

Sons of Norway

Report to Valhall Lodge
From Delegate to District 6 Convention of
2014

Steve Rawlinson

June 29, 2014

Resolutions

There were 4 resolutions.

Resolution 1 moved the Dec 31 membership count which is used to tally delegate totals to the Policies section of the District Six Policies, Appendices and Bylaws which may be updated by Board action. This appeared to simplify the procedure of maintaining membership count. In debate, nobody offered a reason to oppose that resonated with me. I voted for the resolution, and it passed overwhelmingly.

Resolution 2 and **Resolution 3** created a nominating committee. Resolution 2 requires a committee for nominating an International Director. Resolution 3 requires a committee for nominating officers and directors of the District 6 Lodge. I asked why there were two separate resolutions. The answer was that two different documents were being amended, but only one committee was being created. That answer satisfied me, and I voted for both resolutions. They both passed overwhelmingly.

Resolution 4 created a Cultural Director for the District Lodge. The resolution did not define the duties of the Cultural Director, so I inquired about that from the floor. A past president of the International Lodge gave me a stern lecture about cultural resources on the Sons of Norway web site and that if I had familiarized myself with these resources, I would know that the duties of the Cultural Director are already defined in a different document not being amended. Questions were raised about when the office was being created, and the resolution was sent back to committee for clarification. When it was returned to the floor, I was still dissatisfied that the resolution had been thought out adequately. I was also unconvinced that we needed this official. I voted against the resolution, but it passed overwhelmingly and I think all the other delegates from Valhall Lodge voted for it. This is the risk you run when you elect a rookie as delegate. A couple of days later further problems were discovered with the resolution, and so the delegates were asked to vote to reconsider the motion and send it back to committee. The committee drafted further amending language and sent it back to the floor. By this time I had accepted that most delegates wanted a Cultural Director, so I voted to approve the final motion, which passed overwhelmingly.

Election of Officers

The President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Cultural Director, and Zone 6 Director were elected by acclamation. There were contests for Cultural Director, International Director, Zone 6 Delegate to the International Convention, and at-large Delegates to the International Convention. I listened to my fellow Valhall Lodge delegates and found their advice most helpful in deciding how to vote on these races.

Sandal CAMP Breakout Sessions

Two hours were set aside for breakout sessions. Each hour had 4 sessions to enable delegates to be educated about various issues. We made sure that the 7 Valhall delegates covered all 4 sessions during the first hour and 3 of the sessions in the second hour. (The second hour had one session that we did not think needed to be covered.)

During the first hour, I attended "Using technology for your lodge". The presenter advocated using facebook and twitter to attract younger members to the lodge, but he did not explain what kind of content should be on facebook or twitter. He also said that each lodge should have a website. I strongly agree with that and am pleased that Valhall Lodge has a website, and in my opinion a very good one at that. The presenter did not explain how to set up a Facebook Group or a Twitter account or a web site, but it was agreed that a committee should be formed that would help lodges in need get connected to the internet. I am a former webmaster of a homeowners association, and I was asked to attend a meeting to propose forming that committee. As I write this, I do not yet know whether the Board has approved the formation of that committee.

During the second hour, I attended "How to keep members or what color is your parachute?" I really had no interest in any of the sessions of the second hour, and I thought that this one would be a dud but that it was my duty to attend one of the sessions. I picked this after James, Susan, and Marc had picked two other sessions. But it turned out that this was a great session. Kathy Browne, President of Stein Fjell Lodge in Loveland, CO, explained what she has done as President to invigorate her lodge. She started off with a brainstorming session in her lodge to answer three questions:

1. What are we doing that we should continue to do?

2. What are we doing that we should stop doing?
3. What are we not doing that we should start doing?

They tried changing their meeting time, but that did not work out. Traffic was bad for some of the members at the new time.

Kathy had what she called “Membership Epitaphs” of which we need to be careful:

- We’ve always done it this way
- Ask Jane, she’ll do it
- No big deal, it’s my job
- I’d hoped to learn about ...
- You have to be part of the ‘in’ group
- You never know how long it will last
- We talked about it, but no one did anything
- I’ll just watch

People who say, “That’s the way we’ve always done it” are called TTWWADIs. Her lodge has a Jane, and she made a point of not letting Jane do it. (My wife has a sister who is “Jane” in her lodge, so I relate to that problem.)

Kathy’s lodge meets on week nights at 7:00. That works for them. They are done by 9:00. There is a social half-hour at the beginning. The meeting part starts at 7:30. There is a half hour for opening ceremonies and singing. Then 45 minutes for a presentation. (If the presentation doesn’t last that long, then everybody goes home earlier.) Finally, essential business is conducted in about 5 minutes. Most business is handled by the board at separate meetings. The board meetings are open to all the members to observe, and board meeting minutes are distributed to the members.

The newsletter publisher resigned, and Kathy had to put out a newsletter in December. She announced that there would be no newsletter in January or in subsequent months unless somebody volunteered to handle it. Eventually a member got her mother-in-law to volunteer. The mother-in-law

was not a member of the lodge, but she took care of the newsletter. Eventually she got so interested in the lodge that she joined it.

Conclusion

I wish to thank the Lodge for sending me as a delegate to the convention. I was honored to serve in that capacity. I had fun and learned more about how Sons of Norway is organized and how it works. I enjoyed schmoozing with the other delegates from Valhall and meeting delegates from other lodges.