Norwegian culture and Sons of Norway.
3. Cultural Skills Program
This program consists of 14 units on topics related to Norwegian heritage and culture. Each topic is divided into three achievement levels that guides members through the process of learning a particular craft or study topic. The program allows members to work through the units individually or with other lodge members, perhaps as part of a special group or club. Members earn pins for completing each achievement level of a particular topic.

The units can also be utilized as a basis for cultural programming for lodge meetings.

4. Sports Medal Program
Whether or not a lodge has a Sports Director, there are opportunities to combine sports and cultural activities by using this program. Modeled after a Norwegian program to celebrate fitness and an active lifestyle, program participants earn medals for participation in sports and fitness activities.
5. Just for Kids
This is a page, published quarterly in *Viking* magazine, that provides cultural content and activities with a youth focus. The page is also available for download in PDF format on the Sons of Norway website. In addition to the current page, past articles are also available.

CONCLUSION

Many individuals join Sons of Norway to gain an understanding of Norwegian heritage and culture either because of their family history or because of a personal interest in Norway. Fulfilling their expectation for interesting, memorable and enjoyable cultural programming can make a valuable contribution to the lodge by helping to retain existing members, as well as providing an incentive for prospective members to join.