

INSPIRATION FOR MODERN WOODMEN FRATERNAL LEADERS

Impact

M A G A Z I N E

SPRING 2023

Happy spring!

*Longtime leaders share
the good, the baaad and
the memorable* p. 4

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“A book is a gift you can open again and again.” – Garrison Keillor

A gift that keeps giving

It's been great to see how you've impacted the lives of children *again and again* with the first-quarter campaign activity, Read Across America. We've seen so many activities – from reading bedtime books to kiddos in their pj's to honoring literacy leaders in your community.

The Raising Readers campaign is especially important to me as a mom of three (ages 6, 4 and 6 months). We know that screen time and virtual learning is becoming more relevant. These are great learning tools in moderation. However, cuddling up with my girls and a good, old-fashioned book before bed every night creates quality time that's unmatched. It's a small thing that will make a lasting impact.

Likewise, every campaign activity you support – whether big or small – will help to bring literacy to the forefront for our youth. Thank you *again and again* for doing your part!

Fairy dust and wands ready?

The second-quarter campaign activity, Be a Book Fairy, has taken flight! Gather new or used children's books and hide them anywhere children might easily find them. Include an insert explaining that the child should read the book and then hide it again for someone else to find and enjoy. Talk about a gift that keeps giving!

Don't forget to complete your survey, so we can add the number of books your chapter/youth service club hid to our nationwide tally. **(Hint: This will also enter you into the quarterly incentive drawing!)**

What I love about this fraternal campaign (second to helping our youngest generation) is that we all can feel we're on the same team and part of something bigger. YOU are part of a bigger picture and a major piece of the overall impact Modern Woodmen and our members are making on kids across America. *Again and again!*

Abby Berntgen

Abby Berntgen
Fraternal Program Associate



Abby and her daughters.

IMPACT MAGAZINE

Official fraternal publication of
Modern Woodmen of America
1701 1st Avenue, P.O. Box 2005
Rock Island, IL 61204-2005

CHIEF FRATERNAL OFFICER AND VICE PRESIDENT

Jill Lain Weaver

EDITOR

Julie Fuhr

Enterprise Communications

DESIGNER

Jodi Spurling

Enterprise Communications

EDITORIAL ADVISOR

Hannah Glaub

Fraternal Department

FRATERNAL DEPARTMENT STAFF

Abigail Berntgen

Helene DeVine

Cynthia Flores

Melissa Gottwalt

Ann Held

Britney Holst

Melissa Mayers

Tammy Mielke

Karen Mizner

Martha Nelson

Amber Nichols

Kristen Roberts

Find us on:



@ModernWoodmen



Modern Woodmen
fraternal leaders (group)



@ModernWoodmen



@ModernWoodmen




@ModernWoodmen1883

800-322-9805

imakeanimpact.org

Modern
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FRATERNAL FINANCIAL



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Formerly named Operations, the Fraternal Service and Programs team includes (front to back): Britney Holst, Melissa Mayers, Kristen Roberts (manager), Cynthia Flores, Abby Berntgen, Amber Nichols, Tammy Mielke and Martha Nelson.

Get to know ... the Fraternal Service and Programs team

We're responsible for ...

- Handling fraternal leader, field and member requests and inquiries about all things fraternal.
- Processing fraternal activity requests/reports and requests for member programs.
- Coordinating the Make An Impact® Scholarships program.
- Managing the Fraternal Excellence Award for the field.
- Establishing procedures and processes for chapters, youth service clubs, member programs and MoneyMasters.
- Administering imakeanimpact.org.

Contact us if you have questions about ...

- ANYTHING! We're here for you. If we don't have an answer, we'll find it for you or direct you to the appropriate person.

Fast facts ...

- We have more than 100 years of fraternal experience combined.
- We process more than 65,000 chapter and youth club requests and reports annually. This is in addition to requests for member programs, such as the Birthday Book Club and Fraternal Aid Fund.
- We work with more than 1,300 fraternal leaders.
- We're passionate about a wide variety of causes – from homelessness to Alzheimer's disease to supporting the performing arts.
- We're fans of birthday celebrations and all have different go-to hobbies and talents. (Remember that juggler mentioned in the winter issue? Well, it's one of us!)



