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Total Delegates 113

District 5 Board of Director Officer Reports - 2018

District President's Report to the Lodge

Last October the Fifth District held its first District President's Conference that coincided with the Fall Board of Directors meeting. Due to the efforts of the Board and other Fifth District members this event was meaningful, instructive, and enjoyable for all those who attended. We were fortunate to have in attendance Sons of Norway President Jon Tehven and the Sons of Norway Fraternal Director Linda Pederson. With the success of the District President's Conference the Board of Directors are considering the possibility of having a second conference in the fall of 2019. The District President's Conference has helped the Fifth District maintain its cohesiveness between conventions and has provided a venue for our members to celebrate our heritage and culture, and to meet with other leaders in our District.

The District Youth Camp, Masse Moro, is located in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. It is a Norwegian heritage youth camp for boys and girls ages 9 to 15. The Fifth District has been operating and funding the camp every summer since 1979. Masse Moro has become financially sustainable from 2016 to 2017, due to \$5,000 in donations, and by the increase tuition in 2017, which brought in \$7,500 additional tuition without a significant drop in attendance. Also three individuals donated \$1,000 each, and there were many other smaller donations.

Fifth District Treasurer Mike Palecek has reported that the district is in excellent financial condition in 2018, and that the district's costs are under control. Through the creation of the 501c Fifth District Nordic Legacy Foundation the cost of maintaining the District's Massa Moro Youth Camp has been decreased. The rebate from the new Sons of Norway dues structure has also contributed to a better financial condition for the district.

On the 25th of February at the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation's Volunteer Dinner in Hayward, Wisconsin the Fifth District received the "Shellie Milford Spirit of the Birkie Award". This prestigious award is given to either an individual or a group that contributes to the success of the Birkie week ski events through acts of volunteerism. Over the past 30 years the Fifth District has contributed thousands of cookies and thousands of volunteer hours to the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation's Barnebirkie Children's Race. Every year this event hosts between 900 and 1000 children participants.

The district is stressing the importance of recruitment and retention in achieving the goals of "Growing to 2020". All district lodges are encouraged to host at least one membership recruitment function each year. All lodges are also encouraged to do more as a Sons of Norway lodge. By providing more to their members and prospective members our lodges will prosper and become stronger.

In closing it has been a privilege to serve as your District President and to help achieve the objectives of our fraternal.

Fraternally,

Andrew Johnsen Fifth District President

District Vice President's Report to the Lodge

The main job of the District Vice President is membership. And really, that is every member's job.

Over the biennium we have continued to lose members, but at a slower rate than previously. These losses come in several ways.

- 1. Older members die. Nothing we can do about that.
- 2. Members do not renew their memberships.
- 3. We are not recruiting enough members to replace those that die or opt out.
- 4. Lodges disband.

We have been working really hard on the recruitment side of it, and this has been a focus of International SON, too. Congratulations to 8 of our D5 lodges who met their goal of a 10% membership increase this past year and earned a reward. Zone 2 winners are 5-286 Jotunheimen, 5-616 Fagernes, 5-627 Vennligfolk. Zone 3 is 5-513 Vennelag. In Zone 5 5-100 Skjold, 5-168 Valhall, 5-472 Polar Star. And in Zone 6, 5-657 Edvard Grieg. Also our 2 online lodges 5-000 and 5-999 grew. Other lodges showing increases include 5-220 Trygvason, 5-609 Myrmarken, 5-593 Elvesund, and 5-600 Scandiana.

To increase recruitment and retention we have been emailing our District 5 vice presidents with suggestions. We have also been posting a weekly membership tip on the District 5 Facebook page. We are also offering an incentive to lodges for having a Membership Recruitment Meal. But really, recruitment and retention is everyone's job. Be welcoming; be interested in visitors and new members; be excited to tell non-members about the fun things YOU do in Sons of Norway.

The other side of the endeavor needs to be addressing the problem of lodges disbanding. It's much more rewarding and fun to belong to a lodge that you can do things with. If there is none in your area you end up in Central Lodge. This is actually two areas of emphasis.

One is dealing with the lodges wishing to disband. Many times this is because the leadership is worn out. We need to have more zone involvement: zone meetings for training, zone get-togethers for support, and we need to have a heads-up if you hear something is going on. (Sometimes we don't even hear a rumor of a disbanding until after the lodge has taken the vote.) We would love to try and help them stay active.

