

INSPIRATION FOR MODERN WOODMEN FRATERNAL LEADERS

Impact

M A G A Z I N E

FALL 2024

SPIRIT OF GIVING

*How leaders end the year
with holiday cheer* p. 4

21 WINTER ACTIVITY IDEAS

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Cater to the
GENERATIONS
p. 9

Sharon Mitchell,
fraternal leader
from Oklahoma



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Dear fraternal community,

As the holiday season settles in, we find ourselves reflecting on the year that's passed and the special moments that have brought us together.

I look forward to spending Thanksgiving with my family. The football game will be on in the background, cheesy potatoes will be piled high, and we'll talk about how harvest went on my aunts' and uncles' neighboring farms in central Illinois. Then my cousins in New York City and Chicago will share the latest of big city life. This season offers a time in my family to learn about the latest fall fashions, discuss the upcoming lambing season, and spend quality time with those we love.

Across the country, winter brings a variety of experiences. But no matter where we are, we find warmth in gathering with loved ones and sharing traditions across generations. The holidays remind us of the value of community. At Modern Woodmen, **we take pride in the many fraternal activities and events that foster this connection.** We have countless ways to give back – from organizing coat drives to volunteering for local charities, hosting events that bring members together, and more.

We're excited to share wintertime activity ideas in this issue and hear about the events bringing people together in your communities across the nation. These moments of connection are a true reflection of what makes this season so special.

As we enter this time of celebration and giving, may your holidays be filled with warmth, joy and the spirit of generosity. Together, let's make this season one that strengthens our bonds and lifts up those in need.

Wishing you peace, happiness and a bright new year. Happy holidays!

Kate

Kate Schieffer
Fraternal Outreach Associate



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**Modern
Woodmen**
FRATERNAL FINANCIAL

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FRATERNAL SHOUTOUT

Meet Karen Dahlstrom, the newest member of the Fraternal Department

My role: As Fraternal Service & Programs manager, I work closely with our team to provide exceptional service and administer innovative programs that make an impact in our communities. I look forward to developing relationships at the home office, in the field and with volunteer leaders to enhance collaboration and drive collective success.



My past experience: After roles in higher education and nonprofit organizations, this felt like a natural fit for my next step. It combines my passion for community service with the opportunity to lead a team of amazing people. And, I've been a Modern Woodmen member for more than 20 years! (First introduced by my husband's

I want to be a positive force for good.

great-uncle, Byron Carlson, if any of you remember him as former leader of the Fraternal Department.)

My belief in community involvement: I want to be a positive force for good. The world can feel heavy sometimes, so I focus on what I can do to make my local community better. Stepping outside my daily routine and volunteering allows

me to meet new people and develop a deeper understanding of those from all walks of life. As a mom, I want to set an example for my son to say "yes" when asked to serve and be part of things bigger than yourself.

In my free time: My husband and son are sports fanatics, so we're usually watching sports, attending games or playing golf. I love to ride my bike along the Mississippi River with friends and enjoy any chance possible to share a meal with others. I currently serve as president of Twin Rivers Rotary After Hours Club and am on a handful of other boards and committees for local organizations.

A little-known fact about me: I'm a native of Aledo, the rhubarb capital of Illinois. I even dressed up as a stalk of rhubarb in a community variety show when I was in high school! I'll always be a small-town girl at heart and am grateful to have been raised in such a caring place by parents who instilled a passion for service (and fun!) in me.

HOLIDAY SPIRIT

How leaders across the country end their year and spread some cheer



MEMBERS IN OHIO GATHER FOR THEIR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION.

November and December can be a wonderful time to celebrate with members and do good in the community. And now these activities count for premier status.

Here fraternal leaders Amanda Denney, Delaware, Ohio, and Sharon Mitchell, Tulsa, Oklahoma, share their year-end memories and tips.

How does your chapter like to round out the year?

Amanda: We participate in our local Turkey Trot for the Thanksgiving season as a Matching Fund project. Funds raised go to our local autism awareness society. We have members who participate in the race, and some who volunteer at water and snack stations throughout the event.

In December, our local chapters have a huge Christmas celebration. We find an awesome location that draws members in. Santa comes, and we provide a catered meal, family photos, and a kids' craft or activity. Each chapter that's involved dedicates \$500 of their premier dollars to help with the cost of the celebration, which is completely free for our members.