Try something **NEW**

... and other words of wisdom from longtime leaders

Celebrating (and repeating) your successes is a great thing. But, as Lynn Bibbee and Marcella Strand will tell you, it's equally important to learn from oopses and occasionally get out of your comfort zone. They should know. When it comes to planning chapter and youth club activities, these longtime leaders are no spring chickens. They each have 30-plus years of successful and not-so-successful activities under their belts. Here, they reminisce and share a few tips they've picked up along the way.



Lynn Bibbee, Maryland

My first fraternal activity: Back when we first started, my husband (a Modern Woodmen representative) and I planned a picnic for a chapter that had been inactive for awhile. Several hundred people showed up. Everyone said they were glad to have the chapter back up and running, so they could reconnect with old friends.

Key lesson learned since that time: Rely on what works, but don't be afraid to try something new. Members have told us they may not always be able (or want) to attend, but they're glad to see us doing events and service projects within the community.

How many insurance companies can say it's not just about getting business? For Modern Woodmen, it's about forming new friendships while protecting families.

My top tips for new leaders:

- Ask members what *they* want to do, where *they* want to eat, who *they* want to help, etc.
- Make events affordable. For example, I try to find restaurants where kids eat free or that are having special promotions.
- Plan ahead and invite local Modern Woodmen reps, managing partners and the regional director when you can.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. We've been on our own most of the time in Maryland, but we can always rely on the home office when we need help.
- Make events fun – NOT a sales pitch. We've had members say they didn't come to activities at first because they thought we were trying to sell something. Fraternal activities are a time to get together for fellowship and to give back to your communities.

A little something to warm your heart: When we first opened a youth service club in this area, we had kids as little as 2 and 3 years old. Now *their* kids are part of our youth club. That's a full-circle moment!



**Marcella Strand,
South Dakota**

My first fraternal activity: I don't remember if it was exactly my first, but early on we had an activity at the Platte golf course. It was a small group of people, and the activity centered around food. That's just the way we always did it then. People like food, and they like discounts.

Key lesson learned since that time: Everyone thinks differently and does things differently. You just have to go with what you feel comfortable with as a leader. And always be prepared! Truthfully, I'm not always as prepared as I should be. Sometimes I'm like, "Well, I should have done that differently." You learn by doing.

My top tips for new leaders:

- Make sure you have sufficient accommodations for the number of people you're expecting. I've had a few bad experiences over the years. Once, I tried to host an activity at a pizza place. It was a big crowd, and their ovens couldn't keep up. It was the worst activity I've ever had.

- Talk to the manager of the business where you're holding your activity. I usually call and make an appointment. We visit about how our chapter activities work, so the employees can know what to expect. These are the ground rules and how to handle everything.
- Do a Hometown Hero event. I love them! It's wonderful to recognize people who normally don't get recognized. It makes the heroes – and the people who come to the event – feel amazing.
- Try new things; it may surprise you. Recently, I held a Matching Fund project that I thought would never work. We all brought Christmas decorations that we no longer wanted. People could go around to tables and pick anything they wanted in exchange for a free-will donation. We came out of that event with more than \$20,000 to help an individual diagnosed with ALS.

A little something to warm your heart: My all-time favorite activity was with my youth service club. At that time, we had a lot of fish at our place. We were being flooded, and we had a lake that had bullheads in it. So we held a fishing tournament. I didn't think anyone would come, but was I wrong! It was the greatest time. The kids caught a lot of fish, and it was just a fun day. I have members who still talk about it.

I love being a fraternal leader ... I guess that's why I'm still doing it decades later!



Library golf

Social activity
Ravenna, Michigan
Chapter activities coordinator: Karla Twork

Looking for a fun way to get kids to the library? In the spirit of the Raising Readers initiative, Chapter 198 invited members to play miniature golf at a course set up throughout the local library. Then everyone stuck around to read books together with family and friends.



Young paleontologists

Educational event
Springfield, Missouri
Club leader: Lisa Pluth

Members of Youth Service Club 12121-3 explored and researched the science of fossils at an event hosted by the local library. Libraries often offer unique ways to engage the community. Watch for events in your area, especially during the spring and summer months.



