

# Freemasonry



## Values In Action

### **Planning Guides for Masters-Elect:**

- **Lodge Planning Guide**
- **Public Relations Planning Guide**
- **Membership Planning Guide**

### **To Assist in Planning Activities That:**

- **Excite Your Active Members in Your Lodge**
- **Attract Your Inactive Members Back to Your Lodge**
- **Interest Men in Your Community to Join Your Lodge**

# A Guide for Masters to Plan 2009 Activities

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Dear Nebraska Worshipful Masters-Elect,

You will soon be responsible for the well-being of your lodge. Your brothers expect you to plan a year of activities that will *excite* active members, *attract* inactive members to lodge, and *interest* men to join. In so doing, you will construct a strong foundation for future Masters to build on.

This Guide is a tool to aide in your planning. It contains a process to plan activities, explanations of Grand Lodge plans, and resources to assist you in making next year more rewarding for you and beneficial to your lodge.

If you've visited the Lodge Leaders 2009 Web site at <http://www.lodgeleaders09.com/>, and begun your planning, then you are well down the road to success. Use this Guide as an adjunct to put the finishing touches on your plan. If you're making plans for next year now, use this Guide to assemble a calendar that's responsive to your members' needs and appealing to non-Masons.

The Grand Lodge theme for 2009, below and at right, aims to make a strong statement to your brothers and non-Masons about our fraternity and your lodge.

The point is that Freemasonry stands for values that help build our members and their communities in positive ways. It's what men expect from organizations they are looking to join. That's why it's important that your lodge actively emulate this theme in 2009.



The key words are "*actively emulate*." Your lodge must be *active* if it is to grow, and you and your brothers must *emulate* Masonic values to show the benefits of membership. The Grand Lodge will keep this message in front of your brothers and the men in this state. It is up to you to ensure it has meaning in your lodge and your community.

How do you give it meaning? By planning activities that target three areas of Masonic values:

- **The Mason and His Family.** Our fraternity is about the development of men by improving him as a man, a father and a husband. Next year, this value will be represented by the perfect ashlar, which we strive to become in our lifetime.
- **Your Lodge.** Your role as Master is to ensure your lodge in 2009 lives up to the brotherly love our fraternity professes. The trowel stands for the brotherly love you show through your actions and activities that are in the best interests of your lodge and your brothers.
- **Your Community.** There are many people and causes in need of assistance. Not only do Masons seek to reach out to them, but we gain visibility by involvement in local and fraternal charities. The value of charity is set forth in the third rung of Jacob's ladder.

Please participate in the activities in each area of emphasis spelled out in this Guide. Each month from March-December, the Grand Lodge will focus on at least one value through suggested lodge activities. Between them, and the activities you plan, your lodge will have an active, highly visible and meaningful year.

If all Nebraska lodges hold the activities in these areas of emphasis, and plan an active year, we will move our fraternity forward both locally and statewide.

Again, thank you for taking a part in leading Freemasonry in Nebraska. I am proud to have you on the 2009 leadership team.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Russ Reno".

Russ Reno  
Grand Master-Elect

## 2009 Lodge/Grand Lodge Calendar

### **February 2009**

Sat., Feb. 21, 3 p.m. – Installation of Grand Lodge Officers, Scottish Rite, 332 Centennial Mall So., Lincoln

Thurs., Feb. 26, 7 p.m. – Lodge Leaders Forum, Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 202 So. 20<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha

### **March – Support the Grand Lodge Masonic Relief Fund**

Tues., March 10, 7 p.m. – Lodge Leaders Forum, 1635 L St., Lincoln

Wed., March 11, 7 p.m. – EA School of Instruction, Covert No. 11, 2424 So. 135<sup>th</sup> Ave., Omaha

Mon., March 16, 7 p.m. – EA School of Instruction, Cotner No. 297, 1542 No. 65<sup>th</sup> St., Lincoln

Tues., March 17, 7 p.m. – Lodge Leaders Forum, Beatrice Lodge No. 26, 601 Grant St., Beatrice

Thurs., March 19, 7 p.m. – FC School of Instruction, East Lincoln No. 210, 2700 S St., Lincoln

Sat., March 21 – Grand Lodge Officers Dinner, Tangier Shrine, 2823 So. 84<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha

Mon., March 23, 7 p.m. – Masonic Education Symposium, Scottish Rite, 332 Centennial Mall So., Lincoln

Mon., March 23, 7 p.m. – FC School of Instruction, Nebraska No. 1, 2424 So. 135<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha

Tues., March 24, 7 p.m. – 1<sup>st</sup> Sec. MM School of Instruction, Lincoln No. 19, 1635 L. St., Lincoln

Tues., March 24, 7 p.m. – Masonic Education Symposium, Hastings

Tues., March 24, 7 p.m. – Masonic Education Symposium, Omaha

Thurs., March 26, 7 p.m. – Lodge Leaders Forum, Wahoo Lodge No. 59, 445 No. Linden, Wahoo

Thurs., March 26, 7 p.m. – 1<sup>st</sup> Sec. MM School of Instruction, Bee Hive No. 184, 202 So. 20<sup>th</sup> St., Omaha

Fri., March 27, 7 p.m. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sec. MM School of Instruction, Lancaster No. 54, Lincoln

Tues., March 31, 7 p.m. – Lodge Leaders Forum, Rob Morris Lodge No. 46, 2349 Central Ave., Kearney

Tues., March 31, 7 p.m. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sec. MM School of Instruction, George W. Lininger No. 268, Omaha

### **April – Conduct a community service project**

Sat., April 18, TBA – Lodge Leaders Forum, Alliance Lodge No. 183, 123 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Alliance

### **April (continued)**

Sat., April 18, TBA – Lodge Leaders Forum, Silver Cord Lodge No. 224, 404 No. Wilson, Ainsworth

Sat., April 18, TBA – Lodge Leaders Forum, Platte Valley Lodge No. 32, 1600 W. B St., North Platte

Mon., April 20, 7 p.m. – Lodge Leaders Forum, Mosaic Lodge No. 55, 907 W. Norfolk Ave., Norfolk

### **May – Hold a family activity at your lodge**

### **June – Donate time and/or money to CHIP**

Sun., June 7, 7 p.m. – Grand Master's Visitation, at Hay Springs Lodge No. 177, 256 No. Main, Hay Springs with area lodges

Mon., June 8, 7:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. – Grand Master's Visitation at regular meeting of Mitchell Lodge No. 263, 1315 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Mitchell with area lodges

Tues., June 9, 7 p.m. – Grand Master's Visitation at Frank Welch Lodge No. 75, 1830 Illinois St., Sidney with area lodges

Wed., June 10, 7 p.m. – Grand Master's Visitation at regular meeting of Zion Lodge No. 234, Main St., Hyannis with area lodges

Thurs., June 11, 7:30 p.m. – Grand Master's Visitation at regular meeting of Alliance Lodge No. 183, 123 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Alliance

### **July – Read a Masonic book, donate books to local, lodge, or Grand Lodge Library, or start a Nebraska Masonic College course**

Tues., July 21-Sat., July 25 – Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic, UNL, Lincoln

### **August – Hold a blood drive in your community**

Sat., Aug. 8, 8:30 a.m. – Enrollment Program training at Alliance Lodge No. 183, 123 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Alliance

Sat., Aug. 8, 4 p.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Platte Valley Lodge No. 32, 1600 W. B St., North Platte

Sat., Aug. 8, 9 a.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Omaha Home for Boys, 4343 No. 52<sup>nd</sup> St., Wurdeman Learning Center, Omaha

Sat., Aug. 8, 3 p.m. – Enrollment Program training at Scottish Rite Temple, 332 Centennial Mall So., Lincoln

Sat., Aug. 8, 9 a.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Beatrice Lodge No. 26, 601 Grant St., Beatrice

**August** (*continued*)

- Sat., Aug. 8, 4 p.m. – Enrollment Program training at Wahoo Lodge No. 59, 445 No. Linden, Wahoo
- Sat., Aug. 29, 9 a.m. – Enrollment Program training at Silver Cord Lodge No. 224, 404 No. Wilson, Ainsworth
- Sat., Aug. 29, 3 p.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Mosaic Lodge No. 55, 907 W. Norfolk Ave., Norfolk
- Sat., Aug. 29, 9 a.m. – Enrollment Program training at Tangier Shrine, 2823 So. 84<sup>th</sup> St., Lower Level, Omaha
- Sat., Aug. 29, 2 p.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Scottish Rite Temple, 332 Centennial Mall So., Lincoln
- Sat., Aug. 29, 9 a.m. – Enrollment Program training at Rob Morris Lodge No. 46, 2349 Central Ave., Kearney

**September – Appendant bodies' Back to Lodge Night & hold a blood drive in your community**

- Sat., Sept. 12, 8:30 a.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Alliance Lodge No. 183, 123 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., Alliance
- Sat., Sept. 12, 6 p.m. – Enrollment Program training at Platte Valley Lodge No. 32, 1600 W. B St., North Platte
- Sat., Sept. 12, 10 a.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Rob Morris Lodge No. 46, 2349 Central Ave., Kearney
- Sat., Sept. 12, 9 a.m. – Enrollment Program training at Beatrice Lodge No. 26, 601 Grant St., Beatrice
- Sat., Sept. 12, 3 p.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Wahoo Lodge No. 59, 445 No. Linden, Wahoo

**October – Family activities (see Oct. 9-11)**

- October – Area Meetings (TBA)
- Fri., Oct. 9-Sun., Oct. 11 – Ladies Festival Weekend, Omaha
- Sat., Oct. 24, 9 a.m. – Lodge Leadership Program training at Silver Cord Lodge No. 224, 404 No. Wilson, Ainsworth
- Sat., Oct. 24, 5:30 p.m. – Enrollment Program training at Mosaic Lodge No. 55, 907 W. Norfolk Ave., Norfolk
- Mon., Oct. 26 – Masonic Education Symposium, Lincoln
- Tues., Oct. 27 – Masonic Education Symposium, Hastings
- Tues., Oct. 27 – Masonic Education Symposium, Omaha

**November – Veterans Day observance and support for George Washington Masonic Memorial**

- November – Area Meetings (TBA)
- Wed., Nov. 11 – Veterans Day

**December – Support the Grand Lodge Office Project**

**January 2010**

**February 2010**

- Thurs., Feb. 4-Sat. Feb. 6 – Annual Communication, MidTown Holiday Inn, 2503 So. Locust, Grand Island

# **Lodge Planning Guide**

## **First Things First**

Here's a short list of actions and decisions to make first as you plan the year you'll serve as Master of your lodge.

1. Decide, right now, that 2009 will be a benchmark year for your lodge. Make a commitment to yourself that you will do everything necessary to strengthen every facet of your lodge's performance. That with your strong leadership, areas long ignored will be addressed with the intention of achieving improvement. That the things your lodge does well will be even better. Most importantly, that when your service as Master is done, your lodge will be stronger so the next Master can build on what you have started. If you don't do this now, then who will?
2. Prepare a complete plan for every month of the year now. Start by reading this Guide and filling out a calendar for each month. Incorporate the Monthly Masonic Values Activities in your plans. Hand out your 2009 calendar at installation so your members can see the coming year will be filled with activities aimed at them.
3. Review your calendar and create a schedule of actions and decisions you must make every month for each activity so that your plans will stay on course throughout the year.
  - a. Decide now who will be the chairman of your lodge's blood drive in August and September so he can begin making plans right away. You will need to send his name to the Grand Lodge Office in April.
  - b. Also, name the chairman of your CHild Identification Program (CHIP) activity in June. Will you hold a CHIP event, a fundraiser or make a donation?
  - c. Show your members' wives that the year will include them by planning to attend the Ladies Festival Weekend in Omaha in October. Promote this event at installation and throughout the year and encourage members to take their wives to participate in the site seeing, shopping in the Old Market and finishing with an elegant dinner and a new Ladies at the Table ceremony, followed by a concert by the UNL symphony orchestra featuring music by composers who were Masons.
  - d. Look through the nearly 400 activity ideas in this Guide and select new and different events to hold that will send a signal to your members that your lodge is headed on a new, exciting course.
4. Follow through, follow through, follow through on all your plans even if a few members plan to attend. You must show your members that your plan will be implemented and if they don't participate, they will miss out on a meaningful experience at your lodge.
5. Rest assured that your effort will be appreciated by your brothers and the Grand Lodge. When 2009 is over, you will be able to look back on it knowing you made a difference and have put Masonic Values in Action.

## **Why Planning Results in a More Successful Year**

The most critical step in preparing for next year is planning activities and ensuring you have an active schedule geared to the interests and needs of your brothers and potential members. Keeping these points in mind, build a year that will stand as a landmark for future Masters, and the beginning or continuation of excellence in your lodge.

Effective plans involve the membership and the two brothers who will follow you as Master. If you make a three-year plan, it will set the agenda for the foreseeable future. To move your lodge in a positive direction, start by identifying the areas of lodge performance that are strong or those that need improvement, and decide what must be done for continued improvement the next three years. Not only will this assist you in preparing a successful year, it also puts the next two Masters ahead in planning the year they may serve as Master. This will not escape the attention of your members who will find lodge more interesting, relevant to their interests, fun and they will be glad your lodge is stronger. Imagine the progress your lodge will make when your leaders focus on its most vital needs for the next three years. Also, incorporate Grand Lodge activities in your calendar and join lodges across the state moving the fraternity in the same, positive direction.

A healthy lodge will incorporate activities from each of the following areas in their annual plans. By doing so, you will provide a diverse program of activities that will appeal to more brothers. The eight areas of lodge work are:

- Lodge Meetings.
- Ritual Work.
- Grand Lodge Activities.
- Fellowship.
- Community & Fraternity Service.
- Membership.
- Communication.
- Finances.

Keep in mind that a one-man lodge cannot achieve as much as an involved entire membership working together. Involving brothers in your planning commits them to its successful completion. Enlist their assistance to head or sit on committees that will implement the plan. Set a date to meet with all committee members. Give them their charge for the coming year and familiarize them with the plan. Attend committees' first meetings to make sure they're headed in the right direction.

The planning process you use should be repeated by those following you as Master. Their plans need to be reviewed and compared with the plans of the next two Masters, and revised so your lodge's plan remains on the same course.

At your installation, hand out a list of all activities. You can't get it in front of your members too often. When members see an active and fun year on tap, they will encourage their relatives, friends and acquaintances to join your lodge. You can't expect your "customers" to "buy" or "sell" your "product" if they don't know what it is. Also, keep copies in the back of the lodge, post it on bulletin boards, include it in every newsletter to members, review upcoming activities at all meetings, put it on your lodge's Web site, and include it in all e-mails to all members.

For a detailed explanation of planning, the areas mentioned above and for more than 400 activity ideas, go to <http://glne.org/pdf/LodgeLeadership.pdf> and read and work through the Lodge Leadership Manual. Also, at <http://glne.org/pdf/RockMaul.pdf> check out the Rock Maul Award application form, which has many more activity ideas. And, at the Grand Lodge Web site at <http://glne.org/>, click on the Ideas That Work link to read this publication containing activity ideas from lodges, Grand Lodge officers and other jurisdictions.

## **2009 Grand Lodge Programs for Lodges**

During the Revolutionary War, Benjamin Franklin said, “We must all hang together or most assuredly we will all hang separately.” If Nebraska lodges head in separate directions and the Grand Lodge in another, then our fraternity can’t possibly make progress.

Your Grand Lodge provides a program of action based on our Masonry’s challenges. There is no correct answer for every situation, but, generally, lodges face many of the same challenges.

In addition, the resources and experiences of the Grand Lodge, its officers and committees can assist you in many ways. This is evident in the programs, materials and other resources offered by the Grand Lodge. In addition, the Grand Master prepares a program for the year intended to involve your lodge and members in beneficial activities.

The Grand Lodge provides activities and education to give your lodge more tools to tackle your challenges. That is why attendance and participation in Grand Lodge activities are important not only to your lodge and members, but also to every lodge in the state.

Imagine what 150 lodges, all headed in the same direction, can achieve.

In 2009, the Grand Lodge will place an emphasis each month on the values of Freemasonry through monthly activities emphasizing three core ideals of our fraternity. Lodges taking part in these activities will have a more active year, achieve greater awareness in their community, create greater interest among members and will potentially attract men to your lodge. The activities are divided into the areas of: 1). self development and family relationships; 2). brotherly love; and 3). charity for your community. You are encouraged to put the following values in action during 2009.

### **Monthly Masonic Value Activities**

**MARCH** (brotherly love): **Masonic Relief Fund** – Send a donation or hold a fundraiser for the Masonic Relief Fund. Your brothers, their families and lodges occasionally need assistance from our fraternity. Inclement weather, fires, health issues and the deterioration of buildings put our lodges, members and their families in jeopardy. We all took an obligation to aid our brothers and their loved ones in distress. This gives us the opportunity to fulfill our obligation.

**APRIL** (community charity): **Community Service Project** – Deserving citizens in your community are in need of assistance, organizations need volunteers and civic projects are seeking citizen support. In April, help make a difference in your community by selecting a charity or project to support. If you need ideas, see the list of Community Activities in the Activity Ideas for Your Lodge section of this Guide.

