

Building Bridges Idea Board – District 5 Convention- 2016

At the 2016 District 5 Convention, a series of posters were hung in the hallway encouraging members to write down “what works for them”. We hope that these ideas will give your lodge some ideas in areas that you may find challenging! This activity can also be done at zone meetings or modified to conduct a lodge’s long-range planning activity.

Things that would be helpful to our lodge or members

1. We just published a member handbook to explain what we do
2. Create and publish a best practices guide for accounting and auditing. The ELCA has a superb guide and we would benefit from a uniform financial guideline.
3. Set up auditing workshops
4. Have zone meetings or trainings
5. Utilize the Norwegian American newspaper. Post upcoming lodge events in the paper’s social events calendar. Write up memories of a Norway trip, a period of study in Norway, an ancestor’s experiences of growing up in Norway, emigrating, recollections of songs and children’s rhymes, legends and superstitions, sayings. Add photos and drawings.
6. Encourage every member to subscribe to the Norwegian American- it’s fantastic
7. Visit other lodges when they have events
8. A workshop on what’s on the websites- district and international
9. Wondering what the new members get as a “new member welcome” from the International
10. To have at least one scholarship that doesn’t require a benefit membership

How do you educate members about the Sons of Norway Foundation?

1. October- live auction event tripled our donation over what the silent auction raised. And more fun!
2. Big October foundation event with basket raffle and themed event

How do you education members about Fraternal Benefit products?

1. Invite FBC to meeting
2. Information in newsletter
3. FBC sponsors/presents at prospective membership brunch

How do your members reach out to the community and publicize events?

1. Newspaper
2. Do community service
3. Join the Chamber
4. Local parade- representing the Scandinavian community
5. Facebook
6. Online community calendars and free event publicity (print/broadcast) on newspapers, TV stations, radion stations
7. Send out postcards of upcoming events
8. Posters and flyers for all events
9. Participate in other organization’s events – for example we did a Norwegian themed Christmas tree at the local historical society’s Christmas tree walk

10. Posters in churches, retirement complexes
11. Group outing at local sports event
12. Wear t-shirts with lodge name and email address
13. Sponsor or buy a message on scoreboards for local athletic and sports events
14. Word of mouth, newspaper ads for big events, Facebook, community services happens multiple times a week
15. Go to schools and share
16. Buy an ad for the paper occasionally so they are more willing to print your articles

Share your fundraising ideas

1. Meals for bus groups
2. Bingo
3. Bake sales
4. Wrote a "help us" letter to members and got \$1800 in donations
5. Korger Grocery Store- community rewards program. Register online then lodge gets 3% of purchases by merely shopping- no effort required.
6. Sell Rural Route Popcorn
7. We collected short stories from our membership ranging from stories told by parents, grandparents, immigration stories, childhood members and had them printed and sold the book
8. Dinner at lodge meeting cooked and served by youth to benefit the youth program
9. Participation in the Portage County Cultural Festival every May. We make and sell lefse and other baked goods.
10. Fish boils
11. Do a KickStart Campaign for Masse Moro
12. Have lodge t-shirts with our new dragon on them
13. Postcards of our lodge and interior items
14. Masse Moro- seekgrants from Wisconsin DNR, Kids in the Woods (US Forest Service), and American Camp Association (acacamps.org)
15. Made a lodge cookbooks
16. Book swap
17. Garage sale

Share your Youth Activity ideas

1. Youth groups meet separately at each lodge meeting. Once a year they present a skit at lodge meeting.
2. Framtid- Norwegian program for 4th grade classes in area schools
3. Offer geo imaging outings with Norsk theme. Treats at lodge afterwards
4. There are youth?! 😊
5. Dedicated Youth Day for young people between the ages of 5-95. Loud contemporary music, big bonfires and outdoor movie
6. 3rd grade annual cultural day for all schools in our district- 18 different stations
7. Barnes Klub does different activities monthly. Next activity is making a stained glass copy of The Scream
8. Barnes Klub- 11 members are going to Norway in 2017

What are your best programs, speakers and presentations?