Get slimed!

Educational event
Bowling Green, Ohio
Chapter activities coordinator: Jeffrey Crawford

Chapter 3530 participated in a fun, family activity – learning how to make slime. This type of project could work well as an educational event or social activity. Contact your local parks department, library, historical society, etc., to see if they’re offering classes or events your members could participate in.



Recognition and praise

Hometown Hero event
Kernersville, North Carolina
Chapter activities coordinator: Tammy Canter

Members of Chapter 16583 honored a police department employee as a Hometown Hero at a local charity softball game. Awarding your hero at a community, school or local organization’s event may offer recognition from a wider audience. (Something to keep in mind if you’re planning a Hometown Hero event tied to the fourth-quarter Raising Readers project later this year!)



Water fun

Service project
Plankinton, South Dakota
Chapter activities coordinator: Kathleen Guindon

Members of Chapter 7477 filled water balloons and helped set up at a community event held to raise funds for the local pool. Service projects don’t have to be labor intensive, and it’s perfectly OK to help out at an event planned by others in your community. Watch for local charity races, sporting events and other communitywide activities planned this spring and summer. Organizers are often looking for groups of volunteers.



Hooping with first responders

Matching Fund project
Starkville, Mississippi
Chapter activities coordinator: Donna Burkett

Chapter 16017 joined up with a charity basketball tournament to raise money for Starkville’s National Night Out. High school alumni and local first responders battled it out for bragging rights. The price of admission was a donation to the cause. Remember, Matching Fund projects don’t have to be extravagant to be successful.



May is just around the corner and a perfect time to bring members together for a fun spring activity with a purpose. Goody bags are an easy project for members of any age. They can be created for almost any occasion or recipient, and they're appropriate year-round.

Step 1: Choose the recipient.

Ask members who they want the project to benefit. If they're involved in the decision, they'll enjoy the project a lot more. Some recipient ideas include neighbors, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, caregivers, teachers, first responders, postal workers and delivery drivers.

Step 2: Make a list and gather items.

Ask members to help create the list of items to include in your goody bags (which don't have to be bags at all. Get creative!) Members can also help create a budget, search for deals, and donate items to help keep chapter/club costs low. If you have a specific organization in mind, don't forget to contact them first to make sure you get what they actually need.

Step 3: Donate!

Encourage members to take part in the delivery. The project is more meaningful when they see the impact firsthand.

What types of goody bags have your members created?

Share all the "deets" with us at fraternal@modern-woodmen.org or in the Modern Woodmen Fraternal Leaders private Facebook group! (Bonus points for including pictures.)

Goody "bags" to try with your chapter or club



May Day baskets. Remember, they don't have to be baskets. You could use a cup, jar, zip-close bag, paper bag or even a homemade paper cone! Fill them with:

- Flowers and greenery (real or paper).
- Baked goods.
- Homemade trail mix or popcorn.
- Candy.
- Small trinkets.



Birthday-in-a-box. Fill boxes with items needed to celebrate a birthday. Donate them to food pantries or shelters for displaced children. Consider including:

- Aluminum pan.
- Box of cake mix.
- Sprite (instead of eggs and oil).
- Container of frosting.
- Birthday candles.
- Birthday card, signed by members.
- Small gift.



Feminine hygiene kits. These are great to donate to schools. A few states require schools to ensure young women have access to these basic necessities (which many struggle to afford).

- Feminine products.
- Deodorant.
- Soap/shampoo/conditioner.
- Facial cleansing towelettes.
- Toothbrush/toothpaste.
- Razor.
- Brush.
- Nail clippers.
- Hair ties.



Sensory kits. These calming kits are great for young children or people with autism and similar challenges. Some items to consider:

- Fidget toys.
- Bubbles.
- Stress ball.
- Silly putty.
- Soft animal or blanket.
- Scented lip balm.
- Hand lotion.
- Scented crayons or pencils.
- Coloring book.

Requests for activity requests

Instead of this:

Writing your activity request as if talking to Fraternal Department staff.



Try this:

Speak to your members instead.