**MAY** (family relationships): **Family Activity** – Lodge activities focused on families not only meet the expectations of your brothers, but also their wives. The support of a wife is important for their husband’s involvement. Plan an activity in May that includes families or only your brothers’ wives. Review the suggestions included in the Activity Ideas for Your Lodge section of this Guide under Family Activities and Family Informational Programs, and hold a family activity this month.

**JUNE** (community charity): **CHild Identification Program** – Hold a fundraiser, make a donation or host a CHIP event in your community during June. At no charge, CHIP events provide parents a kit containing their child’s photo, a videotape interview, cheek swab, teeth impression and fingerprints. The kit can be used by authorities to find a missing child or for identification purposes. Inviting parents to take their children to your CHIP event offers an opportunity for your lodge to receive public recognition. The program has proven to be an effective tool to promote Freemasonry in Nebraska. Your support will help to increase awareness in communities across the state of our fraternity and its good works.

**JULY** (self development): **Exploration of Freemasonry** – Urge your brothers in July to explore Masonry, its meaning and how it applies to their lives by reading a book of interest regarding our fraternity during the month, or begin an online course with the Nebraska Masonic College. To further encourage your brothers, you may consider starting a library in your lodge or adding to it, or make a donation of a book to the Grand Lodge Library or books to your local public library. Begin with the books recommended by the Grand Lodge Masonic Education Committee. See the list on page 28 of this Guide.

**AUGUST & SEPTEMBER** (community charity): **Statewide Blood Drive** – Every day, patients, accident victims, new-born babies and the cancer-stricken need blood to survive. They are among the one in seven people in hospitals who need blood. The primary source of the blood they need is from donations. Nebraska Freemasonry is unique among all organizations in the state because we have 13,000 members in 127 communities. We are potentially the largest Nebraska resource to save lives by holding blood drives in our lodges during August and September – the time of year when the blood supply is low. Invite not only your lodge brothers, but also your community to participate. And, take advantage of this opportunity to get the donors through your lodge door. Offer refreshments or a meal in addition to information about Freemasonry and your lodge. Lodges that hold a successful drive will be honored at an event at the Governor’s Mansion in Lincoln. Most importantly, hold a blood drive in your community to save lives. Every donation can save the lives of up to three people. Masonry could make a difference to thousands of people across the state if we stage a successful blood drive. You will receive a planning kit after Annual Communication.



**SEPTEMBER** (brotherly love): **Back to Lodge Night** – We hope to see higher attendance at lodge meetings in September as appendant bodies encourage their members to visit their home lodge this month. Welcome them, be prepared to assist them with the due guard and signs and allow them to speak about their involvement in other Masonic-related bodies. If necessary, present the Rusty Nail Degree (included in this packet) so they can learn the words, due guard, signs and grips before the meeting. Schedule a dinner and send invitations to brothers who haven’t attended lodge in recent years, tell them of your plans and advise them they will learn what to do to get into your meeting.

**OCTOBER** (family relationships): **Ladies Festival Weekend** – In appreciation for all that your wife and significant other means to you, especially her acceptance of your involvement in Masonry, a Ladies Festival Weekend will be held October 9-11, in Omaha. Patterned after a common European Masonic lodge activity, the weekend will include site seeing, shopping in the Old Market and finishing with an elegant dinner and a new Ladies at the Table ceremony, followed by a concert by the UNL symphony orchestra featuring music by composers who were Masons. There can be no better way to show her how much you and our fraternity appreciates her support than to treat your lady to a special weekend focused on her.

**NOVEMBER** (brotherly love/community charity): **Veterans Day Observance / George Washington Masonic Memorial** – Attention this month will be on our veterans and George Washington, our brother whose courage and principles set our nation on its course of greatness. ■ On or near Veterans Day, lodges are urged to hold an observance honoring veterans; either brothers who served in the armed forces or all veterans in your community. Host them at a meal, feature them in a parade you organize, visit them at home or in a VA Hospital, mark their graves with American flags, or invite them to your lodge’s presentation of The Vacant Chair Ceremony (included with this Guide) or other special program. ■ On November 4, 1752, George Washington was initiated as an Entered Apprentice. Freemasonry has honored our greatest brother with the George Washington Masonic Memorial, a 333-foot tower overlooking our nation’s capitol. The Memorial houses a priceless collection of Washington’s memorabilia, including many articles connected to his career

in Masonry. In November, lodges are encouraged to hold a fundraiser or make a donation to the Memorial totaling at least \$1 per member in your lodge: The George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, 22301. The purpose of the Memorial is to educate and promote the virtues, character and vision of George Washington, the Man, the Mason and Father for Our Country. The Memorial also preserves American Masonic history and informs the public about Masonic affiliated and auxiliary organizations and charities.

**DECEMBER** (brotherly love): **Grand Lodge Office Project** – As King Solomon’s Temple stood magnificently in Jerusalem, so our Grand Lodge Office deserves to reflect the high standards of our fraternity. To ensure our Grand Lodge Office represents our fraternity in Nebraska appropriately, your lodge is encouraged to help with its improvements, upkeep and maintenance during December by holding a fundraiser and/or sending a donation.

### **2009 Meetings for Lodge Leaders & Members**

**Lodge Leaders Forums** – Your lodge officers are invited to regional meetings with the Grand Master to discuss topics of interest and concern to you and your lodge. In the past, these meetings have provided useful ideas and alerted the Grand Lodge to challenges facing lodges. And, you never know who may have the answer to your question or problem. Check out the 2009 Lodge/Grand Lodge Calendar for the forum in your area. The Forums will be held within 90 miles of nearly every lodge. If you are unable to attend the Forum closest to you, feel free to attend any other Forum.

**Area Meetings** – Meetings will be scheduled in the fall across the state to discuss the workshops, events and proposed legislation that will be considered at Annual Communication. In addition, the meetings will include a primer on attending, voting and participating in Annual Communication. It is suggested the members who will represent your lodge at Annual Communication attend an area meeting so they are prepared for their responsibilities.

**Masonic Education Symposiums** – The Grand Lodge’s Masonic Education Committee holds informational meetings on Masonic topics, books and activities. Encourage your members to attend and learn more about our fraternity, its origins, symbolism and the latest in Masonic research. The Symposiums are held in March and October. See the calendar for the dates and locations.

### **2009 Trainings**

**Lodge Leadership Program** – As helpful as this Guide may be, your lodge officers will find the Lodge Leadership Program an invaluable aide in preparing for the year they will serve as Master of your lodge. The training takes a step-by-step approach to planning a term. An emphasis is placed on working with future Masters as well as members of the lodge to develop activities designed to meet the needs of current and prospective members through a multi-year planning process. Trainings will be held across the state within 90 miles of nearly every lodge. The investment of a few hours of your lodge officers’ time could ensure the continuance of your good work after 2009. The dates and locations of the trainings are on the calendar in this Guide.

**Enrollment Program** – Once a man informs you he wants to join your lodge, what can you do to ensure he feels a part of the fraternity and will become active? Find out how to establish a mentoring program that will prepare candidates for the degree work, provide appropriate instruction and get them interested and involved in your lodge. The aim of the Enrollment Program training is to equip the brother(s) you designate to start a mentoring program so they leave ready to put the program in place. Mentoring new members is a proven way to get them committed and participating in your lodge. Check for the dates and locations on the calendar in this Guide.

## **Other 2009 Grand Lodge Activities**

**Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic** – Approximately 250 of the best high school musicians in the state annually take part in the Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic leading up to performances in the Shrine Bowl Parade and during halftime of the game at Memorial Stadium. Students are able to participate because lodges and other organizations pay their costs for five days of excellent instruction in marching and instrument performance. Local band directors provide lodges the names of students they select to participate. This offers your lodge an opportunity to contribute to the skills of high school band members, positive community exposure and a closer relationship with schools, band directors and the student's family. Look for the deadline in April to take part in this program.

**Grand Lodge Scholarship Program** – Participate in the Grand Lodge Scholarship Program. The Nebraska Grand Lodge contributes \$75 a year to lodges awarding scholarships. The Grand Lodge also provides scholarships to members of Masonic youth groups through the Glenn O. and Evelyn F. Emick Memorial Scholarship and Grand Lodge Youth Committee Scholarships. Contact the Grand Lodge Office for more information.

**Cornerstone Laying Ceremony** – Attend or coordinate a cornerstone laying ceremony. Contact the Grand Marshal or the Grand Lodge Office if you plan to or would like to hold a cornerstone laying ceremony for buildings erected for the worship of God, for educational or charitable purposes, for the administration of justice and free government, or for Masonic use. Centering your community's attention on a cornerstone event will bring considerable, positive attention to your lodge and our fraternity.

## **Making Regular Meetings More Interesting**

Lodge meetings set the tone for a brother's experience in Masonry. How they feel after a meeting, and how smoothly and efficiently meetings are conducted, could spell your lodge's success in keeping and involving members. Every lodge member should extend the hand of friendship to every other member, but it's the officers who must assume this responsibility at every meeting.

Masons said in a survey that boring meetings that wasted time led to their loss of interest in lodge. It's no wonder why lodges involve only about 10 percent of their membership.

Here are suggestions for saving time:

- Summarize minutes and correspondence. Hand out copies of the minutes, pass around the correspondence, or consider posting them along with the treasurer's report.
- Begin meetings on time.
- Make sure each presenter is prepared to efficiently make his report.
- Hold introductions to a minimum. Introduce guests in a group, if possible.
- Limit remarks at the end of the meeting.
- Don't review in lodge what can read later on a piece of paper, such as coming events.

The Master's role is to ensure meetings are organized and effectively controlled by:

- Arrive in time to organize the meeting. Members won't arrive on time if the Master is late.
- Know the ritual to open and close a lodge efficiently.
- Create an agenda for every meeting. Check your lodge's bylaws for the order of business, discuss the agenda with the Secretary and talk to committee chairmen about their reports.
- Prepare a 12-month calendar of activities, and put it in front of your members at every meeting, degree and in newsletter and e-mail.

Avoid the following pitfalls:

- Secretaries are not in charge of the meeting or lodge. Instead, they are the right hand of the Master and should help him with meetings when asked.
- Ritual purists sidetrack meetings by enforcing letter-perfect ritual. Memorization may not be everyone's strong point. Advise purists not to correct officers during meetings, and hold practices to help officers learn their parts.
- Meetings should be more than reading the minutes and paying bills. Masonic education, Masonic presentations, functions with the ladies and youth are a few possible programs.

Make lodge meetings an event. Men attend when there is an interesting program. Consider the following when preparing for a meeting:

- Hold special activities at least six times a year during stated meetings. Involve members in the program and planning.
- Ask individuals in your community to present a program whether they are Masons or not.

Avoid the following pitfalls:

- The Secretary must remember he is not in charge of meetings or the lodge. Instead, he should help the Master with meetings when asked.
- Ritual purists can sidetrack a meeting by enforcing letter-perfect ritual. Memorization is a challenge for some.
- Do more than read minutes and pay bills. Masonic education, Masonic presentations, functions with the ladies and youth are only a few possible programs.

## **Community and Fraternal Service**

Freemasons provide more support to help others than any private organization by donating nearly \$3 million a day to charities. In Nebraska, hundreds of civic and community projects receive the support of local lodges. Selflessness is the essence of Masonry. We are taught that we have an obligation to help, to make things better for everyone.

Your lodge benefits from community service by publicly showing its charitable side. Working on a project can be a powerful, unifying force for your lodge and build a strong team and commitment. Members develop pride when they achieve a goal in their community. Research shows that men who would consider joining Freemasonry, want to be involved in their community.

### **Considerations of Involvement**

When looking for way to involve your lodge in the community, consider the following:

- Review several ideas before settling on a project. Consider a problem in your community that needs a solution. Determine what your lodge can do about it.
- Start small. Success is important when getting involved in your community and it builds a foundation for increased involvement. Know all the steps needed for the task and make sure you can accomplish each step before moving to the next.
- Appoint a chairman who will effectively organize and involve the lodge.
- Communicate your project to your members to gain their support and involvement. Be upbeat in your communications, and present benefits and results.
- Make your member-volunteers winners and give them credit for their contributions.

### **Involvement with Schools**

The best way to become relevant in your community is through involvement with a school. Supporting children's education is one of the "right things" you can do to move your lodge closer to your members, their families and the community. Bear in mind that, teachers and the fathers of students and will recognize the contributions of Masons involved in their school. And, the news media are more likely to cover your lodge's activities if you support children and local schools.

### **Fraternal Service**

Other causes are close to the hearts of Nebraska Masons: The Nebraska Masonic Home, the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children, and the Nebraska Masonic Foundation. These worthy causes are the first line of Nebraska Freemasonry's service projects. And, the CHild Identification Program (CHIP) offers a valued community service and increases awareness of your lodge in your community.

### **Community Service Activities**

With today's tight budgets, your community needs the help of community organizations. Local governments are trying to establish partnerships with groups to solve community-related problems. Human service organizations need volunteers to help accomplish their goals. Your lodge has the resources to be an attractive community partner.

### **Family/Children's Activities**

With many husbands and wives work outside the home, limiting their chances to be together and with their family. It is important that the spouse and children are included in some lodge activities. Keep in mind that research found that the most appealing activities to wives were special events where children were the center of the activity, while dinner and ladies-night programs were not.

### **Fellowship Activities**

Of newly-made Masons, 95 percent in a survey found they expect to gain new friends and fellowship. Fellowship among men is critical to the success of every lodge. Plan activities that bring members together in an informal and relaxed setting.

## **Communications with Your Members**

When you are Master, you will need current and new members active in your lodge to ensure a good year and long-term stability. Keep two audiences informed: an internal audience, your members, and an external audience, non-members who you can interest to join.

Internally, communication will:

- Inform members about your lodge's past and upcoming activities.
- Give members pride in their lodge because of increased awareness of its many activities in the community.
- Create pride in members who are recognized in your communications.

Externally, communication will:

- Educate the public about Masonry.
- Interest men in joining your lodge.
- Elevate the prestige of your lodge, your members and our fraternity.

### **External Communication**

External communication with non-members in your community introduces Freemasonry and your lodge to an unlimited supply of new members.

#### **Informal External Communication**

Informal communication includes ordinary or casual methods that are generally simple and easy to do. If you wear a Masonic ring, lapel pin, or car emblems, and if your lodge posts signs outside your town, these are informal communication methods. It could also include what you say about Masonry, how you act in public and how you live your life. All these tell the public something about Masonry. For informal communication to be successful, you and your members must be ready to respond to comments or questions that arise about our fraternity.

#### **Formal External Communication**

It can sometimes be challenging to get your lodge's information in print or on the airwaves. Your best bet is to build a personal relationship with someone in the media who will take your information or news release.

A well-written news release can provide a vehicle for getting the word out about Masonry in your town. News releases should be prepared about community service activities and special events at your lodge. The less editing required of your news release increases its likelihood to be used. Included are form news releases you can use for various events at your lodge.

#### **Internal Communication**

Internal communication creates an informed membership and encourages members to take part in lodge meetings and activities. No matter how good the plan is for the year you'll serve as Master, you must tell your members about your lodge's activities so it is heard, and heard again and again so it becomes memorable. Take advantage of every situation to inform members about upcoming activities. Every time members meet, mention events that are on the schedule. Regularly review the lodge's schedule at meetings, degrees and ritual practices or even when passing a brother on the street. Hand out the lodge calendar at the installation of officers. Include it in e-mails, newsletters and at the back of the room at every meeting.

#### **Lodge Newsletter**

Preparing and sending a newsletter to all members from your lodge offers many benefits and gives even non-active members the feeling they're getting something for their dues.

## **Ritual Work**

The word “proficient” means to be highly competent or skilled. You, as Master, must set the level of acceptance in the performance of our work for your lodge. Performing our work well builds pride, a feeling of personal accomplishment, gives candidates a good impression, and ensures your lodge will be proficient in the future, which is key to growth and ongoing health.

### **Practicing the Work**

Avoid losing your edge on ritual work by setting a ritual practice schedule for each degree and the opening and closing of lodge. If necessary, request a Deputy Grand Custodian assist your members at a practice to improve your lodge’s work.

During practices, refer to both the CIPHER and the Floor Work manuals to make certain the ritual and floor work are taught correctly. Ask a brother to assist a struggling officer or whisper good counsel in his ear if he needs to work harder on his part.

Also, be sure to practice receiving the Grand Master and encourage members to learn the Funeral Oration or Chaplain’s part in the Memorial Service.

### **The Importance of Backups**

To ensure your lodge can confer a degree in the event someone becomes ill, is out of town or has other obligations when a degree is scheduled, have several members proficient in each part so they may be called on when a crisis arises. No one should “own” a part and be the only one to deliver it. Alternate performances among brothers who know parts so they are well-practiced, and can easily present the part on short notice. Assign parts to brothers best qualified to perform the work.

### **Familiarizing Brothers with Our Work**

Achieve familiarity through presentations of ritual at meetings or special ritual training meetings. Repetition of degree parts, partially or in full, at stated meetings helps brothers review the work or familiarizes them with it and may interest them in learning parts.

For special meetings on ritual work, plan what parts will be presented at each and be sure they last no longer than 50 minutes. Ask presenters to explain the meaning of each part to ease comprehension and memorization. Keep presentations short even if a part of a lecture is performed.

If you have questions or want specific help in your program of instruction or with practices, call your Deputy Grand Custodian or the Grand Custodian. Encourage everyone who presents the work, or aspires to learn the work, to attend Schools of Instruction conducted by the Grand Custodian to brush up on their parts.