Sharon: Every year, we invite chapter members and their families to come to a Christmas bash. We eat, play games, give away prizes and more. One year, we had a baking contest for the best dessert. Another year, we had a cookie-decorating contest for the kids. We've also had talent shows and ugly sweater/ugly sock fashion shows. It's so fun!

Typically, the chapter purchases the meat, and members/guests bring the side dishes. We usually



COOKIE CONTEST IN OKLAHOMA.

hold it at a member's house in the country. The celebration lasts a couple of hours, but people can come and stay as long as they want. It's kind of come and go.

Is it all fun and games?

Amanda: We usually incorporate an educational piece to our party. And we do a toy drive that's incredibly successful. Members each bring an unwrapped toy for us to donate to people in need. This year, we're

also adding a hat, glove and scarf drive.

Sharon: We always do a service project at the bash or around that same time. We've volunteered at the food bank, donated books, and put together fruit bags for residents at nursing homes. We put an apple, orange and candy cane in the bags, along with a Christmas card.

I love doing things for our fire department. So, another year, we donated socks to them. During the wintertime, it gets so cold when they go fight fires, and their feet get wet. This way, they can take extra pairs with them, change their socks when needed and keep working.



OKLAHOMA CHAPTER HOLIDAY POTLUCK.

For all of these projects, the chapter purchased items, and we also asked for donations from local members.

What's a key to success for these events?

Amanda: The most successful thing for us has been starting



SHARON MITCHELL (FIFTH FROM LEFT) AND HER CHAPTER DONATE SOCKS TO FIREFIGHTERS.



FREE, CATERED MEAL FOR OHIO MEMBERS, THANKS TO PREMIER FUNDS.



TIME WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN OHIO.



SUPPORTING THE FOOD BANK IN OKLAHOMA.



WINTER ACCESSORIES FOR OKLAHOMA SCHOOLS.

to plan our holiday events in August. This allows us to choose a location that's available during the most hectic time of the year for venues. It also allows us to be able to line up a great caterer and order enough supplies to make the event a hit.

We always set a budget for the next year's holiday events during our chapter planning sessions in December. Having a budget lets us know what our options are. We brainstorm ideas for venues and caterers, and then someone makes phone calls and comes to the table with pricing for our final planning meetings in August.

Sharon: I try to keep our bash around the same day and time every year, shortly before Christmas. I've found that works better than fluctuating too much. I start promoting it to members in October.

Do you have a favorite moment from a past holiday activity?

Amanda: One of my members has a teenage son with special needs. At our second annual Christmas party, he came to the event and was very excited to meet our amazing Santa Claus.



LEADER AMANDA DENNEY LOVES HER ANNUAL CHATS WITH SANTA!

Santa took intentional time to talk to this young man and read him a story. When Santa arrived the next year, he asked me about this young man. He remembered how special he was and wanted to be sure to address him.

This event has many precious memories. Our members are so grateful for a place to celebrate with their families and an opportunity to give back. For some, it's a time to enjoy the holidays with other people when they might otherwise be spending them alone.

Sharon: I love our talent shows. One of the most memorable was when we asked members to perform a rap song or poem they made up for a friend or family

member they had lost in the past year. Mine was about my mother. She always had these crazy things she would do.

A lot of times, holidays can be tough for people. That activity brought back some fun memories. It

helped us all realize, our loved ones may not be here, but we still have them in our hearts.

"OUR LOVED
ONES MAY NOT
BE HERE, BUT WE
STILL HAVE THEM
IN OUR HEARTS."



MAKING TOYS, JUST LIKE THE ELVES! CONSIDER RENTING A STUFFING MACHINE FOR ONE OF YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS.

Parade with friends

SOCIAL ACTIVITY

Corinth, Mississippi

Chapter activities coordinator:
Jonathan Marsh

Last December, members of Chapter 13188 participated in a holiday parade. They dressed up as Dr. Seuss characters and passed out candy along the route. This season, check out what events are happening locally. There may be a parade or festival that your chapter/club could take part in. Members can bond over the shared experience and make holiday memories.



Hang stockings with care

MATCHING FUND PROJECT

La Crosse, Indiana

Chapter activities coordinator:
Natalie Moore

Animals can take part in the festivities, too! Chapter 439 visited a horse barn and decorated their stalls. Bring cheer to animals and those who help them. Ask local animal shelters, horse stables or other animal-related centers if you can decorate their facilities for the holidays. You can also bring holiday treats for the animals.