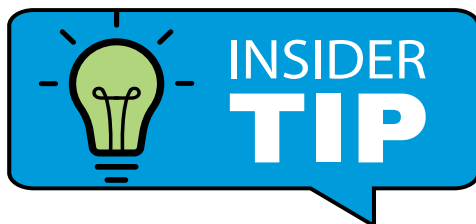
Because:

Although Fraternal Department team members review your requests for approval, they're not the only audience. Some of the information you provide on the request will be pulled into electronic invitations (e-vites), and members will read (or hear) it. Will what you're writing make sense to your members?

A few other best practices:

- **Be detailed, but concise.** Provide key info members need to know to attend or participate. But remember there are word/character limits for e-vite text messages. Include only the most critical information in the fields that display in these messages (activity title, date, time, location name and location address).

- **Check out sample messages and e-vite "field mapping."** This will help you avoid inserting information without understanding what it will look like to your members. Find the resources on the Training Materials site at imakeanimpact.org. Go to Electronic Invitations > Best Practices.
- **Cancel/change/edit with care.** Remember, members will receive another e-vite if you cancel or change your activity. Club leaders: If you forget to select e-vites but want them sent to members, promptly edit and resubmit your existing activity request. It will be too late if you wait until after the submission deadlines (seven or 28 days, depending on whether postcards are requested).



Remember, e-vites use phone numbers tied to members' certificates and email addresses associated with online member accounts at member.modernwoodmen.org. (This is sometimes referred to as Modern Woodmen's member website.)

If one of your members doesn't want to receive e-vites, he/she can:

- Use the opt-out feature at the bottom of the email invitation.
- Reply "STOP" after receiving an SMS/text invitation.
- Follow opt-out instructions given after a voice message.

Members will need to opt out of each method to stop receiving all notifications.

Are you **ON TRACK?**

Strive for premier status in 2023

Earning premier status should be a top goal each year. It helps ensure your chapter/club is active and your members and communities are benefiting. Plus, your chapter or club receives money as a reward. Use premier funds to supplement a future activity or host a special member celebratory event.

As a reminder, you must meet all premier requirements by the end of October. That means the halfway point is just around the corner. Check out the **Fraternal Achievement** area of your imakeanimpact.org dashboard to view your progress.

You can also find helpful resources in the Training Materials site.

- Fill out the **2023 premier planning worksheet** to help keep yourself on track. Separate worksheets, detailing requirements, are available for chapters,



Summit chapters and youth service clubs. Go to Resources & Materials > Lead a Successful Chapter/Youth Service Club.

- Check out the activity ideas in the **premier planning calendars**, which are updated each year. Find quick links to these calendars at the bottom of the 2023 National Campaign page.

PREMIER requirement

Remember to submit a board report

Chapters and Summit chapters must submit at least one online board report each year to earn premier status. While many chapters like to hold an annual board meeting at the end or beginning of the year, your meeting(s) can happen anytime throughout the year.

- Your chapter board must have at least three elected officers.
- One board report is required and a maximum of two are allowed between Nov. 1 and Oct. 31.
- Chapters will be reimbursed \$7 per board member (up to seven members) for any expenses associated with board meetings.

Page 33 of the Fraternal Leader Handbook shares an outline for a successful board meeting. Or you can use the fillable chapter board meeting agenda as a quick guide.





Member program **SPOTLIGHT**

Talk about the Birthday Book Club

Want another way to support children’s literacy this year? Make sure all of your members know about Modern Woodmen’s Birthday Book Club. This member program mails free, age-appropriate books to children ages 1-16 during their birthday month each year. The high-quality books range from classic tales to

contemporary fiction and educational resources.

To qualify, all members of the household must be Modern Woodmen members. Direct members to their Modern Woodmen representative if they’d like to register their kids for the program!

PROMOTE fraternal member programs

Host an interactive educational event this year

Help your chapter members make the most of their membership. Remind them of all the exclusive fraternal programs available to them as Modern Woodmen members. And have some fun while you’re at it!