Visit lodges that perform excellent work so members better understand what is expected of them.

### **Respect for the Work**

Our fraternity espouses high and serious ideals, which should be exemplified in our work. It is important that brothers maintain decorum, eliminate “horseplay,” and be well-studied in our work. Incessant chatting or laughing on the sidelines is a distraction to candidates and the brothers delivering our work. Candidates aren’t impressed with such lack of respect.

Announce that during degree work members will refrain from conversations. If it occurs, be prepared to back it up with a rap of the gavel or by providing good counsel to offending brothers.

### **Conferral on More Than One Candidate**

The conferral of degrees on more than one candidate at a time requires permission from the Grand Master. The suggested ritual for conferring the degrees on two-five candidates is available from the Grand Lodge Office. The conferral of degrees on six or more is done by using an exemplary candidate. Some modifications in the ritual are required to accommodate the candidates who are on the sidelines.

## **Preparing Your Budget**

Planning and controlling your lodge's money through a budget is critical to success. A well-prepared budget ensures prudent financial management and a financially healthy lodge. Most important of all, your lodge will be stable and secure because expenses are covered and income is enhanced.

Scheduling the use of your lodge's funds enables you to effectively implement your plans to heighten your lodge's visibility, hold appealing activities, and inform non-members about Masonry.

### **Preparing a Budget**

Review your Secretary's records for typical income and expenses. Categorize them and add expenses and income for the activities you're planning. It's better to plan your lodge's activities and then decide how much additional money the lodge needs to raise. Budgets are a guideline and can be adjusted as circumstances change. With good planning, it should be reasonably close. If the lodge is to meet the needs of its members and the community, it will almost certainly need more funds than it will collect in dues.

Some typical lodge expenses include:

- Utility bills, including telephone.
- Insurance, including liability insurance.
- Rental or other costs of the building.
- Maintenance, remodeling, painting, etc.
- Salaries to Secretary, janitor, etc.
- Per capita tax.
- Postage.
- Costs of producing a lodge newsletter.
- Travel expenses for officers attending special Grand Lodge, other meetings.
- Office supplies.
- Supplies and materials bought from Grand Lodge.
- Costs of all open meetings.
- Costs relating to the lodge's operation.

Expenses that should be covered by fees charged to candidates:

- Candidate fees paid to Grand Lodge.
- Costs of materials supplied to the candidate (varies by lodge but might include apron, monitor, Bible, instruction and informational booklets, etc.).

Expenses that could be covered by other funds:

- Charitable contributions.
- Activities supporting schools.
- Scholarships.
- Lodge remodeling and capital improvement projects.
- Funds benefitting the community

### **Fundraising**

There are two types of fundraising: a) internal, or money raised from members; b) external, or raised in the community. A popular internal fundraiser is to send a letter asking members to pledge money for a given number of months; such as \$30, or \$20, or \$10 each month for three months. Place the names of participants on a plaque in the lodge. Make more than one appeal and update brothers on the progress of the fund drive. Send letters to lodge members who live out-of-state. They are among the best contributors because it is an easy way they can help and participate in their lodge. Other ideas include placing contribution jars for a civic project in local stores, bake sales, selling loads of wood, Christmas trees sales, fireworks sales, and pancake, sausage feeds, and spaghetti feeds, etc.

### **Lodge Maintenance**

Few lodges budget to maintain and beautify their building and grounds. As a result, many lodge buildings have become unsightly, inside and out, due to neglect, and when equipment fails, lodges face large expenses. No non-Mason is impressed with a dirty, musty, and smelly lodge. Put in your budget a long-range preventive maintenance program to steadily improve the usability and appearance of your building. Effective preventive maintenance could simply be a good cleaning, caulking and painting.

## Activity Ideas for Your Lodge

### Activities Before, During & After Meetings

Offer a dinner before meetings either at the lodge or at a restaurant.

Ask the principal of an elementary, middle or senior high school to speak about ways your lodge can help improve the school.

A financial planner can help members discover the important financial or retirement services available to them and answer questions or concerns.

A travel agent can speak about how to save money on travel, and trips that are available.

An insurance agent, broker or claims specialist can speak about life, health or property insurance and offer insights on how to avoid delays in claim processing and reduce premiums through risk avoidance.

A career counselor can speak about the changing nature of jobs, how to find a job and how to be better trained for the future demands of the job market.

A real estate broker can talk about changes in the real estate market and the importance of their home as an asset.

A health care specialist can speak on ways to protect good health.

A law enforcement officer or fireman could provide an interesting program.

Have fun. Hold a winter putting contest, Masonic Jeopardy (like the game show with Masonic answers), draw for door prizes.

Show videos. Contact the Grand Lodge office to borrow a video.

A program about the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

Provide Masonic education programs. Short Masonic education reports during meetings and degree work enhance members' experience. Ask members to make a presentation or lead a discussion. The following resources may help:

- *Short Talk Bulletins*. The Masonic Service Association for many years has prepared Short Talk Bulletins that are ideal for topics.
- *Internet*. If you use the Internet, be careful to check the authenticity of the source of any information you find.
- *Grand Lodge Education Publications*. The Grand Lodge Office has many publications available that may provide good educational topics.

- *Grand Lodge Video Tapes*. The Grand Lodge has videos your lodge can borrow for educational programs.

- *Recommended Books List*. Each year the Grand Lodge Masonic Education Committee recommends books on Freemasonry, or related topics, that would make a good education report. See page 28 of this Guide.
- *Educational Symposiums*. Each spring and fall, the Grand Lodge Masonic Education Committee hosts Educational Symposiums across the state providing useful information for lodge education programs.
- *Masonic Education Breakfast*. Be sure to sign up to attend the Masonic Education Committee's informative breakfast at Annual Communication where several educational programs are presented.

The following is a list of special programs to consider:

- Anniversaries of the lodge or brothers' membership.
- Flag Day (June 14) or other patriotic holidays.
- Book club.
- Masonic movies.
- Bazaar.
- Family talent night.
- Visit nearby lodges or ask them to your lodge meeting or event.
- Birthdays.
- Past Masters night.
- Masonic education.
- Table Lodge.
- Ladies at the Table Lodge.
- Parties for children.
- Hobby displays.
- Birthdays of members.
- Brothers' Masonic birthdays.
- Lodge dinners.
- Award recognition dinner.
- Open installation of officers.
- Lodge picnic inside or outdoors.
- Special seasonal events.
- Costume Party.
- Rusty Nail Degree or welcome back party for brothers who haven't attended meetings in awhile.

## Children's Activities

Sponsor local students to Boy's and Girl's State (contact your local American Legion).

Adopt a needy family during the holidays and gather food and/or presents.

Sponsor a pancake breakfast with the Boy or Girl Scouts.

Volunteer to deliver food or toys during the holidays.

Create an event for kids at a county or state fair.

Join with a local group to help with donations and distribution of toys for the holidays.

Mount a drive to collect coats for kids. Arrange to have them cleaned.

Volunteer to read at a local library.

Build a play area in a local park.

Host a Games Day for kids with a community

celebration. Work with your local recreation or parks board.

Sponsor a public speaking contest open to high school senior boys and girls.

Sponsor a photo contest for young people in association with a local mall or store. Judge, display and give prizes.

Sponsor a major essay or writing contest for kids. Arrange to have the winning essays published.

Hold a fundraiser (pancake feed, etc.) for a local youth group.

Contact your local YMCA or YWCA for opportunities to volunteer.

Pay a video store to provide a number of videos to a local hospital or children's care center.

## Community Activities

Sponsor or assist with the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration.

Provide medical supplies for local EMT unit.

Provide funds/labor to renovate local ballpark.

Raise funds to assist public library.

Donate Masonic books to local library to increase community understanding of Masonry.

Help a local hospital in a volunteer or fundraising effort.

Sponsor or assist with the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration.

Provide medical supplies for local EMT unit.

Provide funds/labor to renovate local ballpark.

Raise funds to assist public library.

Help a local hospital in a volunteer or fundraising effort.

Help the local United Way with its volunteer effort.

Sponsor a food-for-the-hungry campaign with a local store or business.

Visit the elderly at a nursing home.

Partner with a local charity to raise funds for cancer research.

Develop an award for excellent contributions to the environment.

Assist with traffic control at a community event.

Adopt a local library, playground, park, memorial, public area or public facility to keep it clean, safe and operational.

Volunteer to run a local food kitchen during a holiday and underwrite the costs of meals.

Partner with any successful agency in town to solve a community problem.

Identify a small but important community project that needs a fix-up and paint job.

Gather books from the community and members

to hold a book fair. Lodge families work the fair. All profits will support a community cause.

Consider getting involved in immediate causes. Perhaps a child needs money for an organ transplant, a band needs funds to appear at a college bowl game or a family is in a desperate situation.

Identify objects that need a coat of paint (park benches, swing sets, fences, etc.)

Identify a local stream or small river and clean the banks of waste and debris.

Host a flea market with funds helping a local charity.

Plant and water a garden project for medians in your community's streets.

Arrange an exhibit for local artists to display and sell their works. Get judges to select the best in different categories for prizes. Consider including crafts.

Volunteer to serve as drivers at a local senior citizens home for a weekly trip to a store or business.

Organize a local blood drive, relying on members to donate blood.

Volunteer to help the Salvation Army raise funds during the holidays.

Organize a recycling point in your community. Work with your local newspaper and appropriate agencies to establish it as a one-day event or as an ongoing activity.

Assist local charities with phone-a-thons that raise money for their cause. You could get on-air credit for helping.

### **Community Activities** *(continued)*

Work with local optometrists/ophthalmologists to provide transportation for those unable to get to their office for glasses or treatment.

Volunteer to serve as parade marshals or to direct traffic at a local event.

Organize a symposium about child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, or spousal abuse. Partner with a local college, hospital or social services agency.

Volunteer to help with a crisis hotline.

Help a local agency check on seniors each day at their homes.

Deliver meals to seniors.

Volunteer to help at a hospital.

Support your local literacy council.

Help the League of Women Voters get out the vote by handing out literature or making phone calls.

Sponsor a sports tournament with your local parks and recreation department.

Adopt an area in your community or a section of a road or highway to clean.

Staff local attractions like a zoo, museum, special exhibits or events, gardens, parks, visitors' bureau, etc.

Serve a meal to homeless at local soup kitchen.

### **Family Activities**

Activities with wives

Barbeque

Day at the State or County Fair

Ladies at the Table Ceremony

Ice Cream Social

Camping out together

Mother-child bake-off (& dessert party)

Family Day-Long Field Trip

Family Day/Night with nearby lodge (park or other outside location)

Father-child dinner

Father-child cookout

Father-child softball/football/basketball

Grandparents Night (hold on Grand-parents Day; whether Masons or not)

Holiday party for kids (Halloween, holidays with games & activities)

Host a meeting of wives within the first few months of the year, and the wives of new members within two months that their husbands join lodge. Inform them of your plan and point out activities you want them to attend.

Inform wives about Masonry using a page in your newsletter, or an entire newsletter, to explain our Craft to her. Tell her who can belong, what we do, what we support, what happens in lodge and answer their difficult questions. Be sure they also receive a calendar of events for the year.

Invite wives to lodge to hear a speaker on a local topic of interest.

Ladies Night (catered meal, activities to meet other wives, rent fine china, linen and silver which is only a few dollars more; give them a gift such as a photo of their husband, note cards, a book, candy, a gift certificate, movie pass or even a free car wash)

Picnic (inside or outside)

Progressive dinner with wives (serve courses at different homes)

Sports Day (at local playground, park)

Weekend out-of-town with wives shopping, historic site, lake parties, etc.

Widow's Night or other activity honoring them

### **Family Informational Programs**

The Dangers of Smoking (American Cancer Society/American Lung Assn.)

The Dangers of Drug Use (for school students; local schools or police)

Swimming Safety (Red Cross)

Choosing a Career (high school/college students; Chamber of Commerce, or local post-secondary schools)

Driver Safety (driving instructor for information about driving in winter)

Crafts (for children; local crafts person or hobbyist; make a gift for Mom)

Crafts (for children; local crafts person or hobbyist; make a gift for Mom)

Boating Safety

Firearms Safety (local law enforcement)

Book Club (involve 8-10 spouses to form and participate)

Making Family Relationships Work (local minister, social services professional or family relations counselor)

Crisis Management (minister or social services professional could recommend a presenter to discuss managing the pressures of today's lifestyles)

### **Family Informational Programs** *(continued)*

Local/Community History (local historians, museum set up 4-5 meetings exploring this subject)

Personal Financial Management (local financial planner)

Growing and/or Arranging Flowers (local florist or garden club)

Personal Computers (small group program with instructions; member of your lodge)

Kids and Summer Fun (city parks dept., YMCA or YWCA; what will be happening this summer in your town to keep kids busy)

Careers for Women Returning to the Work Force (local employment counselor provide a series of sessions)

Improving Marital Relationships (an overview by Marriage Encounter or other counselors)

### **Fellowship Activities**

Charge officers to welcome all members and visitors before and after every meeting.

Give responsibility to non-officers to greet all members as they enter the lodge.

Give special attention to guests, and give them nametags to sign and wear.

Make introductions during lodge meetings warm and personal. Ask all members to warmly welcome new members and guests.

Send a Masonic anniversary card to brothers on the date they became Master Masons. Or, send birthday cards to members.

Send Get Well cards to ill or hospitalized brethren.

Send Sympathy Cards when a member of a brother's family dies.

When a brother dies, present a "Resolution of Respect" to the brother's family (A Resolution of Respect form is available from Grand Lodge, item # 511.) At a Widow's Night following the death of a brother, present the widow with a Widow's Pin and Salute. (Pin and Salute are available from Grand Lodge, item # 309).

Appoint a Masonic Widow Contact Committee to identify widows of lodge brethren. Contact them on a regular basis to make sure their needs are being met, and inform them of special lodge meetings for widows, etc. Members of the committee maintain a list of widows their addresses and telephone numbers, and contact them to see if they need handiwork done around the house, etc. They serve as a main source of contact between with the widows we have obligated ourselves to aid and protect.

of the funeral. Make every effort to have a good attendance of brethren at the funeral itself.

Appoint a committee to check hospital admissions and alert the lodge if a brother is hospitalized. Visit ill or hospitalized brethren at home or hospital so sick and shut-in brethren and their families know they are remembered and cared for. This develops a method to learn about brethren who are sick and shut-in and could benefit by your lodge's attention, cards or visits. Committee members report at lodge meetings, and visit such brothers on a regular basis, and make the lodge aware of special needs.

Use the time after closing your lodge to reinforce fellowship. Provide refreshments that will keep members and guests after the meeting to fraternize.

Send a personal note to thank new members or guests for attending your lodge.

Include the names of new Master Masons in lodge communications with a brief summary of their interests and the names of their wives and children.

Schedule open meetings to make year pin presentations.

Appoint a Bring a Brother to lodge Committee to re-involve inactive Brethren and to promote lodge attendance. Committee members call inactive brethren and offer to take them to lodge. During the contact, the Committee member should try to discover if the inactive Brother has any special needs that are not being met.

## Meals

Potluck dinner  
Recognition dinner  
Chili cook-off  
Dinner with other Masonic bodies  
George Washington's Day Dinner  
Table Lodge

Past Masters Dinner  
Charter Day Dinner  
Sts. John Dinners (St. John the Baptist, June 24;  
St. John the Evangelist, December 27)  
Picnic with other lodges or Eastern Star.  
Arrange to meet after church for brunch.

## Parties

Children's parties  
Holiday parties  
Past Master's Night

Year-Pin recognition night  
Theme parties (western, luau, football, fiesta,  
50s/60s party, etc.)

## Ritual Work

Hold an outdoor degree  
Visit a local or area lodge  
Hold the Rusty Nail Degree to inform inactive  
members how to get into lodge

Friendship Night  
The Vacant Chair Ceremony that honors  
veterans and current members of armed service

## Sports Activities

Attend a sporting event together  
Bowling  
Golf  
Play pool  
Fishing trip

Miniature golf  
Sponsor a softball team of members  
Sponsor youth football or baseball teams.  
Hold a lodge fishing trip and invite nearby lodges  
to join you.

## Other Activities

Visit a local place of interest (zoo, historical site,  
museum, TV station, etc.)  
Travel to The Masonic Home in Plattsmouth or  
the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in

Fremont to assist with programs, projects or work  
on the grounds or just to tour.

## Fraternal Service Activities

The following are supported by the Grand Lodge  
and local lodges:

- **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth provides care for retired Masons and their female relatives. Its bylaws for eligibility include membership in good standing over a continuous period which varies with the age of the Mason. Admission can be on a "pay basis" where the resident pays on a monthly basis; or under the "regular way" when the resident turns over all assets in return for continuing care. Further information can be found in the Secretary's Handbook or from the Home at (402) 296-7300.
- **The Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont provides quality care for children 5-18 years of age separated

from their homes. Applications are individually evaluated and although charges are based on ability to pay, a child is never excluded due to inadequate resources. Masonic or Eastern Star affiliation is not an admission requirement. Further details are available from the Home at (402) 721-1185.

- **The Nebraska Masonic Foundation** is an educational, cultural, historical, literary and charitable foundation exclusively for the promotion, support, and maintenance of Freemasonry and for the benefit of the public. Master Masons in good standing who make a donation are members of the Foundation. It is the owner of the Grand Lodge office building. Further information about the Foundation can be obtained from the Grand Lodge office (toll free) at 1-800-558-8029 or 402-475-4640.