Offer smiles and song

SERVICE PROJECT

Owosso, Michigan

Club leader:
Rachel Remenar

Youth Service Club 11096-1 brought holiday magic to older adults. They sang carols at a senior apartment complex and served hot chocolate during their visit. This season, bring your members together and sing songs around the community. Everyone can choose their favorite tune to join in on the fun!



Bring joy with baked goods

SERVICE PROJECT

Easley, South Carolina

Club leader:
Janine Sutter



Who doesn't love sweet treats during the holidays? Members of Youth Service Club 17423-1 baked items for local first responders. They created holiday classics, like peppermint candy, and fan favorites, like banana bread. Show your chapter's/club's support for first responders by creating goody bags. Stuff them with baked goods, candy or anything else you dream up.

Need **more** holiday
INSPIRATION?
Check out these project ideas!



HONOR AMERICAN HEROES

This year, **National Wreaths Across America Day** will take place **Saturday, December 14**. Your chapter or youth service club could sponsor a veteran's wreath (or multiple) in honor of a loved one who served our nation. Or volunteer to place wreaths on graves at a cemetery near you. **Learn more at wreathsacrossamerica.org.**

Speaking of greenery: After your wreath event, you could ask a local florist to teach your group how to make a berry pinecone centerpiece to bring home or share with a holiday party host. Use chapter funds for supplies and the instructor's time.

Jump into a holiday movie!

Enjoy a new release or holiday classic with your group on the big (or small) screen. Or take in a live performance at a community theater or other venue. For an added touch, hire a photographer to take family photos before or after the event.

Real-life example: Chapter 11096 in Owosso, Michigan, went on a "Polar Express" train ride. The train stopped at a fake North Pole, where attendees could enjoy hot cocoa and a special visit from Santa Claus!

Show member appreciation

Gather together for a year-end party. Add a theme or sprinkle in fun activities, such as a gingerbread house-making, holiday trivia or name-that-tune contest. Consider a family breakfast event for a unique spin. Or offer mini photo sessions with a professional photographer (don't forget the pets!). You could use premier funds to offset costs and/or provide special gifts to members who attend.

Real-life example: Chapter 10397 in Minneota, Minnesota, gathered for an ugly Christmas sweater party. The event was complete with a build-your-own-burger bar and door prizes.

Spread cheer

There are so many ways your members can be a source of happiness for your community. Bring members together to pass out hot beverages at the park, go caroling, help decorate a community space, or create and deliver holiday cards. Or sponsor an angel tree. Ask members to nominate families in need and/or ask schools for ideas. Then encourage members to donate items to the families.

Real-life example: Last December, members of Chapter 16220 in Villa Rica, Georgia, set up a hot chocolate and apple cider bar at a local park for ice skaters.

Support traditions near and far

Is there a holiday tradition in your community? See how you can take part. Many communities offer opportunities for sleigh rides, lighted boat parades, tree lightings, Hanukkah celebrations, Kwanzaa festivals, and other traditions that would make great social activities. Or hold an educational event to learn about holiday customs around the world.

Real-life example: Chapter 5300 in Doniphan, Missouri, held a Matching Fund project during a local tradition, the Santa Run. This annual fundraiser supports a local ball field. Attendees of the run participate in Santa attire – some in just hats, others in the full suit!



Talkin' about the generations

What activities interest your members most could depend on when they were born. Consider these generational insights as you plan your year.

The silent generation

Loyal, hardworking and fan of life's simple things
Born: 1928-1945



These members tend to **love educational opportunities**. Some may work a part-time job (for pleasure or necessity), but most are retired with time to learn something new. Many people in this generation are married or widowed with grown children and grandchildren. This, along with the fact that they're often extremely patient, are reasons many enjoy mentoring, tutoring, working with or being visited by kids.

Baby boomers

Goal-centric and team-oriented
Born: 1946-1964



Because leaving a social legacy is a motivator for this generation, they're **inspired by people in the community who help others**. Honoring a Hometown Hero may be important to them. Members of this generation also love educational opportunities, being part of a team and using their unique skills. It may be ideal to organize team-effort opportunities that allow members to showcase their talents.