1. Have a culture committee that plans a Nordic Culture Program for one year in advance
2. Genealogy
3. Scholarship recipients come back to talk about study in Norway
4. Local AFS students
5. Kids report on camp
6. Members read short immigrant stories to end each meeting
7. UW Madison Scandinavian Studies Department- Peggy Hager has numerous programs
8. Invite other local organizations to speak or present at meetings (fosters knowledge of each others organizations)
9. Travel programs
10. Woodcarving presentations
11. Norwegian exchange students – speaker, participant
12. Movie Nights
13. Norwegian choirs
14. Show “Cool and Crazy” and other movies that relate to Norway
15. Behring Bounty LLC- fisherman from Verona, WI captain in Arctic Circle.
16. WWII presentations- 8 large tables of memorabilia- stories collected from WWII vets, presentation by Professor Peter Johnson from Nashville, TN
17. Bingo for a cause
18. Language classes
19. May 17- parade, songs, games (cod toss, potato race, sack race), food, desserts, pony rides, bunad presentations, speeches from the King
20. Members bring in items to share (Norwegian, favorite thing, a craft they do, family heirlooms)
21. Book group gives presentations
22. Speakers from Vesterheim’s speaking group

Share your membership ideas

1. Collect names at each activity and email/mail them postcards of upcoming events. Develop an email list too.
2. Have a new member luncheon
3. Spend \$600 on newspaper advertising for each event
4. Lots of follow up to prospective members
5. Good lodge website
6. Get your membership list and start calling “no shows” at meetings
7. Send newsletter, announcements to prospective members
8. Hold public Norsk genealogy events
9. Ask
10. Have high chairs and kid’s activity area visible so families know they are welcome
11. Have a lodge greeter who welcomes people and can identify guests and visitors
12. We put on all flyers that the public is always welcome at our events
13. We do a 3 tiered pricing for bus trips so there’s a bigger discount for our members, other SN members, and non-members. Some join because of this.
14. Host classes and have a member discount
15. Have a membership packet that can be given to guests and visitors
16. Encourage current members to invite people (and their own families).

Food Activities – meals, fundraisers and classes

1. \$4 dinner at our monthly meetings
2. Favorite Norwegian Family Recipe book
3. 2 x/ year we have a catered meal
4. Corn boil with brats in August
5. Fish boils twice a year
6. Making lefse
7. Waffle breakfast- 3 kinds (plain, cardamom, gluten-free) and varied toppings with sausage, fresh fruit cup, juices, coffee served cafeteria style and ala carte prices.
8. Meals for bus groups
9. Christmas cookies
10. Meals from our lodge cookbook
11. Authentic food- including food skill regiments
12. Cookie baking classes
13. Lefse making classes
14. Mat Klub- picking Norsk recipes and then making them. Figure cost of ingredients as the charge.
15. Guess Who's Coming to Dinner- have hosts and people are assigned to go to a house. Meal is prepared at the lodge and delivered and then all come back to the lodge for dessert. The host doesn't know who is coming and the attendees just know the address they are to go to. Could also have a caterer prepare the meals and committee deliver them.
16. Box social events

Other Ideas that work for our lodge!

1. Identify and use your resources and talents- whether it's a wide-screen tv, language teacher, or an amazing chef
2. Potlucks at all our meetings.
3. Celebrating life events together- birthday, anniversaries, ect
4. Have fun- socialize after events
5. Ski for Light video and testimonial from Sons of Norway's Ski for Light guide.
6. Presentation on the Sami people with DVD's and Sami music- members bring Sami artifacts
7. Demonstration on Nordic folk dancing and instructions to learn a dance from a teacher
8. Julebaking
9. Meet @ member's homes for a change
10. Challenge another Scandinavian group (the Swedes) to a miniature golf game