## **Fraternal Service Activities** *(continued)*

- By holding a CHild Identification Program (**CHIP**) event in your community, your lodge will receive public recognition. CHIP provides a kit at no charge to parents that contains their child's photo, a videotape, cheek swab, teeth impression and fingerprints. The kit gives immediate, useful information to authorities when a child is missing or for identification purposes. For more information about how to set up a CHIP event in your community, contact the Grand Lodge office at 402-475-4640 or toll free at 800-558-8029. Tax deductible donations can be made to CHIP. Other funds are provided by local lodges that arrange CHIP events.

Appendant bodies of our fraternity also support various philanthropies:

- The Scottish Rite has established Childhood Language Disorders Centers across America where children with language problems (the most common problem children experience) are treated. Another part of the program provides training for teachers in a technique that is 87 percent effective in teaching children with dyslexia how to read. In Nebraska, the Language Disorder Centers in Hastings (402-463-1518), Lincoln (402-472-2071) and Omaha (402-559-6460) are supported by the Nebraska Scottish Rite Foundation.
- Perhaps the best known Masonic charities are the Shriners Hospitals for Children, where the world's very best care for birth defects and orthopedic problems is available completely free of charge. The Shrine has also established Burn Centers and Spinal Cord Treatment Centers where childhood victims of burns and spinal cord injuries are treated, also free of charge. For more information, contact the Shrine headquarters in your area; Sesostris Shrine in Lincoln at

402-474-6890; Tangier Shrine in Omaha at 402-392-0410; or Tehama Shrine at 402-462-5813.

- The York Rite bodies support a number of worthy causes. The Knights Templar Eye Foundation does important work with vision, as well as offering free eye surgery to children when the surgery is necessary to save their vision. Knights Templar also supports Holy Land pilgrimages and educational loan programs. The Cryptic Masons Research Foundation promotes research on the treatment of atherosclerosis and Royal Arch Research Assistance (RARA) funds research on auditory maladies.
- The Order of the Eastern Star sponsors an educational loan program for OES members and relatives, and also provides grants under the Eastern Star Training Awards for Religious Leadership (ESTARL) program.
- The philanthropy of Job's Daughters International is the Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment (H.I.K.E.) which provides hearing devices at no cost to children between newborn and 20 years of age.

Other activities include:

Sponsor local youth to the Masonic All-Star Marching Band Camp.

Arrange for a cornerstone ceremony for a public building or church in your community.

Plan activities to raise money or volunteer the time of your brothers to support The Masonic Home, Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children and the Nebraska Masonic Foundation, or ask for ways your lodge can help.

Hold a Widows Night or similar event to recognize them and to fulfill our charge to care for the widows of our brothers.

Host youth members of DeMolay, Job's Daughters or Rainbow for Girls at a Masonic Youth Recognition Night or day-time event.

## **School Activities**

A survey of educators identified the top five ways a lodge can help:

Volunteer a few hours a month to read to children, listen to them in small groups and work with them on special assignments.

Adopt a local school and work with the administration to identify one, year-long effort for

which the lodge would be responsible. (Grooming the play area, supervising evening events, serving as library aids, keeping the library open for adult reading or literacy, beautifying the school grounds, refinishing the gym floor, raising funds for a significant school event, work with teachers, go on

## School Activities *(continued)*

field trips with classes and handle special projects or events. Reading assistance was most often mentioned.)

Recognize excellence in learning by granting scholarships to individual students identified by a school/lodge committee.

Recognize teaching or instructional excellence by granting annual awards or scholarships to teachers who meet or exceed expectations in working with children. (A cash award would be used to further the winning teacher's education or involvement in the school.)

Children's Holiday Party. Hold a party for all the kids in your town. Open your hall, get a Santa, and maybe some Shrine clowns. Give sacks of fruit and candy. There's also a side benefit – this is fun.

Sponsor a grade school sports event.

Sponsor an environmental or other club at a local high school.

Adopt a local elementary school and work with the principal to develop ways to help students improve their experience.

Develop with your local schools, a program to recognize teachers who do an excellent job with children.

Offer scholarships in conjunction with the Grand Lodge Scholarship Program.

Contact your local school or Department of Education to develop special programs and help with costs.

Read to children on a regular schedule.

Initiate a scholarship program for learning excellence and present a cash award or savings bond to one student in each grade who meets established criteria.

Hold an event with the school to raise funds for a specific need like computers.

Assist the librarian in an after-hours volunteer reading program to promote reading enjoyment for adults and children.

Organize a book exchange so students and members of the community can donate books for children and adults. Distribute through the school library.

Deliver books and other learning materials to children who are out of school for an extended period.

Volunteer as chaperones or hosts for school-related field trips/events.

Develop a book reading contest in which students receive an award or prize.

Provide teachers or the library with subscriptions to magazines for children.

Fund an after-school or summer reading program at schools. Provide compensation for teachers and materials. Parents could also pay.

Establish a forum where students who want extra assistance can go for help. The lodge could be a learning center. Compensation may be required.

Arrange for a limited number of part-time jobs for students with a need and an excellent academic record. Don't let hours exceed 15 hours a week or schoolwork might suffer.

Host a book fair with parents and teachers with proceeds going to the library.

Reward learning excellence by offering summer jobs to kids who meet pre-determined criteria.

Showcase students in your lodge newsletter who have achieved academic excellence.

Provide in-school day care on a for parents who need to visit the school.

Showcase the names of the All-Star Reading Team in the local newspaper. Arrange for photos of the students to go with the article.

Offer the local high school a series of field trips to businesses in the community so that students gain additional knowledge about the workplace.

Arrange for donations to schools of equipment from businesses represented by lodge members.

Volunteer to work at school as a tutor or mentor.

Identify needs in music and art.

Purchase a video for the school and donate it in the name of the lodge.

Arrange for selected merchants in town to provide a small discount for children and faculty members.

Underwrite and organize a contest that would ask students to become familiar with the town's history. Ask for a display, model, map or some other type of project that would encourage their additional discovery.

Arrange and host a Read-A-Thon where students assemble in the school one day each quarter for a reading experience. Arrange for games, prizes, instruction, book sales and other activities.

Provide a video library for a school. Buy tapes from a 'wish list' for the school library. (Put your lodge's name on all videos.)

## School Activities *(continued)*

Sponsor an unsung hero's award to spotlight the high school boy or girl that the coaches or drama or music instructors identify as unselfish in their support of their high school team or group.

Work with local social service agencies to host a local alcohol or drug awareness seminar for all students.

Develop a reading and writing pal program with the school. Ask each lodge member to partner with one student for one year. Assume that each member will commit one hour on the phone per week and one two-hour, face-to-face every other week for a year.

Provide a video library for a school. Buy tapes from a 'wish list' for the school library. (Put your lodge's name and a brief statement about Freemasonry on the case.)

Organize and underwrite a special Discovery Series of field trips to unusual places for students. Work with school authorities to learn of the important places you might visit.

Encourage innovation and discovery by sponsoring a Discovery Fair in association with your local science teacher. Contribute prizes. Work with local businesses to hold a Creative Fair. Students submit artwork, photos, videotapes, original music and creative writing for scholarships and prizes.

Develop, host and sponsor a Classics Film Forum. Your local librarian should have a list of rental films suitable for showing in the schools. Provide transportation for student the school identifies as needing help getting to local school events. (Check with your insurance agent.)

Develop a county-wide poster contest promoting goodwill, racial understanding and parental involvement. Arrange for year-long sponsorship and involvement. Get local businesses to display entries and winners. Have the winning posters made into T-shirts with the artist's name, school and your lodge's name on it.

## Communication

The following list of communication vehicles may help you get news out to your members.

**Lodge newsletter.** Newsletters provide details about activities. But, make certain your articles are short and graphics are included to grab their attention.

**E-mails.** Develop an e-mail list of your members. This is one of the fastest ways to inform members about lodge news.

**Calling Committee.** This is another quick means to inform or find out expected attendance from members. Some members will appreciate the personal contact over impersonal e-mail, but most are accustomed to e-mail.

**Web Site.** A lodge Web site offers information about your lodge and its activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your biggest challenge is keeping it updated and fresh.

**Postcards, Handouts & Invitations.** Postcards put information in the hands of all members inexpensively, but there may be a couple-day delay before it is received. Handouts at meetings, or just placed in the back of the room for members to pick up, also keeps information readily available. Invitations or letters to members allow more information to be communicated and permit you to use more emotion, if appropriate.

**Bulletin Boards.** An ever-changing and colorful bulletin board will quickly draw attention to itself, and you can place photos and high-impact graphics and messages there.

**Community Calendars.** Most radio and television stations have community calendars that accept announcements about meetings and activities from local organizations. Send information about lodge events and activities at least two weeks before they occur.

Improve your lodge's communications by:

Develop a list of men who have been raised in the past three years and ask officers or volunteers to contact each by phone and invite them to a special meeting, a dinner or friends night. Members are more likely to respond to a personal invitation from a brother. Call them back to confirm their attendance.

Develop a special greetings program for members or their wives. Mail cards on behalf of the lodge for significant holidays or birthdays. Every communication from your lodge raises their awareness.

Dress-up, brighten-up and spruce-up your existing publications and communications to members. Consider at least a quarterly supplemental publication mailed to members.

## **Books Recommended by the Grand Lodge Masonic Education Committee for the July Emphasis on Self-Development**

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The following books are recommended by the Grand Lodge Masonic Education Committee to form a knowledgeable base of understanding about our fraternity. The committee will present its 2009 list of books at Annual Communication in February. During July, recommend to your lodge brothers that they read one of these books, or that they volunteer to add one of these books to your lodge library or local library.

### **2007**

**Leading Change** by John P. Kotter  
**The Art of Memory** by Frances A. Yates  
**Freemasons' Guide and Compendium** by  
Bernard E. Jones  
**Sesquicentennial History of the Grand Lodge of  
Nebraska** by Russell G. Reno  
**150 Famous Masons** by John T. Parsons

### **2006**

**Freemasons For Dummies** by Christopher  
Hodapp  
**1776** by David McCullough  
**Symbolism of the Blue Lodge Degrees of  
Freemasonry: Albert Pike's  
ESOTERIKA** transcribed and edited by  
Arturo De Hoyos

### **2005**

**The Freemasons: A History of the World's  
Most Powerful Secret Society** by Jasper Ridley  
**Foreign Countries** by Carl H Claudy

### **2004**

**Is It True What They Say About Freemasonry?**  
by Art DeHoyos and S. Brent Morris  
**Undaunted Courage** by Stephen Ambrose  
**Introduction to Freemasonry** by Carl H Claudy

### **2003**

**The Newly-Made Mason** by H.L. Haywood  
**Brother Truman** by Allen E Roberts  
**The Origins of Freemasonry; Scotland's  
Century, 1590–1710** by David Stevenson  
**George Washington: Master Mason** by Allen  
Roberts  
**Freemasonry – A Journey Through Ritual and  
Symbol**, by W. K. Macnulty

### **2002**

**Black Square and Compass** by Joseph A.  
Walkes  
**Confessions of a Born Again Fundamentalist  
Freemason** by Nelson King  
**Bowling Alone** by Robert D. Putnam  
**Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia** by Henry Coil and  
Allen E. Roberts  
**Freemasons at Gettysburg** by Sheldon A. Munn

### **2001**

**Beneath The Stone** by C. Bruce Hunter  
**House Undivided** by Allen E. Roberts  
**Revolutionary Brotherhood** by Steven C.  
Bullock  
**The Mystic Tie** by Allen E. Roberts  
**How Good People Make Tough Choices** by  
Rushworth M. Kidder

### **2000**

**Born in Blood - The Lost Secrets of  
Freemasonry** by John J. Robinson  
**The Temple and the Lodge** by Michael Biagent  
and Richard Leigh  
**A Pilgrim's Path - Freemasonry and the  
Religious Right** by John J. Robinson  
**Freemasonry - A Celebration of the Craft** by  
John Hamill and Robert Gilbert  
**Freemasonry in American History** by Allen E.  
Roberts

## The Vacant Chair Ceremony

*(The Altar is placed at the foot of the east dais. A pedestal with a candle on it is placed just south of the center of the Lodge room. Stands for wreaths are placed around the sides of where the Vacant Chair will rest next to the pedestal. Throughout the ceremony, an organist or pianist may play march music appropriate the solemn occasion. If the Grand Master or his personal representative is unavailable, it is suggested a Past Master present the paragraph on page 5. Before the ceremony begins, the candle is lit.)*

*(The Marshal enters the room through the Preparation Room doors and marches to music to his place in the southeast corner of the Lodge. Upon arriving at his station, he turns and announces . . .)*

**MARSHAL:** The assembly will please rise for the entrance of the Volume of Sacred Law, and officers of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, No. \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska.

*(The following is the lineup for the entrance of the officers. This ceremony may be adjusted to accommodate available officers. The ceremony could be performed without the Tyler, Treasurer, or Junior and Senior Stewards. If the Stewards are not used, then the Junior and Senior Deacons would handle their responsibilities.)*

### Entrance of Officers

	Chaplain	
Jr. Steward		Sr. Steward
Treasurer		Secretary
Tyler		Speaker #3
Jr. Warden		Sr. Warden
Sr. Deacon		Jr. Deacon
	Master	

*(Optional Music: "Abide With Me.")*

*(The Lodge Officers enter from the Preparation Room in two lines, led by the Chaplain carrying the V.S.L. The Stewards halt the procession on the North Marching Line after the Chaplain passes the point in line with the pedestal which bear the candle. The Chaplain turns south, proceeds to a point in line with the Altar, then turns east and proceeds to the Altar where he places the V.S.L. Once placed, the Chaplain takes three steps back, places his right hand over his heart and bows slightly to the V.S.L. and proceeds around the south of the Altar to his station in the East. After the Chaplain bows, the two lines of officers turn in toward each other. The Deacons, with rods crossed forming an arch, lead the W.M. as he proceeds from the back of the line through the Officers. They stop and maintain the arch five steps from the line of officers. The officers walk under the arch. The Officers move from the back of the line to the arch and perambulate the Lodge, falling out at their respective stations. After the last officer has passed, the Senior Deacon turns to the north to his station and the Junior Deacon leads the officers. When all Officers are at their stations and standing, the W.M. seats the Assembly with **\*I rap** of the gavel.)*

**MARSHAL** (optional): *(The Marshal, without being seated, immediately goes to the Preparation Room door to escort the Grand Master or his representative into the room. The Marshal announces the Grand Master or his personal representative at the Preparation Room door.)*

**Most Worshipful Brother \_\_\_\_\_, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska.** *(The W.M. causes the assembly to rise with \*\*\*3 raps of the gavel. The Marshal marches on the North Line to the East. When he arrives, he steps to the south side of the dais and waits for the Grand Master or his personal representative to be welcomed by the Worshipful Master.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** *(The W.M. introduces the Grand Master or his personal representative according to form and calls on Brethren to rise and Salute him with the Grand Honors by three times three. The Marshal then returns to his station. The Grand Master is seated.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** **It was a fateful time during World War I. Allied troops attacked the Turkish peninsula of Gallipoli in April 1915 and continued the fight until they were forced to withdraw in January 1916, accomplishing very little except death from the battles and disease. The Allies lost about 50,000 soldiers and experienced 250,000 casualties. Soldiers from Australia who survived that great tragedy formed a Masonic lodge in Australia in 1922 named Lodge A.I. F. Memorial – A.I.F. meaning Australian Imperial Forces – for the specific purpose to remember soldiers from Australia and New Zealand who did not return from Gallipoli. These veterans created the Vacant Chair Ceremony, and it has been and continues to be performed throughout Australia and New Zealand on ANZAC Day with the central focus on the Vacant Chair, representing those who did not return from war. We have adapted this ceremony for our use here, and extend its significance to include the 1.2 million U.S. soldiers who have died to preserve our nation and the freedoms we all enjoy.**

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER: Brothers Senior and Junior Deacons** *(W.M. gives \*1 rap of the gavel for them to stand), you will dispatch the escort for the Vacant Chair.*

**SENIOR DEACON:** *(Rises and turns facing the Stewards.)* **Brothers Senior and Junior Stewards** *(\*1 rap of the rod in front of him), you will escort the Vacant Chair.* *(The Stewards march abreast to the Preparation Room door and exit in the usual manner.)*

*(Optional music as the Stewards march to the Preparation Room doors and exit.)*

*(The Vacant Chair Bearers, led by the Stewards, enter through the Preparation Room door carrying the Vacant Chair with an apron draped across the backrest of the chair so that it is visible to the audience. The Junior Deacon leaves his station and marches straight East, turning north in front of the pedestal, and goes to the North Line where he stands next to the Senior Deacon, who marches west on the North Line to meet him. The Senior and Junior Stewards lead the Vacant Chair Bearers until they meet the Deacons. The Stewards return to their stations by turning left and walking north, then west to the West Line where they proceed to their stations and are seated. The Deacons, followed by the Vacant Chair Bearers, march along the North Line, turn south on the East Line, and turn west on the South Line, pausing to place The Vacant Chair in the Southeast corner facing west. The Vacant Chair Bearers are seated on the sidelines near the Vacant Chair. The Deacons return to their stations and are seated.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** The Vacant Chair represents those who are currently away from us, protecting our freedoms; those who left us for a time to serve our nation and have returned; and especially those who will never return.