There is also good training material on the

website: https://www.sofn.com/member-resources/lodge-leadership-resources/administrative-resources/

Some Central Lodge members would like to be included in District wide events. We need to figure out what this will look like.

There is only so much the District VP or the District Board can do to increase membership. It's up to every member. But we would love to help you with whatever you might need: money, ideas, our physical presence. Contact your zone director or anyone else on the board and request our help if you would like to have it.

Fraternally, Kathleen Secora, D5 VP June 2018

District Secretary's Report to the Lodge

Welcome to the 54th Biennial Lodge Meeting of Sons of Norway Fifth District! As I reflect on the past two years, I am deeply humbled, amazed and energized with the activity of our lodges, individual members and leaders, District Board members, and International Board members and staff. We also have felt the loss of several lodges, the sales and pending sales of buildings, and the struggles that some are feeling. And we are excited about a possible new lodge in southern Illinois and offering Sons of Norway programming to that area.

This biennium has also given us more changes for our leadership, lodges, District, and members to adjust to. The new dues structure, reporting and required report form changes, new websites, contests and a new conference. I credit all of our leadership and members for their patience and willingness to help all of us adjust to those changes.

What I find the most challenging yet is keeping our leaders connected to each other, to the District, and to the International organization. It is easy to focus on our lodges but we sometimes miss the help, the resources, opportunities that the District and International can offer. We continue to struggle on a District level as to how to reach our lodges that are geographically distant from each other, how we can take a very limited budget and make the best use of member's funds to do the work of the District, and how to help lodges that are in need.

I commend the board members who worked hard to fulfill their duties of their positions; I commend the lodges that welcomed help and support; I commend the International staff and leadership who provide invaluable resources and help; and I commend you for taking time to come to LaCrosse and serve your lodge and District in whatever role brings you here.

We have more challenges and changes ahead and I look forward to helping move us onward and upward.

Thank you to all the Board members that have assisted me as I balance my workload, family and Sons of Norway commitments. It truly is a team effort.

Fraternally, Darlene Arneson

District Treasurer's Report to the Lodge

Past D5 treasurer Duane Kittleson left a legacy by computerizing D5's accounting system and writing a treasurer's manual.

D5's financials are best analyzed in a two-year cycle, because district and international conventions occur every two years, are major district expenses. Those two events, plus Masse Moro and district board meetings are D5's largest costs. Most convention costs are budgeted for, based on provisions in D5 bylaws and policy manual. Because D5 hosted the 2016 convention, about \$9,500 in profit was earned.

Masse Moro (heritage youth camp) has become more financially sustainable in 2016-17, due to \$5,000 in donations, increasing tuition in 2017 by \$150, which brought in \$7,500 additional tuition without a significant attendance drop. A special thanks to Masse Moro donations, including these lodges: Hafrsfjord, Skjold, Valkryrien, Norslaland, Ostestaden, Tre Elver, Skjold. Three individuals donated \$1,000 each, and there were many smaller donations.

MM administration, working with D5 Youth Director and Treasurer, have contained costs, in part by the creation of a 501(c)(3) foundation and changing background check vendors. In 2017, some

Masse Moro income and expenses have been transferred to the D5 Nordic Legacy Foundation, the 501(c)(3). In 2018, all Masse Moro income and expenses may be moved over to the Nordic Legacy Foundation to simplify accounting. MM administrators also secured a \$1,500 grant from the Sons of Norway Foundation and \$500 from District 1's Nordic Heritage Fund for Masse Moro programming.

Membership Dues in 2017 were higher than in 2016, showing a membership increase in D5. The 2018 unified dues structure has provided financial benefits and uncertainties to D5. On the plus side, the D5 portion of dues has increased from \$9.50 to \$14.00 for individual members, about a 50% increase. To date, D5's dues revenue is up 37% in January, and 22% in February, over 2017 and is conservatively forecasted to provide \$9,000 higher income in 2018.

With family dues being paid on the later date of family member's dues renewal date, this will probably provide even higher income. It is premature to calculate any negative trends in membership until a full year of the new dues structure has been in place. We have seen some lodges disband in 2017, and an increase in dues "might" have been a factor in one lodge disbanding. D5 received over \$4000 in donations from disbanding lodges in 2017, as they distributed some of their funds to D5.

