

Fraternal Order of Eagles (Philippine Eagles)

Observations and Issues

My Observation:

When I first met members of the Eagles it was back around 2012 it was a nice bunch of guys who bought me a lot of beer. Great social club, I thought. But over time I started to understand more about what the Eagles were and what the organization stood for and did or was supposed to do. Eventually this group of Eagles decided to break away from their current club and form a new club and I was inducted as one of the founding members. Now the problem as I see it. In the 3 or so years of the club's existence, I think we have had a total of 3 maybe 4 meetings. It is, as far as I know, mainly financed by one individual. But they always had an eagle event for Foundation day sponsored by this individual. No club growth or service projects beyond that. No adherence to the Magna Carta.

Second observation:

Now that I belong to multiple Clubs I see another pattern developing and that is overgrowth in memberships. I see many clubs inducting 20 and 30 members at a time but at meetings there is little or no growth in participation. I have also talked to several Kuyas about why they joined. And a common response is, "I wanted to be able to call people Kuya on the street". One member I talked to is on the Board of Directors of a club and he told me that he can't attend any meetings because of his work. So here we sit with clubs that have hundreds of members but little participation. It is like having a 1,000 room resort but only 20 rooms have beds. It is a dysfunctional situation.

This makes me reflect back on my introduction to the Eagles. Fun party group but is that what the Eagles are all about? It is part of it but should not be the main focus of the Club and how people perceive us. I also remember being at one LEADS seminar where a German Eagle member got up and asked, paraphrasing, "What do you do about members of a club that do nothing and just want to be a member because it is cool. How do we control this?" As two concerned outsiders we both saw the same problem developing.

Accountability:

There are certain rules and regulations that must be followed in order to become a chartered club and maintain its status as active. The same goes for members. Who monitors the clubs and its members? How are clubs and members held accountable for 100% no show and participation and clubs that do not follow the basic principles of the Magna Carta? I'm not saying go by the book 100% of the time but make an effort to live up to the goals, ideals and principal concepts laid down by the founding fathers of the Fraternal Order of Eagles (Philippine Eagles). It is not just Brotherhood. It is Service Through Strong Brotherhood.

Personal Note:

I personally take this one step further in that my philosophy embraces the true spirit of Eagleism, which I adopted back in the early 1960s when I joined the Boy Scouts, to also include service to individuals on an individual basis. By doing so, an individual can make a difference in someone's life which in turn could spread to helping others. If 10 individual Eagles helped make a difference of 10 lives then the potential is not just a 1 on 1 situation but is multiplied exponentially. The Service Through Strong Brotherhood, in this case, is the sharing of the accomplishments and how these accomplishments and concepts can be spread from helping an individual into a full blown community based service project. Sometimes things happen spontaneously and there is no time to meet and make a plan. It just happens and feels right. Little things can make a difference.

Proposals:

If not already in place, have a method of monitoring or auditing each club as far as total number of members, members who attend meetings and service projects, and inactive members. This needs to be a verifiable accounting through documentation such as attendance sheets and financial statements. This information should also be verifiable by the District Governor and collated at the National level. Develop a database based on the information received if it doesn't already exist.

What to do with this information:

Establish a reward or recognition program based on the statistics in the above proposed database. I know that people here love recognition and rewards here so for those clubs that have high scores on members vs. attendance and participation, the outstanding Club from each district would receive a banner or ribbon to hang along with their Club Flag, a plaque of some sort, or a trophy. Each member of the quality club would also receive a gold (colored) or silver (colored) eagle feather pin which could be worn to the right lapel or charm that can be added to a neck chain or bracelet as a symbol of this achievement. This is a page out of my personal Boy Scout handbook on motivation. In addition to these simple basic rewards, I see the possibility of cash awards or grants which would be given out with the intent of aiding a club run a special service project. Funding for this is open for discussion but I wanted to get the concept on record.

To take this concept one step further, let's take it to the National level and have a reward for the most outstanding Eagle Club picked from the winners from each district. In this case they would, like the District level, get a special banner and each member would get a gold eagle feather pin.

Thinking further out of the box, can this concept be expanded to include international clubs so we end up with a three tier program ranging from local, to National, to International? This is just more food for thought and discussion.

Another possible program would be a simple rating of clubs based on the above database and coming up with a way to rank clubs as Quality Clubs and award plaques or certificates to those clubs who meet the criteria as a Quality Club.

Final Thoughts:

It should not be up to the National level or the District level to expel delinquent or nonperforming members but the clubs right to do so if they wish. It is up to each club to decide what kind of club they want to be. In my opinion, we should be an organization of quality not quantity. That being said, I do think there has to be some method of holding clubs and members accountable and a mechanism needs to be developed to deal with clubs and members that do not follow the rules and regulations set forth in the Magna Carta. Just paying your dues is not enough. A club must follow the ideals, goals, and dreams that the founding fathers envisioned. The US Constitution is 243 years old and has never been modified. It has been amended but the basic values, visions and principals of the founding father are still alive and the law of the land. With the same respect, we need to follow the guiding principles and visions of the founding fathers of the Fraternal Order Eagles (Philippine Eagles) and respect their wisdom and forethought. I am not the perfect Eagle but I do my best to make a difference to one or many when I can.

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