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** Brothers Senior and Brother Junior Deacons (*W.M. gives \*1 rap of the gavel for them to stand*), you will dispatch the escort for the flag of our nation.

**SENIOR DEACON:** (*Rises and turns facing the Stewards.*) Brothers Senior and Junior Stewards (*\*1 rap of the rod in front of him*), you will escort the flag of our nation. (*They march abreast to the Preparation Room door and exit in the usual manner.*)

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** (*\*\*\*3 raps of the gavel when the flag of the United States enters the room.*)

*(The Color Guard, led by the Stewards, enters through the Preparation Room door. The Senior and Junior Deacons meet them as described above, and lead the Color Guard as the Stewards return to their stations and remain standing. The Deacons proceed along the North Line until they arrive at the point west of the pedestal where the Color Guard turns south, marches to the center of the room and stands west of the pedestal. The Junior Deacon faces South as the Senior Deacon joins him at his side.)*

**SENIOR DEACON:** For your country and for that flag, never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look at another flag, never let a night pass but we pray God to bless that flag.

**JUNIOR DEACON:** Remember that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself, your country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother. Stand by her as you would stand by your mother!

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** Join in singing “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

*(The organist plays, “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and the assembly sings the first verse.)*

*(The Color Guard turns north and marches to behind the Deacons. The Deacons proceed to the East. When the Deacons arrive at the East Line, they stop, turn to face each other and back to the north and south to allow room for the Color Guard to pass between them and place the flag in the East.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** All citizens of the United States will honor our great country, its flag and those who have defended it against tyranny, by joining in The Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (*The W.M. is seated and makes \*1 rap of the gavel for the assembly to be seated.*)

*(The Color Guard leaves the East. The Deacons return abreast with the Color Guard behind them. They march to the South Line, turn and march west to the West Line. The Color Guard and Junior Deacon return to their seats. The Senior Deacon proceeds to his station.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** *(Offers a welcome to the audience, current members of the military, veterans and their families and makes other comments as appropriate.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** **Brother Senior Warden,** (*\*1 rap of the gavel for the Senior Warden to stand.*) **for what purpose are we assembled?**

**SENIOR WARDEN:** **To honor the memory of our Brethren and to remember those men and women who served or are serving our country, and those who were physically or mentally maimed, and especially those who have passed through the veil of death as a result of their service in times of world conflict and on peace-keeping missions.**

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** **Brother Junior Warden,** (*W.M. gives \*1 rap of the gavel for the Junior Warden to stand.*) **what sentiments should inspire the souls of Masons on such occasions as this?**

**JUNIOR WARDEN:** **Eternal hope for the return of those brave men and women who today protect our freedoms; joyous thanks for those who returned; and calm sorrow for the absence of those who have gone before us; and to remember why we must work for peace every day of the year. Without freedom there can be no peace, and without peace, no enduring freedom.**

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** (*\*\*\*3 raps of the gavel for the assembly to stand.*) **Let us pray.**

**CHAPLAIN or WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** **Great Architect of the Universe, and most glorious God. As time heals the wounds of our hearts, and of those who were near and dear to them, we pray that we use the lessons so learned to make us wiser and better, but let not time ease the salutary lessons engraved thereon. Let our affection increase for those still living. Protect those who are now serving our nation. Make us more punctual in the performance of the duties demanded by friendship, love and honor. So, when it is our turn to enter this new existence, may a firm and abiding trust in Thy Mercy dispel any feelings of gloom and dread. Amen.**

**ALL MASONS:** **So mote it be.** (*\*1 rap of the gavel for the assembly to be seated.*)

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** **In 1861, at age 18, "Willie" Grout of Worcester** (*were-stir*), **Massachusetts, enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War. Three months later he was killed at Balls Bluff, Virginia. The grief of his parents at Thanksgiving so moved Henry Washburn that he wrote the words to a song about the family's loss, and George Root set the words to music.** (*Optional music: You may introduce the soloist or invite the assembly to join in singing, "The Vacant Chair," which is the inspiration for this ceremony.*)

*(Optional music: "The Vacant Chair.")*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** The Masonic tributes to the memory of the departed are useful lessons to those who live in this mortal existence. We derive instruction from them and learn to consider afresh our attitudes toward our own earthly demise. May we be remembered for our deeds in life, just as those we honor here are revered by the generations for their sacrifices on our behalf.

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** (**\*\*\*3 raps** of the gavel. The Worshipful Master walks from the East dais to left of the Altar. The Marshal takes the apron, medal and evergreen to the Worshipful Master, holding the apron in front of him with both hands. The Worshipful Master takes the apron and holds it in front of him.) **The purity of this apron represents a life well spent. The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence, the badge of a Mason; more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle; more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other order that could be conferred upon a man. This emblem I now place upon the Altar in memory of our departed Brethren.** (Places the apron on the Altar next to the Bible. The Marshal gives the Worshipful Master the medal and he holds it for all to see.) **May this war medal serve as a tribute to the heroism of our soldiers today, and over the centuries, who fight so that Vacant Chairs in our homes and lodges shall be no more.** (Places the medal on the Altar above the apron. The Marshal gives the Worshipful Master the evergreen.) **This evergreen is an emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this, we are reminded that we have an important part within us which shall survive the grave and never die. Though, like our Brethren, we shall soon encounter death, yet we confidently hope that our souls will bloom in eternal spring.** (The evergreen is deposited on the Altar between the apron and the medal. WM returns to the East, is seated and gives **\*1 rap** of gavel for the assembly to be seated.)

**GRAND MASTER/HIS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE/OR PAST MASTER:** We, the Freemasons of Nebraska, express our loyalty to God and our Nation. We give our gratitude to those serving and those who have served our country by placing themselves in harm's way so this country can remain free. And, we pledge that we will always honor those who have paid the supreme sacrifice in times of war and peacekeeping missions so that future generations may live in peace.

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER (optional):** (Introduces the guest speaker.)

**GUEST SPEAKER:** (Delivers speech.)

(At the conclusion of the speech, the four members of the Honor Guard march to the center of the West Line two abreast, and slowly march to the center of the room about six feet from the northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest corners of where the Vacant Chair will rest and stop at parade rest.)

**SECRETARY:** On behalf of the Freemasons of Nebraska, Most Worshipful Brother \_\_\_\_\_, Grand Master of Masons of Nebraska. (He rises and the W.M. gives **\*\*\*3 raps** of the gavel for the assembly to stand.)

*(The Junior Deacon proceeds north from his station to the North Line and to the Senior Deacon. They proceed to the East Line, passing the East dais where the Grand Master falls in behind them. They continue to the Vacant Chair in the Southeast corner. The Grand Master stands behind the Vacant Chair and receives the wreath from the Marshal. The Deacons proceed to the front of the Vacant Chair. The Chair Bearers assume their positions on either side of the chair. The Deacons, Vacant Chair Bearers and Wreath Bearer march to the West Line. The procession turns north and goes to the center of the West Line. When they arrive, the Deacons turn to the east and take three steps forward, and then turn toward each other and step backward to allow the Vacant Chair Bearers and Grand Master to step through. After the Vacant Chair Bearers and Grand Master pass, the Deacons then step back behind them and stop. The following is to be completed in one fluid motion so the Chair does not stop. The Chair Bearers, who are proceeding east, and Grand Master continue to the pedestal. When the Chair Bearers reach the pedestal, they turn a half-circle so the back of the Vacant Chair is to the East. They place the Vacant Chair next to the pedestal with wreath stands on its north, east and south sides. After placing the Vacant Chair, the Chair Bearers back out of the area within the Honor Guard, and stop, facing the Vacant Chair. After the Chair Bearers have stopped, the Grand Master approaches the Vacant Chair and places the wreath on the designated stand. He rises, backs outside the area within the Honor Guard, and he and the Chair Bearers together put their right hands over their hearts and bow slightly. They remain in place until all wreaths have been laid.)*

**SPEAKER #1:** *(He asks the assembly to assume an attitude of prayer, and reads a section of “For the Fallen.”)*

**Please assume an attitude of prayer.  
They went with songs to the battle.  
They were young, straight of limb,  
True of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end,  
Against odds uncounted.  
They fell with their faces to the foe.  
They shall grow not old, as we who are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.  
Amen.**

**ALL MASONS:** **So mote it be.**

*(All lights, except a spotlight on the Vacant Chair and the candlelight on the pedestal, are slowly turned down.)*

**BUGLER:** *(After the lights are all the way down, a Bugler located outside the Lodge room plays “Taps.”)*

**SPEAKER #2:** *(Recites the words to “Taps” after the Bugler has finished.)*

**Day is done, gone the sun,  
From the lake, from the hills,  
From the sky.  
All is well, safely rest,  
God is nigh.**

**SPEAKER #3:** *(Reads “In Flanders Fields” by John McCrae.)*

**In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the Dead. Short days ago,  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.  
Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.**

*(Lights are slowly turned up.)*

**SECRETARY:** *(Individually announces each person who will lay a wreath representing one or several Masonic-related organizations. Optional music: “Amazing Grace.” The Wreath Bearers proceed along the North or South lines to the center and turn proceeding toward the Vacant Chair where they place the wreath on a stand. They retire by backing outside of the area within the Honor Guard. Once outside the Honor Guard, they stop, put their hand on their heart and bow slightly.)*

*(After the last person lays a wreath and returns to his/her seat, the Grand Master or his personal representative and the Chair Bearers turn west and return to the West Line where the procession turns north. The Deacons lead the procession north about the room, and they return to their stations when they arrive. The W.M. gives **\*1 rap** of the gavel to seat the assembly.)*

*(After the Grand Master is seated, the Honor Guard retires to the West and they return to their seats.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** **We ask all in attendance who are veterans or who are currently serving in the armed forces to stand.** *(Optional music: Soloist or the assembly may sing “Almighty Father, Strong to Save,” in recognition of the contributions to our country and the preservation of our freedoms, or the Worshipful Master may appropriately recognize and honor them.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** *(\*\*\*3 raps of the gavel for the assembly to rise.)* **Let us pray.**

**CHAPLAIN or WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** Most Glorious God, Architect of the Universe, Author of all Good and Giver of all Mercy, pour down Thy blessing on us and especially those who are heavy of heart at the loss of loved ones. Grant thy Grace for our friends and relatives who made the supreme sacrifice to protect this great nation and the ideals we stand for. Strengthen our solemn resolution with a firm commitment to always remember those who laid down their lives for us. Protect this world from the evil that brings vacant chairs into the homes in our country. Keep our soldiers, who have served and are serving our country, forever in your care and comfort no matter the calamity or when you will call them to the Celestial Lodge above. May Your love surround everyone here with the assurance of a purpose in every life, and may Your blessing fill our days of loneliness with a celebration of the contribution our loved ones made to keep this country free. We ask this in your name. Amen.

**ALL MASONS:** So mote it be. *(All others say, "Amen." The Worshipful Master gives \*1 rap of the gavel for the assembly to be seated.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** *(Comments, thank you and asks the Grand Master or his personal representative to speak.)*

*(Grand Master or his personal representative speaks.)*

**WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** *(\*\*\*3 raps of the gavel to raise the assembly.)* Let us pray.

**CHAPLAIN or WORSHIPFUL MASTER:** May the Peace and Love of God which passeth all understanding, rest upon and abide with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.

**ALL MASONS:** So mote it be. *(All others say, "Amen.")*

*(Optional Music: The Worshipful Master may invite the assembly to sing the first verse of "America," while the officers retire and asks them to remain standing until the officers have retired.)*

*("America" may be played, and the Stewards, followed by the Tyler, Junior Deacon and Senior Warden, proceed to the North Line and around the room. The other Officers fall into line as it passes them. They proceed out of the room in the following line-up.)*

### Line-up of Officers

Jr. Steward	Sr. Steward
Tyler	Treasurer
Secretary	Marshal
Jr. Warden	Sr. Warden
Sr. Deacon	Jr. Deacon

Chaplain  
Grand Master & Master

## **Public Relations Planning Guide**

Planning public relations is another facet of the plan you will need to put together for the year you'll serve as Master. How effectively you get your messages in front of the audiences that you want to move to action is critical to your success.

In today's high-speed, electronic world, it is easier than ever before to create and distribute your messages. Your only limitations are time and money, and the computer has significantly reduced the negative impact of those two factors. Public relations can place your message in highly visible media at nearly no cost. But, it requires some effort on your part. The payoff for your lodge of repeatedly getting your lodge in front of others is well worth it.

When considering a public relations activity, the key questions for you to consider are:

- What are the most influential and most often read, seen or heard media used by each audience, and how can I get my message to them through these media?
- How will each audience most likely respond to my messages and how do I need to prepare my messages so they appeal to them?
- When is the best time to communicate each message to each audience?
- Since a person must receive a message several times before they remember it, how many different ways can I get my messages in front of our audiences?
- Are there other, more creative ways to communicate my messages to each audience that will gain even greater attention?

Public relations is effectively communicating with two audiences . . . internal (your brothers, their spouses and children, other Masonic bodies, etc.) and external (everyone else who you want to hear your messages).

### **External Audiences**

External communication will:

- Educate the public about Masonry, who you are and what you stand for.
- Interest men in joining your Lodge because of what they've learned about our Craft from your promotion.
- Elevate the prestige of your Lodge, your members and our Craft in your community as your involvement, and supporting promotion, increases.

Perception becomes reality to the public. In the absence of communication from your lodge, they don't know any more than what they've heard from unofficial sources or what they conjure up themselves. This gap of understanding about who Masons are and what your lodge does is directly attributable to the lack of communication from your lodge.

### **You Must Have Something to Sell**

Communicating your messages is not the sole answer to successful public relations for your lodge. You must have something to "sell" that your audiences want. In other words, if you effectively get the message out that your lodge is active and is also involved in your community, but schedule only a couple activities a year and only write a couple small checks to local organizations, they will quickly realize your public relations efforts weren't honest. Your credibility is lost.

The coming year offers you a program to promote your lodge in several arenas to both external and internal audiences. Your and your lodge's involvement in these activities will provide many opportunities to promote your lodge and gain a higher involvement in your lodge and greater visibility in your community. From March-December, activities are suggested for Nebraska's lodges to plan and hold. Almost every suggested activity gives you the chance to promote your lodge externally and internally. By effectively promoting and implementing the high-visibility activities

planned in the coming year, members and non-members will view your lodge as a place where they want to join, attend and participate in activities.

Public relations tools and ideas, as well as suggestions for lodge activities, are included in this information to assist you in promoting your lodge in the coming year. By planning an active year and promoting it, you will attract members back to your lodge and generate awareness and interest in your lodge among non-members.

The suggested activities next year include (more details on each activity are included in the Lodge Planning Guide):

**March: Masonic Relief Fund** – Send a donation or hold a fundraiser for the Masonic Relief Fund.

**April: Community Service Project** – Help make a difference in your community by selecting a charity or project to support.

**May: Family Activity** – Plan an activity that includes families or only wives.

**June: CHild Identification Program** – Hold a fundraiser, make a donation or host a CHIP event in your community.

**July: Exploration of Freemasonry** – Urge your brothers to explore Masonry, its meaning and how it applies to their lives by reading a book of interest regarding our fraternity. Or, start a Masonic library in your lodge or add books to your current library, make a donation of a Masonic book to the Grand Lodge Library or books to your local public library.

**August & September: Statewide Blood Drive** – Participate in the first statewide blood drive by inviting your brothers and residents of your community to donate blood.

**September: Back to Lodge Night** – Members of appendant bodies will be encouraged to visit their home lodge. Send invitations, plan a dinner, assist them with the due guard and signs and allow them to speak about their involvement in other Masonic-related bodies.

**October: Ladies Festival Weekend** – Treat your wife to the royal treatment in Omaha from October 9-11 to site seeing, shopping in the Old Market, an elegant dinner with a new Ladies at the Table ceremony, followed by a concert of Masonic composers by the UNL symphony orchestra.

**November: Veterans Day Observance / George Washington Masonic Memorial** – On or near Veterans Day, hold an observance honoring veterans. Also, honor our greatest brother, George Washington, with a donation to or fundraiser for the George Washington Masonic Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia.

**December: Grand Lodge Office Project** – Hold a fundraiser or make a donation to help our Grand Lodge Office with improvements, upkeep and maintenance.

## **News Releases**

The news media provide the greatest exposure for your public relations. Always keep in mind that reporters and editors only want news that is timely, local and interesting to their readers, listeners and viewers. You may disagree with their view about the worthiness of your news, but always treat them with respect. But, what's important to remember from their perspective is whether your news meets their needs or not. All decisions will be based on this fact.

When preparing a news release, be sure to:

- The less editing that is required of your news release increases its likelihood to be used. Reporters and editors have very little time each day to correct grammatical errors, misspellings and copy that is not in news style. Use the form news releases provided by the Grand Lodge as good examples of how to write in journalistic style.
- Double-space your news release. All news media prefer news releases that are double-spaced so they can easily make edits.
- In all news releases, answer who, what, where, when and why in the first sentence of the article.

- Include a photograph of the event with the news release. Ask newspapers or television stations if they would like to attend to photograph/tape the event. If not, then offer to provide a photograph for them. Be sure to follow up quickly with any requests for photographs you provide.
- End each news release with standard information about your lodge and a succinct explanation of Masonry. See the last four paragraphs of the Form News Releases as a guide. This is a good way to educate others about Freemasonry.