Other income - D5 held a district leadership conference in fall 2017, designed to strengthen lodge leadership, with 43 participants, including the International SON President and membership staffer. D5 used a \$1,500 grant from the Sons of Norway Foundation and used the \$1,000 lodge revitalization grant to help keep the conference affordable. D5's Nordic Legacy Foundation refunded the district \$1,062 in conference startup costs, because a camp deposit needed to be paid before the 501(c)(3) was created.

A D5 fundraiser, the Hidden Heroes book, brought in \$5,500 in profit in 2017-18. District 2 and 6 also sold some books and received \$836 for their efforts.

Miscellaneous income included the lodge revitalization grant and \$1,000 from Sons of Norway Foundation for a 50th anniversary celebration.

Expenses - Nordic Legacy Foundation expenses were our largest extraordinary expense (\$20,250) in 2017. \$13,000 of that went to pay Beaver Creek for Masse Moro use, \$2,500 for other MM expenses (insurance, background checks, Ingebretzen supplies) and \$4,000 was used for the President's Leadership Conference. The district board meeting was held at the same time, so those expenses were transferred to the PLC. By doing so, D5 saved over \$1,500 in state sales tax, by having the 501(c)(3) make the purchases.

District Board food and lodging costs appear to be lower in 2017, but this is due to the fall board meeting being held as part of the 2017 PLC, and those costs were transferred to the Nordic Legacy Foundation.

Overall, D5 is in excellent financial health in 2018, and costs are under control. A financial snapshot at the end of March is a good indicator. As of the 2018 spring board meeting, our assets have increased since the past District lodge meeting over \$24,000 to \$99,241. A normal \$40,000 reduction is expected by August, due to the district and international conventions, D5's match to lodge contributions to Masse Moro tuition and MM administrator salaries, but expect \$25,800 in membership dues and other SON payments.

In addition, the D5 Nordic Legacy Foundation has \$5,308.

Fraternally, Mike Palecek

District Recreation Director's Report to the Lodge

The 2017 and 2018 Barnebirke could not have been more different! In 2017 there was no snow on the ground and the ski race was changed to a running race. In 2018 there was plenty of snow and approximately 800 children skied and enjoyed cookies donated by the Fifth District.

In 2018 the Fifth District was honored with "The Shellie Milford Spirit of the Birkie Award" for our many years of volunteering at the Barnebirke. Tusen Takk to every District Five member who has volunteered and/or made cookies all of those years!

The district bowling tournament remains a successful fundraiser in District Five. In the past 2 years over 230 bowlers have participated in the tournament raising funds for the District Five Scholarship Fund.

The District Five annual chili cook-off was started in 2017. In the 1st year 13 lodges enjoyed a chili cook-off contest. In 2018, 14 Lodges have participated in the chili cook-off.

The 2016 district convention walk-a-thon was a success and generated funds for Masse Moro. In 2018 we will again have a walk-a-thon for Masse Moro.

Michaela Decker District 5 Sports and Recreation Director

District Publicity Director's Report to the Lodge

It has been an honor to serve as your Publicity Director these past two years. I would like to thank everyone who submitted photos for the Viking magazine. I've been working closely with the webmaster, who also happens to be my husband, on keeping the District 5 website updated with lodge newsletters, calendar events, convention information, etc. It has been fun trying to come up with new ideas to keep the website user friendly and see the ideas evolve.

Thank you to the lodges that have updated and/or submitted their lodge history. I've enjoyed reading your lodge newsletters and Facebook pages while searching for new ideas to post on "Ole's Corner". If you haven't checked it out yet, you can locate the page under the "News and Events" tab of the District 5 website. Thank you to those who have contacted me in regard to stories and spotlighting a lodge member.

The website is a wonderful tool we can all use to help promote Sons of Norway and what we have to offer along with lodge activities, Masse Moro, Barnebirkie, Syttende Mai, Lutefisk dinners, lodge anniversaries and more. We are currently working towards updating our speaker's bureau with programs and speakers from all the lodges in each state. It is a good tool for us to use while building bridges to our heritage between the young and old by keeping interesting programs. I'd love to hear from each lodge with a list of potential speakers or programs that we could add to the list. By sharing our lodge programs and ideas with each other will continue to help make our District 5 the friendly fifth.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for giving me this opportunity to serve on the Sons of Norway District 5 Board of Directors.

Fraternally,

Christina Fairchild - Director and Richard Fairchild - Webmaster