Generation X
Independent and resourceful
Born: 1965-1980



Members in this generation like to try new things, appreciate multi-

cultural settings, and are **interested in activities they can do with their families**. To find time to volunteer while balancing other obligations, activities need to have flexible scheduling. Consider different days of the week and times of day to give these members options. They may also appreciate receiving the activity agenda ahead of time, since they like to plan and use their time effectively.

Millennials

Optimistic and open to new ideas
Born: 1981-1996



Immersive experiences that allow these members to **think about or gain new perspectives** are particularly appealing to this generation. Millennials (especially those who are single) are influenced by their peers and find interest in activities they can do with their friends. Guests may want to

return if they know their friend is involved. Service projects that support popular causes may be of interest as well as activities that involve working in pairs or in a group with peers.

Generation Z

Tech-savvy and independent
Born: 1997-2012



This generation is interested in volunteering and working for nonprofit organizations. They're **inspired by current trends or identified needs driven by social media**. Service projects that support popular causes may be of interest to this group. They also like to try new things and visit new places that create experiences they can have with their friends and family.

Welcome WINTER

21 IDEAS TO TRY IN THE COMING MONTHS

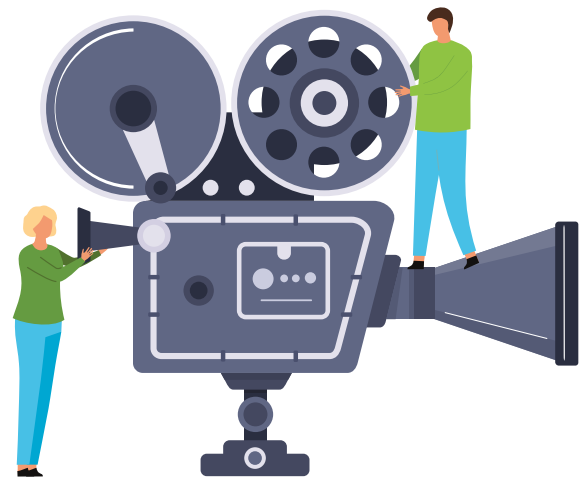
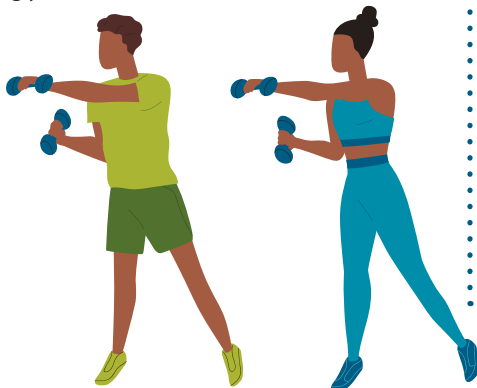
Now's the time to plan winter activities with your chapter or youth service club. Which of these events would your members be most excited to attend? Bonus points for mixing and matching to create a truly memorable experience.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR

Hold an educational event in January that's tied to common New Year's resolutions. Members might enjoy a healthy-cooking or yoga/Pilates/Zumba class. Or hire a speaker to share tips on decluttering and organizing your home.

Other new year ideas:

- Deliver supplies to teachers as they return from winter break.
- Host an online mixology class or virtual wine tasting.



KEEP IT COZY

Plan an indoor movie marathon. Rent a projector and host the event at a community center or gym. Invite families to bring their own chairs, blankets and pillows, etc. For extra fun, pick a theme, dress the part and/or provide related snacks.

Other cozy ideas:

- Make cocoa bombs.
- Set up a hot chocolate or s'mores bar.



GET ACTIVE

Take advantage of the cold and snow if applicable to your area. Organize a sledding day at a nearby hill or park. Or go snowshoeing, tubing, snowboarding, skiing, ice skating or ice fishing. If you're really feeling adventurous, participate in a local polar bear plunge fundraiser.

Other active ideas:

- Go rock climbing at a local gym.
- Organize a casual photography walk or bird-watching stroll through a scenic area. Hire a professional photographer or someone who knows how to take great cell phone pics to provide guidance along the way.



LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Contact a local fabric store and ask if they offer classes. Members could learn how to make something easy, like fleece tie blankets or pillows. Then donate your creations to a local nursing home.

Other educational ideas:

- Tour a local chocolate factory and enjoy samples. Yum!
- Attend a watercolor class together, online or in person.



SHOW YOUR COMPETITIVE SIDE

Hold a snowman or snow sculpture building contest. Your chapter/club can purchase needed items, such as food coloring and decorations, plus prizes for the winners. No snow, no problem. Get creative with a snow substitute – sand, cotton balls, paper, etc.