### **Public Service Announcements**

Radio and television stations provide time for announcements as a service to the public. There is no charge for a public service announcement or PSAs. It should be no longer than 70-80 words, which should take no longer than 30 seconds to read.

Another form of PSA is the community bulletin board on broadcast and cable television. These are even shorter in length. These are mostly used to announce events. Check with your local station for guidelines.

### **Build a Relationship**

Send editors, reporters and PSA directors a thank you when they use your news releases. This will help to create a positive relationship for future coverage. If your news release isn't used, send a follow-up news release summarizing your activity or event. It could be that there wasn't time or space to include it that day and they will use your follow-up news release. Never complain if they don't use your story, but you may talk with them about what you can do to improve your news releases. The best way to establish a good relationship is ongoing contact, information that meets their needs, timeliness in providing news and responses to questions and accuracy.

A key question they may ask is, "What is it that Masons do?" Be ready to respond. Here is one definition you may consider using: Freemasonry is a progressive philosophy of life encouraging tolerance, integrity and self-development of its members, while promoting service to our nation, state and communities. Also, become familiar with Freemasonry's activities on the state level so you can cite additional programs as well as what your lodge is doing locally.

By building a strong relationship, they call you for a story about your lodge or Freemasonry. That's the biggest payoff of them all.

### **Flyers and Posters**

It's easy to make a flyer or poster with a computer. The availability of good artwork and a variety of art effects and colors can bring attention to your message.

The cost is minimal to make copies of flyers and posters at a copy center. Once duplicated, take them to businesses in your community, especially near your lodge, and ask their permission to post them.

Of course, all communications should include our square and compass logo. Be sure to use only the logo available on the Nebraska Grand Lodge Web site on the "Downloads" page under "Miscellaneous" at: <http://gline.org/Forms.aspx>. If everyone in Nebraska uses the same square and compass, then we will begin to develop a brand identity. That is, when non-members repeatedly see the same square and compass in the context of our communications, they will know it stands for the Masons and will make an immediate link to our positive messages.

## **Internal Audiences**

Internal communication will:

- Keep your members informed about what their lodge is doing.
- Encourage members to attend activities because they will know when they will occur and what will happen at them.
- Give members pride in their lodge because of increased awareness of its many activities in the community.
- Create pride in members who are recognized in your communications.

The lack of communication with inactive members may cause them to view your Lodge as not caring, not relevant and staid. It makes them question why they remain members.

### **You Must Have Something to Sell**

Just as you must have something to sell when communicating with external audiences, it is even more important for internal audiences. It all starts with having an active year planned. Review again the activities planned each month in the coming year and schedule to participate. An active lodge is the best public relations you can possibly devise for an internal audience, but you can enhance it by communicating with your members.

### **Newsletters**

A good place to start is with a regular newsletter sent to members. Newsletters can be as simple as a typewritten piece of paper, an e-mail or as elaborate as a newspaper, and limited only by the resources available to you. A key way to publish a newsletter is to use a computer with publishing software that gives you flexibility to use various sizes of typefaces and columns. With very little effort, an attractive-looking and appealing newsletter can be produced with a computer. Since most, if not all, your readers are very familiar with a newspaper use it as a guide to lay out your newsletter. Use typefaces similar to your local newspaper for headlines and copy.

Photographs and artwork draw attention to articles. Photos can be difficult to duplicate unless your publication is professionally printed, or if you print all copies on a high quality computer printer. If it will be difficult to reproduce photos, look for simple artwork that represents the theme of the article. There are many Web sites that have Masonic and other artwork. Artwork that will best duplicate is black and white.

Here are a variety of articles you may consider placing in your newsletter:

- Calendar or list of upcoming events.
- Masonic education.
- Upcoming activities.
- Lodge officers and their phone numbers.
- Support and promotion of Grand Lodge programs.
- Activities of lodge committees.
- Masonic or calendar birthdays.
- Message from at least one elected officer and preferably your Master.
- Masonic education.
- Reports of sickness and distress.
- Profiles/information about members and their families, especially newly-made brothers.
- Information from/about appendant bodies.

The more frequently you communicate with members, the greater likelihood they will be aware of upcoming activities and you may increase their interest in your lodge. Once a month is ideal. Greater time between issues risks members not remembering the information, and requiring your

newsletter to contain more and interesting information to make a long-lasting impression. And, you must be sure to cover all upcoming activities until the next issue. Consistency in distributing your newsletter on a certain date each month will build your reader's expectation for its arrival, assure that all activities are covered and will enable you to maintain a regular schedule in its production.

Send your newsletter to all members living close and far away. Every member pays dues and is entitled to know what his lodge is doing. Regularly sending news about happenings in your lodge may help to stem the tide of suspensions for non-payment of dues as members feel they are getting something in return for their dues.

An e-mail mailing works best and will save your lodge a lot of money. Find out the e-mail addresses of members to send them your newsletter. Send a paper copy to all other members.

### **Additional Internal Communication Vehicles**

It can't be emphasized too much that frequent communication with members will keep your Lodge at the forefront of their thoughts, and a repetition of messages can help to increase attendance. Here are a variety of ways to communicate with your members:

- **E-mails.** This is one of the fastest ways to inform members about the latest happenings or upcoming activities. Develop an e-mail list of your members.
- **Calling Committee.** This is another quick means to inform or find out expected attendance from members. Some members will appreciate the personal contact over impersonal e-mail, but most young men prefer e-mail.
- **Web Site.** A lodge Web site offers information about your lodge and its activities 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your biggest challenge is keeping it updated and fresh.
- **Postcards, Handouts & Invitations.** Postcards put information in the hands of all members inexpensively, but there may be a delay of a couple days before it is received. Handouts at meetings, or just placed in the back of the room for members to pick up, also keeps information readily available. Invitations or letters to members allow more information to be communicated and permit you to use more emotion, if appropriate.
- **Bulletin Boards.** An ever-changing and colorful bulletin board will quickly draw attention to itself, and you can place photos and high-impact graphics and messages there.
- **Community Calendars.** Most radio and television stations have community calendars that accept announcements about meetings and activities from local organizations. Send information about lodge events and activities at least two weeks before they occur.
- **Special greetings program.** Send greetings to members and their wives. Mail cards on behalf of the lodge for significant holidays or birthdays. Every communication from your lodge raises their awareness.

## Form News Releases

Included here are form news releases for activities involving your lodge in the coming year. These are provided so you can increase awareness of your lodge and Freemasonry in your community. A frequent presence of information about your lodge in the local news media, with identification of members, will keep your lodge in front of local men and inform them who they can contact for more information. Also, it will keep your members aware of happenings at your lodge.

Feel free to change the news releases to fit your occasion or to add other information that may be used by the news media. Be sure to put your name and contact information at the top of the news release so the media can quickly follow up if they have questions.

Included here are 22 form news releases for events and activities that will occur in the next year:

- **Pre-installation** of your lodge's officers.
- **Post-installation** of your lodge's officers.
- Donation/Fundraiser to **Masonic Relief Fund** (see March Masonic Value Activities).
- Attendance at **Lodge Leaders Forums**.
- **Masonic All-Star Band Clinic scholarship** to area high school students.
- Members who **chaperone** at the Masonic All-Star Band Clinic.
- **Grand Master's visit** to your lodge.
- **Donation of books** to local library (see July Masonic Value Activities).
- **Blood drive** in your community (see August-September Masonic Value Activities).
- Attendance at **Lodge Leadership Program**.
- Attendance at **Enrollment Program**.
- Performance of **The Vacant Chair** (see November Masonic Value Activities).
- Donation to **George Washington Masonic Memorial** (see November Masonic Value Activities).
- Donation of a **George Washington portrait** to a local school. (For information on this program, go to: <http://www.gwmemorial.org/main.html>.)
- Attendance at **Annual Communication** of the Grand Lodge.
- **Scholarships** for area high school students to attend a post-secondary institution.
- Presentation of **year-pins**.
- Presentation of **Jordan Medal**.
- **Lodge anniversary** event.
- **Cornerstone** laying ceremony.
- **CHIP** event.
- **Proficiency examination** by Deputy Grand Custodian.
- Other events and activities during the coming year that your lodge will hold.

Please follow these guidelines:

- **Retype these news releases** in their existing format and insert the appropriate information shown in italics and parenthesis. The form news releases are written according to accepted journalistic style. The fewer changes the news media must make to a news release, the more likely they are to use it. Be sure to prepare news releases as soon as possible immediately following each event. The longer your news release is submitted after the event, the less likely it is to be used. Before the event, you can ask the news media to hold a news release until a certain date and time. Change the heading from "For Immediate Release" to "For Release (*date and time*)."

- **Double-space your news release.** All news media prefer news releases that are double-spaced so they can easily make edits.
- **Mail or hand deliver the finished news release** to all newspapers, and radio and television stations and other news media in your town as well as in neighboring towns. It is most effective to personally deliver news releases to local editors and news directors, especially if they know you. The Grand Lodge office has a listing of all news media in Nebraska and will be glad to provide you this information on request.
- **Send information in advance of the event as well.** A pre-event news release may attract more people to your activity. Of course, follow up with a report on its success.
- **Include a photograph** of the event with the news release. Ask newspapers or television stations if they would like to attend to photograph/tape the event. If not, then offer to provide a photograph for them. Be sure to follow up quickly with any requests for photographs you provide.
- If you write your own news release, **answer who, what, where, when and why** in the first sentence of the article.

### Use a Standard Closing to Educate

A good way to educate readers and news reporters and editors about Masonry and your lodge is to use a standard closing for each news release. If editors don't have the space in their newspaper or time during their broadcast to include the information, at least the informational paragraphs serve to inform them. Include the following paragraphs in every news release you send to the news media:

*(Lodge Name)* Lodge meets monthly on *(day of the month)* at *(time)* at *(address)*. It was chartered in *(year)*, and has *(number)* members. There are more than 13,000 members in about 125 communities in the state. Freemasonry has nearly two million members in the U.S.

Masonic lodges across Nebraska support local youth and community projects and humanitarian efforts including a statewide blood drive, child identification program and scholarships. In 2009, *(Lodge Name)* Lodge will also support *(explain community service projects your lodge will support in 2009)*.

Freemasonry, a benevolent, educational and charitable organization, provides \$2 million a day in charity through its lodges and appendant bodies. The Grand Lodge helps to maintain two homes: The Masonic Home at Plattsmouth for Masons and their female relatives, and the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont.

Masonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world and is based on the lessons of living a life of brotherhood and high moral standards as portrayed symbolically in the work of stone masons who built the cathedrals, abbeys and castles of Europe.

We hope you will prepare and send these form news releases. They will not only help to increase awareness of your lodge in your town, but will also increase awareness of Masonry in Nebraska and communicate the tenets of our fraternity. Thank you for taking the time to promote Freemasonry.

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Installation of Officers**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name) Will Be Installed As Head Of (Name) Masonic Lodge***

*(Full Name)* will be installed Master for the coming year of *(Lodge Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of *(City/Town)* on *(day of week, month, date and time)* at *(location)*.

*(Last Name)* held elected leadership positions in the Masonic lodge before he was elected Worshipful Master for 2009. In that position, he will lead all meetings of the lodge, and plan community service, membership, educational and family-oriented activities for the coming year.

Other elected officers who will be installed are: *(Name)*, senior warden; *(Name)*, junior warden; *(Name)*, secretary; and *(Name)*, treasurer.

Appointed officers to be installed are: *(Name)*, chaplain; *(Name)*, senior deacon; *(Name)*, junior deacon; *(Name)*, senior steward; *(Name)*, junior steward; *(Name)*, tyler; and *(Name)*, marshal.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Installation of Officers**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

***(Name) Installed As Head  
Of (Name) Masonic Lodge***

*(Full Name)* was installed Master for the coming year of *(Lodge Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of *(City/Town)* on *(month and day)* at *(location)*.

The installing officer was *(Name)*, *(Title)*, of *(Town if other than your community)*. He was assisted by: *(Names and Titles of other installing officers – also include town if they don't live in your community)*.

About *(number)* attended the installation and reception that followed, including *(Names and Titles of Dignataries)*.

*(Last Name)* announced *(Lodge Name)* Lodge will hold *(activities you will hold in 2009)* in 2009.

Other officers installed were: *(Name)*, senior warden; *(Name)*, junior warden; *(Name)*, secretary; *(Name)*, treasurer; *(Name)*, chaplain; *(Name)*, senior deacon; *(Name)*, junior deacon; *(Name)*, senior steward; *(Name)*, junior steward; *(Name)*, tyler; and *(Name)*, marshal.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Donate Funds**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name of Lodge) Masonic Lodge Makes Donation to Assist Others***

*(Name of Lodge) Masonic Lodge has made a donation of \$???:/donated \$???:from a fundraiser for the Masons' statewide relief fund, said Master (Worshipful Master's Name).*

Freemasonry encourages its members to assist members of the fraternity, their wives, children and other lodges in need of help, *(Master's Last Name)* said. The Grand Lodge Masonic Relief Fund is used to complement the efforts of local lodges to support these needs.

“Inclement weather, fires, health problems, the deterioration of buildings and other issues put our members, their families and our lodges in jeopardy,” *(Master's Last Name)* said. “We all take an obligation to aid our members and their loved ones in distress. This donation is an opportunity for *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge to fulfill our obligation.”

The donation of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge to the Masonic Relief Fund is part of a statewide effort to raise funds in keeping with the 2009 theme for the Grand Lodge – Freemasonry: Values in Action. Grand Master Russ Reno of Lincoln has called on the state's Masonic lodges and members to exemplify the tenets of the fraternity through self-development, in their lodge and in their community and state.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Attend Forum**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Local Masonic Lodge Leaders Attend Area Forum with Grand Master**

Officers of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge in *(Town)* will attend an area meeting of leaders of Masonic lodges on *(Date)* in *(Town)* to discuss issues confronting the fraternity locally and statewide.

Grand Master Russ Reno of Lincoln will lead the session and solicit the opinions of area lodge leaders on topics of success and concern.

Like many fraternal and civic organizations, Freemasonry has seen a decrease in members in recent years, said *(Name of Your Lodge's Master)*, Master of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge.

“Masonry offers men important guideposts in living a meaningful and value-based life,” *(Last Name of Master)* said. “How we can let local men know about its skill-building benefits, lessons in life and the camaraderie we enjoy is our constant challenge. It will be interesting to hear how other lodges have approached these challenges and share our experiences, too.”

Reno has scheduled the forums across the state to gather information that will help guide the Grand Lodge in the services it provides to local lodges. In addition, the conversations among area Masonic lodges attending the forums will be helpful in aligning assistance and gleaning ideas that may work elsewhere.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masonic Band Scholarship**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Local Student(s) Presented Scholarships to Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic**

*(If one student, use the following:)*

*(Student's Name), the (son/daughter) of Mr. and Mrs. (First and Last Name of Father, or Father's Name and Mother's Name if divorced), was awarded a scholarship by (Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge (number) in (town), to attend the Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to play for the Shrine Bowl Parade and Football Game.*

*(If more than one student, use the following:)*

*(Number of students) local students have been awarded scholarships by (Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (number), in (town), to attend the Masonic All-Star Marching Band clinic at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to play for the Shrine Bowl Parade and Football Game.*

*Receiving scholarships were: (Student's Name), the (son/daughter) of Mr. and Mrs. (First and Last Name of Father, or Father's Name and Mother's Name if divorced); and (Student's Name), the (son/daughter) of Mr. and Mrs. (First and Last Name of Father, or Father's Name and Mother's Name if divorced).*

*(Use the following if one student or more than one student receives a scholarship:)*

*More than 250 students in grades 9-11 from across Nebraska will learn marching and playing techniques July (dates), during the annual band clinic.*

*The band will lead the Shrine Bowl parade Saturday, July (date), in Lincoln's Havelock district, and perform during halftime of the all-star football game at Memorial Stadium. The clinic is hosted by the Nebraska Masonic Grand Lodge.*

**- more -**

**Masonic Band Scholarship**  
**ADD 1**

Local Masonic lodges, affiliated Masonic organizations as well as other civic groups and individuals across Nebraska, make the scholarships available to students. The scholarships cover the registration fee and expenses.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Chaperone Band Camp**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Local Masons to Chaperone Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic**

*(Number)* members of *(Lodge Name)* Masonic Lodge *(Number)* in *(Town)* will help chaperone more than 250 high school students attending the Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), July 21-25.

During the five-day camp, students will learn marching and playing techniques. They will perform for the Shrine Bowl Recognition Dinner on Friday, July 24, and the Shrine Bowl Parade and during halftime of the Shrine Bowl Football Game on Saturday, July 25. The students and chaperones will stay on the UNL campus.

*(Number of students)* local students have been awarded scholarships by *(Lodge Name)* Lodge to attend the Masonic All-Star Marching Band clinic at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to play for the Shrine Bowl Parade and Football Game, including *(Student's Name)*, the *(son/daughter)* of Mr. and Mrs. *(First and Last Name of Father, or Father's Name and Mother's Name if divorced)*; and *(Student's Name)*, the *(son/daughter)* of Mr. and Mrs. *(First and Last Name of Father, or Father's Name and Mother's Name if divorced)*.

