



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

October 31, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Yesterday, I published a DMC Newsletter article which expressed my concern about Lodges that run "the 20 minute meeting" - the meeting where there are no committee reports, no unfinished business, and no new business. My concern is that this indicates a Lodge which cannot attract new members (or retain existing members) because it does nothing in the way of good fellowship activities for the membership nor does it undertake any outreach with good community projects.

Alan Thomas, a long-time and active member of the Morse Lodge, wrote the following response and posed a "challenge" to us:

Dave,

Is there a flip side to this analysis? Morse Lodge meets once a month and as often as not, we have a two hour business meeting. It might result in some grumbling from the members, but so far as I can tell we have not lost any members due to this length. When I joined 54 years ago, we met once a week, even fifth Wednesdays. As the membership declined, we went to twice a month sometime in the 1960s. Then around 1994 we went to once a month and stayed there. Now we have about 60 members with a sometimes 50% turnout at meetings. We have an active Good Works committee, an active entertainment committee, and reports from Hall Association delegates and several other committee members who usually have reports. I now distribute the minutes and do not take an additional ten or 15 minutes to read them aloud. The lengthy meetings mean to me that the members are interested and involved, but at the same time having a social hour, a dinner, a two hour meeting and dessert after can amount to close to six hours of time. This is quite a contrast to "twenty minutes" and I guess we are the extreme in the other direction.

I would be curious to learn if other lodges have this degree of involvement.

Alan Thomas



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Well, Alan, I am curious as well. And so, I invite readers of this DMC Newsletter to respond and share your thoughts about the length of your meetings, but more importantly, the kinds of things you discuss and plan! I will publish and share the information in future DMC Newsletters.

To get the ball rolling, I will mention my own Davis Lodge. We meet twice each month and our meetings typically last at least one hour, but often 90 minutes or more, and they are chock full of reports of activities. One of our meetings is a Saturday breakfast meeting, and the other meeting is a Wednesday evening meeting. Just to give you a flavor of it, I did a quick count, and have determined that my Lodge currently has 23 active committees (a nice odd number), as follows:

Bingo
Bylaws
Breakfast with the Bunny
Breakfast with Santa
Community Support
DogtoberFest
Finance
Fork to Farm
Good Fellowship
Halloween Party
Installation
Legacy Tree
Odd Hiking
OddtoberFest
Odd Poetry
Music and Concerts
Senior Project
Social Services
Taste of Davis
Visiting
Wine Club
Wine Trips
Zymurgy

Many of these committees focus on one yearly event or project (e.g. Breakfast with Santa, Taste of Davis, OddtoberFest, Installation, etc.), many of these committees function year-round with regular events (e.g. Bingo, Community Support, Good fellowship, Music and Concerts, etc.) and some of the committees just function when needed (e.g. Bylaws, Visiting, Senior Project etc.). In addition to the committees, my Lodge members often organize themselves to help out the community in various big and small ways - for example, we often help out with the Salvation



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Army's annual bell-ringing, or we "adopt" residents at the Odd Fellows Homes, or we help out at our local Meals on Wheels, etc. All this makes for an active and vibrant Lodge that provides members a high level of satisfaction. And as to membership development (the focus of DMC) - there is nothing like an active Lodge to attract new members and retain existing members.

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Dave Rosenberg
Grand Warden