Other competitive ideas:

- Host a chapter cook-off. Members can enter for the best cookie, soup, casserole or other favorite winter dish.
- Tailgate before a high school basketball game and create your own cheering section.

GET CRAFTY

Create snow globes with your members. You'll need mason jars with lids, water, lots of glitter, and something small to glue to the bottom that will make you smile when you look at it.



Other crafty ideas:

- Teach kids how to make paper snowflakes.
- Stuff your own bears to donate or as part of a fundraiser. (Learn more at bdaybears.com.)

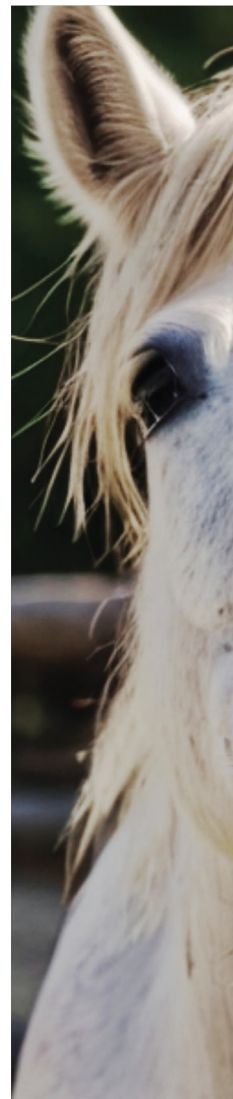
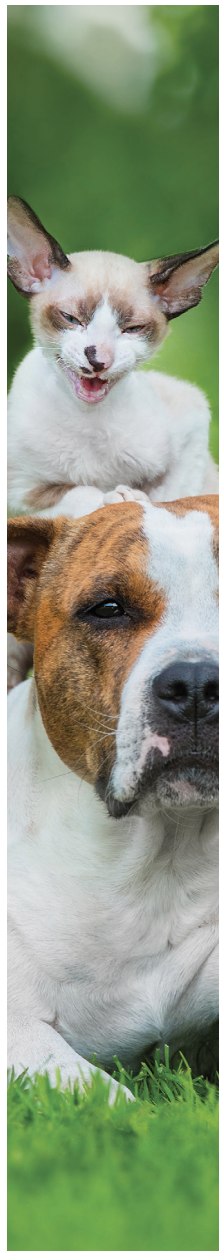
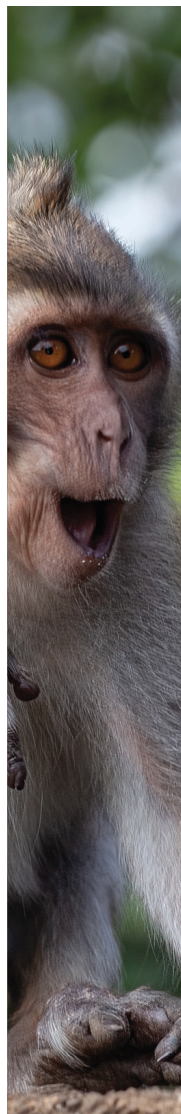


HELP A NEIGHBOR

Volunteer at a soup kitchen. Members could bring their favorite dishes to share, serve the meal and help clean up afterward. Be sure to talk to staff in advance to learn about guidelines.

Other service ideas:

- Collect food and help stock shelves for a local pantry.
- Organize a coat drive, mitten/hat drive or something similar.



Go ahead – keep monkeying (or horsing) around

Keep walking on the WILD side next year

The cat's out of the bag. Next year's national fraternal focus will build on the wildly popular Wild About Animals initiative. Let's have a whale of a time, show animals some love, and help humans in the process.

1st quarter

Go wild for animal shelters.

2nd quarter

Go wild for pets.

3rd quarter

Go wild for wildlife.

4th quarter

Go wild for service animals.

New in 2025:

- A preplanned virtual event you can use with your chapter or club. Watch for details.
- A year-end thank-you gift for all leaders who participate in a Wild About Animals activity in 2025.

Take the bull by the horns!

Go to the Wild About Animals page of the Training & Resources site ([accessible through imakeanimpact.org](https://www.imakeanimpact.org)). Fresh ideas with photos, instructions and supply lists will be added throughout the year. Check back regularly. Holy cow!