The clinic is hosted by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. Local Masonic lodges, Eastern Star chapters and other Masonic-related and civic organizations pay the registration fee and expenses for the students to attend.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Donate Books to Library**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Masonic Lodge Donates Books to *(Town)* Public Library**

*(Lodge Name)* Masonic Lodge *(Number)* in *(Town)* has donated *(Number)* books on Freemasonry to the *(Town)* Public Library to increase knowledge of the fraternity.

The lodge donated *(Names of Books and Their Author)*. *(Master's Name)*, master of *(Lodge Name)* Lodge, said the books are recommended by authorities as accurate in their explanation of Freemasonry.

“Freemasonry has received considerable attention in recent years because of books, movies and documentaries on the fraternity,” said *(Last Name of Master)*. “We thought it would be helpful to people wanting to know more about Freemasonry if we would donate books to our library.”

*(Last Name of Master)* noted more books have been written about Freemasonry, numbering in the tens of thousands, which is more than any other topic except religion.

“Readers will discover that Freemasonry’s purpose is to make good men into better men,” he said. “We learn through symbolism tenets to live a better life and to keep our priorities in line; our religion, our family and our jobs in that order.”

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Grand Master's Visit**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

**Grand Master of Masons to Visit  
*(Name) Masonic Lodge***

Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of *(Town)* will host Russ Reno, Grand Master of Nebraska Masons, on *(date)* at *(type of event)*.

Reno, a Lincoln resident, is the head of the Grand Lodge of Masons in the state, which includes more than 13,000 members in about 125 communities in the state.

*(Describe the event and the Grand Master's participation – make a speech, award year pins, visitation, etc.)*

Reno's theme for 2009 is: Freemasonry: Values in Action. He said Masonry offers guideposts for living a meaningful life based on high moral standards and positive values, which are obvious through the actions of the lodge its members in their community.

Also attending will be *(Names and Titles of other Grand Lodge officers, area lodges, etc.)*

*(In the event of a meal or other arrangements needing a reservation, include:)*

Reservations for the event may be made by contacting *(name and phone number)*.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masonic Blood Drive**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Blood Drive Coming to Town *(Month and Date)* Thanks to Local Masonic Lodge**

The first statewide blood drive is coming to *(Town)* thanks to *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* on *(Day and Date)* at *(Time)* at *(Location)*.

Masonic lodges across the state are participating during August and September in the first blood drive to bring together blood donation centers serving every community in Nebraska.

“We encourage area residents to donate blood during this critical time of the year for blood banks,” said *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge Master *(Master's Name)*. “After blood centers process the blood into its various components, one donation can save the life of three people. The impact of each donation on residents and families in this area is enormous.”

Local Masonic lodges are working with the blood donation centers to coordinate the drive in each community. Nebraska Masons are placing an emphasis this year on service to the community. The blood drive is one service it will offer to help area residents. In addition, *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge also will *(describe other community service projects you will hold this year)*.

Residents with questions may call *(Local Chairman's phone number)*.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Attend Leadership Training**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Masonic Lodge to Attend Leadership Training Seminar**

Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* in *(Town)* will learn leadership training at a seminar *(Date)* in *(Town)*.

Attending from *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge will be: *(Office and Name)*; *(Office and Name)*; and *(Office and Name)*.

The day-long training will focus on planning and implementing activities aimed at appealing to the interests of members, and leadership techniques. Topics include: running a more efficient meeting, creating an atmosphere of brotherhood, community service, effective communications, budgeting, leadership skills, building a program of activities that generates interest in the community and planning.

Leaders of area lodges will also attend and share their experiences in working with their Masonic lodge. The training will be held at nine locations across the state.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Attend Mentoring Training**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Masonic Lodge to Attend Mentoring Training Seminar**

Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* in *(Town)* will learn mentoring skills at a seminar *(Date)* in *(Town)*.

Attending from *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge will be: *(Office and Name)*; *(Office and Name)*; and *(Office and Name)*.

The seminar will cover techniques to use when working with a new member, getting him involved in lodge and points to explain about the fraternity. The program prepares lodge members to begin a planned program of mentoring new members when they return home.

The training will be held at nine locations across the state.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Veterans to Be Honored**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Freemasons to Honor Veterans with 87-Year-Old Australian Ceremony**

In recognition of Veterans Day, area soldiers, veterans and their families are invited to attend a Masonic ceremony honoring them on *(Day and Date)* at *(Time)* at *(Location)* that will be performed by *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* in *(Town)*.

The ceremony, titled “The Vacant Chair,” originated in Australia after World War I by survivors of the Battle of Gallipoli to honor their brothers in arms who died during the fighting. It has been performed in Australia and New Zealand continuously since 1922 on ANZAC Day, a day to recognize the contributions of veterans similar to Veterans Day in the U.S.

“The ceremony is a very moving expression of thanks to the men and women of our armed services who have and are protecting our freedom,” said *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge Master *(Master's Name)*. “In particular, the ceremony recognizes those who made the supreme sacrifice for us.”

The ceremony’s title is derived from the American Civil War song, “The Vacant Chair” that was popular during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and found its way into church hymnals.

A guest speaker will provide a patriotic address, and members of the armed forces will present the American flag and serve as an Honor Guard during the laying of wreaths at the vacant chair.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Donate to Washington Memorial**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name of Lodge) Lodge Makes Donation to Honor George Washington***

*(Name of Lodge) Lodge No. (Number) of (Town)* made a donation to the George Washington Masonic Memorial to help preserve his legacy of patriotism, leadership and high moral standards, said Master *(Name)*.

The Memorial in Alexandria, Va., was completed in 1932 by the Masonic fraternity to honor Washington, the preeminent member of Freemasonry. Washington joined the fraternity in November 1752 and was involved in Masonry until his death, including laying the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol in Masonic regalia in September 1793.

Housed at the Memorial are objects from Washington, his family and associates and a research center and library. The Memorial's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be observed in 2010.

“The members of *(Name of Lodge) Lodge* felt it was important to make a donation to help perpetuate the memorial, so future generation can learn about George Washington, his involvement in Freemasonry and his character,” said Master *(Name)*. “The Memorial stands as a tribute to a great man and a great Mason and we are proud to play a part in perpetuating his memory.”

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Donate Washington Portrait**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Portrait of Washington Donated to Local School by Masons**

A portrait of George Washington will greet students each school day at *(Name of School)* thanks to *(Name of Lodge)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of *(Town)*.

*(Name of Lodge)* Lodge purchased the two-foot by three-foot porthole portrait by Rembrandt Peale of Washington in his Continental Army uniform for *(Name of School)* as part of an effort by Mount Vernon to return his picture to schools across the country.

“There was a time when nearly every school had a picture of George Washington in its hallway, but that’s no longer the case,” said *(Name of Lodge)* Lodge Master *(Name)*. “Washington was a Freemason and emulated the tenets of our fraternity better than anyone. It’s important that the inspiration of Washington’s character be evident to today’s students as a reminder of the importance of patriotism, leadership and high moral standards.”

*(Name of Lodge)* Lodge sponsored the portrait through a donation to Mount Vernon in honor of Washington’s 275<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Besides the portrait, *(Name of School)* also received a “Celebrate George Washington” kit, which recommends ways to develop lesson plans, programs and ceremonies surrounding the placement of the portrait. The kit contained a flag flown over Mount Vernon. *(Name of School)* also held *(list the activities surrounding the placement of the portrait)*.

*(Quote from the school’s principal.)*

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

## ***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

### **Masons Attend Statewide Meeting**

#### **For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

### ***(Name of Lodge) Lodge Officers Attend Statewide Meeting in Grand Island***

Officers of *(Name of Lodge)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of *(Town)* will join more than 500 Masons from 125 communities at the 153<sup>rd</sup> Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska to be held Feb. 5-6, at the Grand Island Midtown Hotel.

Attending will be: *(Office Title and Name)*, *(Office Title and Name)*, *(Office Title and Name)* and *(Office Title and Name)*.

The two-day event will include conducting the business of the Freemasons' state governing body, workshops to prepare for the coming year, social events and the presentation of awards. A public opening of the Grand Lodge will occur Friday at 8:30 a.m.

A highlight of the Annual Communication will be the announcement of several awards, including: Rock Maul Award to the large and small lodges selected as the best all-around lodges in Nebraska; Gold Pan Award to the lodge contributing extraordinary service and advancing Freemasonry in Nebraska; Grand Master's Recruitment Award recognizing members recruiting the largest number of members, and lodges to showing the highest percentage increase in membership; the DeMolay Mason of the Year to a Master Mason who has made significant contributions to Masonry; as well as several other awards.

At the meeting last year, *(Name of Lodge)* Lodge received the *(Names of Awards)*.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

***Masonic Scholarship***

***For Immediate Release***

***For more information, contact: (Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name) Masonic Lodge Awards Scholarship To (Student's Name)***

*(Student's Name), the (son/daughter) of Mr. and Mrs. (First and Last Name of Father, or  
Father's Name and Mother's Name if divorced), was awarded (Year) Grand Lodge of Nebraska and  
(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge scholarship.*

*(Last Name only if the recipient is male/use 'Miss' and Last Name if female) is a senior at  
(Name) High School. (Describe some of his/her activities and accomplishments in school and  
community, and which post-secondary institution he/she will attend.)*

*In presenting the scholarship, the Master (Name) of (Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge recognized  
(Last Name only if the recipient is male/use 'Miss' and Last Name if female) for exemplifying good  
citizenship and high moral character.*

*The scholarship (was/will be) presented at (location and/or describe event).*

*“We are proud to recognize (First Name of recipient) with this scholarship,” (Last Name of  
Master) said. “(He/She) is an example of the best that today’s youth has to offer for our future. We  
hope this scholarship helps (First Name of recipient) realize (his/her) career goals.”*

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Long-Time Members Recognized**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name) Masonic Lodge Recognizes Members For (No. of Years) Years of Membership***

*(No. of members recognized)* members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* were recognized for their years of membership as a Master Mason at a ceremony held *(month, day)*.

Receiving a pin and certificate were: *(Name)* for *(50/60/70)* years; *(Name)* for *(50/60/70)* years; *(Name)* for *(50/60/70)* years; and *(Name)* for *(50/60/70)* years.

*(Last Name of first recipient)* became a Master Mason in *(Year)* at *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge. *(List offices he has held, and other involvement.)*

*(Last Name of second recipient)* became a Master Mason in *(Year)* at *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge. *(List offices he has held, and other involvement.) (Continue with this paragraph for each recipient.)*

“These men have been devoted Master Masons throughout the years of their membership,” said *(Name of Worshipful Master)*. “It is appropriate that we recognize their contributions to the development and success of *(Lodge Name)* Lodge.”

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

***Oldest Member Recognized***

***For Immediate Release***

***For more information, contact: (Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name) Masonic Lodge Recognizes (Name) As Oldest Member***

*(Member's Name)* was recognized with the Jordan Medal as the longest standing Master Mason of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* at a ceremony *(month, day)*.

The medal was presented in honor of Robert Carrel Jordan, the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. He served for three years as Grand Master, beginning in 1857 when Nebraska was still a territory.

During his *(Number)* years of membership, *(Last Name)* served *(Lodge Name)* Lodge as *(list offices he held and other involvement)*.

In presenting the award, Master *(Name)* commended him for his many years of loyal and dedicated service to Masonry and *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge. *(Last Name of recipient)*, who is *(age)* years old, became a Master Mason in *(year)*.

“Our ability to continue the good work of Masonry is dependent on the dedication of our members,” *(Last Name of the Worshipful Master)* said. “The members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge are honored to recognize *(Recipient's First Name)*'s many years of service to Masonry and this Lodge.”

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Celebrate Anniversary**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## ***(Name) Masonic Lodge to Celebrate (Years) Anniversary***

Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of *(Town)* will celebrate the lodge's *(Years)* anniversary at *(Type of Event)* to be held *(Date)* at *(Location)*.

The event will honor long-time members and special guests who will be in attendance, as well as *(other historical activities highlighting the history of your lodge)*.

Highlights of the anniversary program include *(list your program and entertainment)*.

Reservations may be made by contacting *(name and phone number)*.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons to Lay Cornerstone**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Cornerstone to be Laid by Masons for New *(Name of Building)***

In keeping with a centuries-old tradition, the Masons of Nebraska will lay the cornerstone of the recently completed *(Name of Building)* in a ceremony *(Day, Date and Time)* at *(Location)*.

The head of Nebraska's Masons, Grand Master Russ Reno of Lincoln, and officers from around the state will take part in the ceremony, which dates to several hundred years ago. George Washington, a Mason, laid the cornerstone of the nation's capitol in 1793 while dressed in Masonic regalia and serving as President.

Masons lay cornerstones only on public buildings and buildings dedicated to religion, education, civic service or philanthropy. On average, about 10 cornerstones are laid in buildings by the Masons in the state each year.

*(Name of Lodge) Lodge No. (Number) of (Town) coordinated the event with the (Organization constructing the building).*

Items are being assembled to include in the cornerstone that reflect today's culture and the events surrounding the ceremony.

*(Describe other celebratory activities that will be held surrounding the cornerstone laying ceremony.)*

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Child ID Program**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Local Parents Offered Free Child ID by Freemasons**

Parents are invited by *(Lodge's Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)* in *(Town)* to protect their children by taking them through a five-phased, free identification program on *(Day and Date)* from *(Start and End Time)* at *(Location)*.

The Nebraska Freemasons CHild Identification Program (CHIP) is the most comprehensive child identification program available to parents. When completed, parents are given all materials for easy access and safekeeping, including a brief video interview of their children, digital photograph, digital fingerprints, cheek swab and an impression of their teeth. *(Lodge's Name) Masonic Lodge* is paying the cost for each child who goes through the program

“*(Lodge's Name) Lodge* is proud to provide this vital service to our community,” said Master *(Master's Name)*, who heads *(Lodge's Name) Lodge*. “On average, a child is reported missing every 43 seconds in the U.S. The identification materials parents receive provide the best overall information about a child, which increases the likelihood of their return.”

The program is conducted by the members of *(Lodge's Name) Lodge* in cooperation with the Nebraska Dental Association, Nebraska Dental Hygienists Association, State Troopers Association of Nebraska and the Nebraska Sheriffs Association.

**- more -**

**Child ID Program**  
**ADD 1**

*(Master's Last Name)* explained that the teeth impression also yields saliva that can be stored for at least three years and used by bloodhound recovery dogs and for nuclear DNA testing. Cheek swabs provide DNA, and, when frozen, can last up to 30 years.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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# ***NEWS RELEASE***

***(Lodge Name) Masonic Lodge No. (Number)***

**Masons Host Official**

**For Immediate Release**

**For more information, contact: *(Contact Name and Phone Number)***

## **Masonic Official to Visit *(Name) Local Lodge***

Members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge No. *(Number)* of *(Town)* will host Deputy Grand Custodian *(Name)*, of *(Town)*, at a meeting on *(Date)*.

As part of his annual responsibilities, *(Last Name of Deputy Grand Custodian)* reviews *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge's presentation of memorized parts that are used as men go through a three-stage process to join the organization. The officers and members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge learn the parts, some which originated more than 300 years ago in England.

"The history of Freemasonry is tied to the presentation of these parts, which teach men how to live a value-based life with high moral standards," said *(Name of Master)*, Master of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge. "How effectively we communicate these meaningful lessons is important to our members' understanding of the values we profess."

The members of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge have been practicing in recent weeks to prepare for the Deputy Grand Custodian's visit. His approval of *(Lodge's Name)* Lodge's performance of the parts is necessary to be authorized to initiate new members.

*(Insert here the Standard Closing found on page 41.)*

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## Membership Planning Guide

Recruiting men is the lifeblood of your lodge's success. But, we haven't done that. With 150,000 more males in the state today, the number of Masons dropped from 40,000 members in 1966 to about 13,000 today. During that time, we didn't change to meet the needs of modern men. To increase membership, you must build a relevant and meaningful program for your lodge.

On average, after the first year of membership, only 80 percent of all new members don't return to lodge. Appealing activities attract and keep members.

Only about 25 percent of men indicate they are "favorably interested" in joining groups. Of that percentage, only 2 percent show definite interest while the other 23 percent "may be interested." Masonry competes with other fraternal and civic organizations for that small pool of men. Does your lodge have a program that can compete with these organizations? When a member feels good about Freemasonry and what he is gaining from it, he will be active and talk enthusiastically to others about it. This is the most effective recruitment tool possible, emanating from a well-designed program targeted to meet his and Freemasonry's wants and needs.

### What Men Want from Freemasonry

As surveys show, Masons want our fraternity to provide:

- Better **fellowship** and opportunities to make new friends.
- **Leadership opportunities**, improved **leadership training** and to be well led.
- Greater **civic involvement**, public charities, pride in the accomplishments of the Craft.
- Improved **Masonic education** and understanding by Masons.
- A **higher profile** for Freemasonry, more open to the public, greater visibility and more pride in the organization.
- Active commitment to the needs of **youth**.
- **Higher quality degrees** presented more dramatically and understandably.
- **Improved meetings** with entertaining and interesting programs.
- Opportunities for **family involvement** in Lodge.
- **Self-improvement**.

### **Who Wants to Join?**

Recent surveys show the following men are most likely to join Masonry:

- Between the ages of 35-55.
- College educated.
- Unmarried.
- Professionals.
- Live in rural communities.