Check out the new **Fraternal Programs Educational Event Activity Guide** to prepare for an event using one of two separate presentations:

- **PowerPoint and script.** This is a revised version of the previous presentation, which shares current member programs in a standard, straightforward format.
- **Interactive presentation.** This brand-new format incorporates fun activities to add some excitement to your event and aid learning.

Access the guide and presentations in the Training Materials site at imakeanimpact.org. From the left-hand navigation, go to Activity Ideas > Project Guides. You’ll also find an activity guide for an educational event focused on **end-of-life planning and Modern Woodmen’s Final Wishes Resources**. Invite a Modern Woodmen rep to present on this important topic.

Attention Modern Woodmen reps: You can find a PowerPoint and script for the “Getting your house in order” presentation in the Fraternal section of The Resource Center, under Final Wishes Resources.

What's your **ROUTINE?**

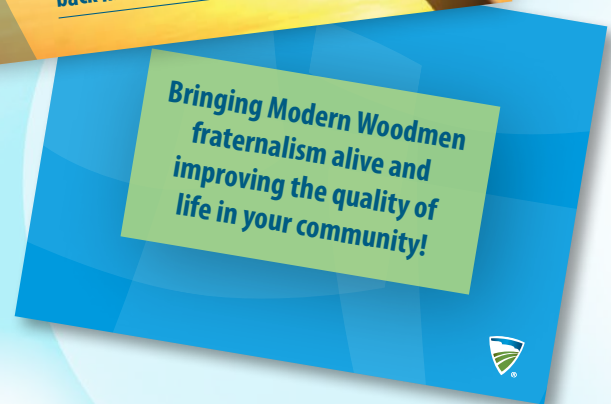
Kick off your activities with structure

Do you have a routine way you start chapter/club activities? It could provide structure and help your members know what to expect, serve as a reminder of what your chapter or club is all about, and help set the tone for the activity.

Recommended agenda:

- Welcome.
- Unifying activity, such as saying the Pledge of Allegiance, singing the National Anthem or reciting the final line of the Modern Woodmen Creed. *Hint: You can order creed cards for your members in the Supplies section of imakeanimpact.org (item F1206, design shown to the right).*
- Icebreaker to help attendees get to know each other.
- Announcements.
- Main event.

See Page 32 of the Fraternal Leader Handbook for details and ideas.



Experience the **BENEFITS**

Make the switch to Fraternal Connect now

Paper attendance sheets will be discontinued at the end of 2023, but there's no need to wait to start using Fraternal Connect regularly. This easy-to-use mobile app was specially developed to help you check in members electronically. (You can also use the browser version on a computer or laptop.)

- **Convenient.** Check in entire member households at one time. Guests who previously attended an event are prepopulated in the system.
- **Faster, more accurate.** No more wasting, keeping track of, scanning and uploading paper. No more deciphering bad handwriting. Fraternal Connect automatically uploads attendance to your imakeanimpact.org activity reports.
- **Instructional.** See more reliable, complete data about your events – how many (and how often) members are attending, how many times they bring guests, etc. Use this information to plan more successful, engaging activities.

Find Fraternal Connect training and tips in the Training Materials site at imakeanimpact.org.



BE A BOOK FAIRY

Help support our 2023 children's literacy initiative. In the second quarter, get books into kids' hands in a fun and unique way.

Work with members to:

1. Gather children's books (used books in good condition are fine).
2. Put them in clear, zip-close bags, along with a Book Fairy insert (item F622, see pic). The back of the insert explains that the finder should enjoy the book and then hide it again for someone else to find.
3. Hide the bagged books in public areas throughout the community – near playgrounds and schools, outside local organizations, or anywhere kids might easily find them.

Go to the 2023 National Campaign page on the Training Materials site at imakeanimpact.org for tips, supplies and fun ideas for hosting this activity.



Participate and win!

You could be one of 30 winners to receive a 12-month Amazon Prime subscription or gift card this quarter.

- Hold a Be a Book Fairy project in April, May or June.
- Report it within 30 days of your activity. (Be sure to categorize it as "Special Campaign.")
- Complete a short survey to share how many children your chapter/club activity reached (how many books you hid).

We'll automatically add your name to the quarterly drawing, to be held in early August.



**RAISING
READERS**