Although our primary target age range is 35-55, don't ignore men of other ages. But, men in this age group are usually looking to be active, to get involved or to network with others. They are established and likely to maintain roots in your community, resulting in members who could be life-long, contributing members.

### Recruiting New Members

Your first step in recruiting is to set a goal. Looking at losses the past five years, estimate how many Masons you need to raise to make up for losses. Add to that a percentage of growth to your previous year's membership total, such as 5 or 10 percent. Don't make it too low or too high, but more than what you're comfortable achieving so your members need to work to reach your goal.

Inform members of the consequences of failing to increase membership. Review membership trends for the past 5, 10 and 20 years. Then, forecast your lodge's membership into the future. Show

the impact on lodge finances resulting from lost dues, which could affect your ability to maintain your building, participate in your community and hold activities.

Appoint a Membership Committee chairman who works hard and is committed to your lodge's success. Members should trust him as someone who will do what's needed to increase membership.

Ask the most successful recruiters in your lodge how they recruit new members. Also, ask your brothers why they became and remain Masons. Use this information to recruit others.

Consider establishing new member teams among active members by age groups to develop ways to appeal to other men their age. Empower them to pursue prospective members as they see fit.

After making a list of prospective members, ask the members who recommended the prospects to meet with them and discuss Masonry. Men respond best when Masonry is explained to them face-to-face by a friend. Set a time when the Worshipful Master can also attend, and any other brother who knows the prospect well, or a member of the Membership Committee.

Don't take too much of the prospect's time and don't try to "oversell" him on Masonry. Tell him why you are a Mason and what it means to you. Give him the basics, and then present him with a petition and invite him to join. If he won't make a decision at that time, change the subject or part ways for the evening. After a couple days, follow up with a call to ask if he has any questions and whether he's made a decision. Be positive and upbeat.

If you plan to hold a "Who are the Masons?" meeting, invite him and his wife to attend. These meetings have proven to be very effective in recruiting new members. Read how to plan a "Who Are the Masons?" Meeting in the enclosed information. A "Sample Letter to Prospective Members" is included to invite men and their wives to attend.

### **Forms/Information to Help You Recruit**

Your best prospects are men your members already know. Most Masons become perplexed when asked to provide the names of men who may want to join our fraternity. Getting your members to think about the areas of their lives where they interact with men may make them aware of men they hadn't previously considered.

At your next meeting, distribute the "Prospective Lodge Members" form. Read each category aloud and ask members to write the names of men they know. Give them time to fill out the sheet after reading each category.

Utilize several of the "Methods to Become an Effective Masonic Recruiter."

Once you have identified prospective members, recruiting is the next and most critical step. You must provide prospective members with accurate and meaningful information about your lodge and Freemasonry. In addition to making a famous Masons fact sheet, give them the most recent four-color membership brochure that answers many questions about Masonry. It is available from the Grand Lodge Office.

It's equally important to speak knowledgeably about Masonry. Give brothers a copy of the "Responses to Common Concerns," which provides answers to comments of prospective members.

### **Visitation (or Investigating) Committees**

Once a man signs a petition, the Master appoints a Visitation (or Investigating) Committee immediately after the petition is read in lodge. This applies not only to petitions for initiation, but also petitions for affiliation, advancement, dual or plural membership and all applications for reinstatement after suspension for more than three years for nonpayment of dues.

The Investigating Committee is the guardian of the portals. Its report at the next meeting of the lodge will determine the ballot. The future of your lodge rests squarely on the quality of the new members who are accepted.

The committee's duties are twofold. The first is to investigate the eligibility of the candidate, his character and his fitness for membership. The second duty is to give the candidate and his family a positive first impression of Freemasonry and answer questions.

The committee contacts the candidate to arrange a meeting with him (and his family, if desired). It may be best to arrange for the candidate to meet the committee at the lodge. Consider meeting him there prior to or after another scheduled event to make the most of active members' time and to preview Masonic activities for the prospect. Ensure the interview is friendly and promotes dialogue. Ask the following questions:

- **Belief in a Supreme Being.** A man must believe in a Supreme Being to become a Mason. This does not mean he must be Christian. No other religious test may be given.
- **Age.** A candidate must be at least 18 years old or not in dotage (feebleness of mind).
- **Jurisdiction.** He must have resided continuously with the jurisdiction of the state for six months immediately preceding and at the time his petition is received by the lodge.
- **Occupation.** The candidate's occupation may be indicative of his character. However, there are no legal occupations identified by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska that would render a candidate ineligible.
- **Prior petition.** Check if the candidate previously petitioned any lodge, and if so, check the outcome of the first petition and verify that the required six months have passed from the date of the ballot to the date the new petition was received. If the candidate did petition another lodge, that lodge has three years jurisdiction over the candidate.
- **Does the candidate know of any reason he cannot or should not become a Freemason?** The answer to this question could disclose mental reservations concerning Masonry or information about the candidate that may require further investigation.
- **His petition must be submitted of his own free will and accord.** Undue pressure shall not be applied to convince him to become a Mason.
- **Financial ability and special benefits.** He should have financial potential and authority to pay his dues and fees. He must understand that he will not receive personal advancement, - financial or otherwise - and that the lodge is not an insurance, burial or relief society. He should also understand that his acceptance relies entirely on a unanimous secret ballot and there is no obligation to accept him or offer any reason or justification for denial.
- When concluding the investigation, the committee should **contact the brethren who signed his petition.** Any rumor casting discredit on his integrity, morals or record should be thoroughly investigated.
- The report allows for a favorable or unfavorable response in the space provided on a candidate's petition. Don't hesitate to make an unfavorable report if you have reasonable doubt that the candidate is not qualified in every respect to be a just and upright Mason.

### **Recommendation of Degrees**

You can also petition a man without his knowledge, enabling his degree work to start as soon as he agrees to become a member. This method is outlined in the bylaws of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska in Chapter IX, Sec. 2-913). Attach a **Form for the Recommendation of a Candidate for the Degrees of Masonry** to a regular petition, which is in draft form and not signed by the proposed candidate. A candidate may be proposed for initiation by presenting the form with the signature of three brothers, who constitute the investigation committee. The form is read at a stated meeting of the lodge. Find the form at: <http://glne.org/pdf/RecPet.pdf> .

At the next stated meeting (after a 30-day layover) of the lodge, following the proposal of the candidate, the petition is put to a vote with a favorable ballot subject to the subsequent completion of the petition by the proposed candidate. Satisfactory answers must be completed to the questions posed on the petition but not limited to: a belief in a supreme being, and questions as to health,

financial responsibility, and not having been rejected by another lodge within the time period set out in the bylaws of Grand Lodge. The petition must be signed by the candidate and applicable fees paid prior to his presenting himself for initiation.

After election, the Master will select one of the three proposing brothers to inform the candidate he has been elected to join the fraternity upon completion of the petition. This petition must be returned to the lodge within 60 days of his election. If not, the Master declares the petition null and void. Then, it is duly recorded in the records of the lodge.

If a candidate is not found to be favorable by the lodge, it will be held only by the restriction that a new proposal cannot be made until six months have passed. The proposed candidate will not be informed of this rejection and would not be held responsible for Sections 2-906, 2-907 & 2-908.

### **Preparing for the EA Degree**

Once a man commits to become a Mason, immediately work to make him feel comfortable and assimilate him into lodge. Ensure his experience is positive by informing him of what to expect.

Of men who were suspended from their lodges for non-payment of dues, 66 percent said it was not what they expected. They said they were not prepared for the initiation. It surprised them and they felt uncomfortable and embarrassed. A good way to prepare a man for this experience is to send him a "Letter to the EA Candidate."

### **Appoint Lodge Members to Mentor Candidates**

Assign a mentor to each candidate to work with him while progressing through the degrees and beyond. The mentor's duties are:

- To attend each stated and special meeting for six months.
- To personally call and invite the new member to each meeting.
- To provide transportation, if required.
- To follow up after each degree to answer his questions.
- To personally introduce the new Mason to lodge brothers.
- To contact the family and answer any questions they may have, if necessary.
- Identify the new member's Masonic friends and invite them to his initiation.
- Provide names of committee chairs and urge him to call them to volunteer.

In addition, mentors must:

- Inform the brothers about the interests of new members.
- Encourage brothers to connect with new members by relating their names and what is unique about them.
- Invite the new member to a sporting event, and ask him to invite his friends.
- Take a photo of the new members and place it on the bulletin board.
- Ask for feedback from the new member about how he feels about his membership in your lodge. As he makes more friends in lodge, the mentor can begin withdrawing, if desired.
- Watch for any loss of enthusiasm. If discovered, ask for the cause of it.

For more information about how to conduct a mentoring program, read the mentoring manual at: <http://glne.org/pdf/Mentoring.pdf> .

Every brother must hold a diploma of proficiency as a Master Mason, or he is not allowed to hold office, demit from his lodge nor petition any other Masonic body for further degrees. He shall, however, be liable for payment of his lodge dues.

Each candidate must answer the questions in the proficiency manuals. He must also demonstrate the modes of recognition and prove his oral proficiency before he may advance to the next degree or be declared proficient when reaching the degree of a Master Mason. It is the Worshipful Maser's responsibility to ensure the Standard Proficiency manual has been satisfactorily completed before the candidate demonstrates his proficiency in the modes of recognition in open lodge.

Participate with new members in a review of their reasons for becoming a Mason and the types of personal enrichment they hope to receive through membership in your lodge. Use that information to adjust your lodge's plans. Follow-up later by asking how well your lodge is meeting their needs. Their satisfaction ensures they will remain a Mason and recommend lodge membership to others.

Communicate at least five times with new members within the first six months of membership. Make them comfortable when they come to lodge meetings and activities. And, call them if they miss a meeting. You may discover that your new members want benefits that differ from those of current members. You probably won't need to change your lodge, but you will need to accommodate these needs. Don't let old ways of doing business get in the way of future members.

### **One-Day Degrees**

The Grand Lodge created the One-Day Degree to accommodate the initiation of candidates whose schedules prohibit spending three separate evenings over several months to receive Masonic degrees. The One-Day Degree starts with the EA Degree early in the morning, continues with the FC Degree and concludes with the MM Degree by late afternoon.

Offering the One-Day Degree to new members helps to meet the needs of some men. It also eases the burden on your brothers who may tire of degree work because your lodge is fortunate to have very good recruiters. If your degree teams contain newer members, the One-Day Degree program not only accommodates a candidate's schedule, but that of the newer member as well. Do not allow a few brothers in your lodge to stifle this alternative approach to conferring degrees.

### **Delinquent Dues**

An important aspect of retaining members is preventing them from becoming delinquent with their dues. Suspensions for non-payment of dues occur at an alarming rate.

The Masonic Renewal Committee studied members suspended for non-payment of dues and found that 50 percent were not contacted prior to their suspension. Nearly 35 percent said they had no knowledge of being suspended, and another 35 percent could not be reached because their contact information was incorrect.

It is the responsibility of the chairman of Membership Retention to obtain from the Secretary a list of all members who are in arrears with dues before they are suspended the first day of April each year. Send a letter from the Secretary of the lodge to those on the list advising them their dues are in arrears and encourage them to become current.

Follow-up letters from the Secretary may be sent to those who do not respond after a specified period of time. See the sample "Dues Notice Letters."

For members who do not respond, the most successful method is personal contact, either in person or by phone. It is probably best for those who signed his petition to contact him. A brother who is acquainted with him or a member of the Membership Committee is the next best choice.

In some cases, a brother is unable to pay his dues because of financial reasons. Perhaps he is in a care facility, has health problems, is financially distressed, or simply that he has not been brought into the fellowship of the fraternity. In these situations, the lodge can remit his dues.

Remember, the Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth should not allow a member to be dropped from the rolls for non-payment of dues. Consider creating a fund to pay for the annual Grand Lodge per capita for members who, for whatever reason, have not paid their annual dues. Solicit donations from your members to help these brothers.

To drop a member would mean the loss of several important benefits: his and his female relatives' right to apply for admission to the Nebraska Masonic Home, membership in other Masonic organizations, availability of Masonic Funeral Services, eligibility to receive membership awards, and other rights and privileges afforded a Master Mason in good standing. Maintain the names of those in need of assistance in the strictest of confidence.

## Methods to Become an Effective Masonic Recruiter

Any Mason can be a top-notch recruiter. The hardest obstacle to overcome for success in recruiting is deciding you want to do it. There are many incentives to do so. A more active and meaningful Lodge, shared workload, increased fundraising, annual dues waivers for recruiters, the Grand Master's Recruiting Award and the continued existence of your lodge are just a few. It takes just a little preparation that can be a very interesting and fun process for you.

**Become familiar with famous Masons.** Learn who in world history was well known by the general public who also happened to be a Mason. Know everyone from local celebrities and officials to foreign dignitaries throughout time so you can bring them up in any conversation that may arise. Armed with good background information, you are ready to start identifying and getting prospects. This will aid you in the next step.

**Get the word out.** One of Freemasonry's greatest challenges is the fact that few people know about our beloved fraternity. Some people have heard of the institution, others have seen the Square and Compass symbol from time to time and still others know that their grandfather was a Mason. What can the individual Mason do to recruit quality men into the organization? Find any one of many creative ways to cause people to ask you about Freemasonry. The following steps are some innovative ways to advertise the fraternity. Masonic recruiters are limited only by their imagination and good common sense, of course:

- 1. Wear a Masonic ring.** Are you proud to be a Mason? Do you want people to know it? The easiest way to let your friends, co-workers and the general public know you belong to the oldest and largest fraternity in the world is to wear a Masonic ring that displays the Square and Compass clearly. Successful Masonic recruiters report this method as the single most effective way to get curious people to ask about Freemasonry. They also say rings that prominently display the Square and Compass are the most effective as opposed to highly ornate ringers that are difficult to identify at a glance. A prospective recruit's question opens the door for you to apply the other recruiting techniques discussed in this section. It also gives the impression that you are answering the person's question because they brought it up, not pressuring them to join Freemasonry on your own initiative. Do not continue to pressure them if you feel they want to change the subject. It is necessary to be patient. You will quickly develop a feeling of whether or not the prospect is favorably impressed and may consider becoming a Mason. There may be many opportunities to "work on" the prospect in the future. Don't overdo it at first. If they seem the least bit interested, you can mention the fact that you feel they would fit quite nicely into an organization such as Freemasonry and ask them to consider becoming a Mason. At any time during step one, you may implement all or part of step two below.
- 2. Discuss famous Masons with friends and prospects.** It doesn't take an inquiry about your ring to mention famous Masons while talking among friends or potential prospects. If a television show involves or mentions any person you know to be a famous Mason, you can be ready to say, "...and John Wayne was also a fraternity brother of mine." That will no doubt beg many questions from your non-Masonic friends. If there is any doubt about the integrity of Freemasonry, it will be hard for them to continue to believe it if they know such men of historical integrity were also Masons. Ensure they know you feel they are the type of man who should be included with the likes of George Washington, Winston Churchill, etc. Create and give a list of famous Masons (with a blurb on Masonic history) to your prospect for reading. Include your name and contact information at the bottom. Keep a stack of petitions, dual member forms and lists of famous Masons readily available wherever you are

(your vehicle, office and briefcase. You never know where you'll be when the opportunity to recruit a good Mason will arise.

- 3. Place the Square and Compass symbol on your vehicle.** The people who ride with you or who notice your vehicle in a parking lot will ask what it means and provide a recruitment opportunity. Implement steps 1 and 2 as needed.
- 4. Bring up Freemasonry in any way you can without directly asking them to join.** If you constantly mention something in passing about the fraternity, people will decide it has great meaning to you and will ask more about it. Invite them to your house to watch a movie like "National Treasure," "The Man Who Would be King" or "The DaVinci Code." (For more movies with Masonic references, go to the Web site of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon which is full of positive Masonic history. Don't sell the event as a Masonic recruitment effort, just a good movie. Invite them to a classical music performance of Mozart and casually mention that he was a Mason.
- 5. Point out Masonic influence on history.** When a prospect says, "Is it on the level?" or any of the other commonly-used Masonic phrases or terms, take the opportunity to explain its Masonic meaning.
- 6. Invite prospects to non-Masonic social gatherings with a group of Masons.** Invite prospects to your house for a cookout, to a restaurant or bar, a movie, or any other social gathering where they are the only non-Mason present. Implement steps 1 through 5 as appropriate.

## Prospective Lodge Members

**Relatives (sons, grandsons, nephews, etc.)**

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**Church, synagogue, worship associates**

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**Professionals you do business with (doctor, dentist, attorney, vet, insurance agent, accountant/tax preparer, banker, pharmacist, mail carrier, barber, police, appliance repairman, who sold you your home, car, tires, gas, furniture, etc.)**

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**Schools (teachers, principals, adult students, volunteers, etc.)**

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**Community leaders (councilmen, board members, volunteers, etc.)**

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**Civic and other organizations (Elks, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.)**

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**Friends, neighbors (current and former), holiday card list, classmates**

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**Work associates (current and former coworkers, consultants, vendors, etc.)**

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**Sports (coaches, teammates, other parents/grandparents, etc.)**

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**Business owners/managers (grocery, automotive, hardware, jewelers, printers, etc.)**

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**Service providers (travel agent, barber, plumbers, landscapers, repairmen, broker, etc.)**

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**Activity associates (Booster club, hobby groups)**

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## Responses to Common Concerns

### ***What is Freemasonry?***

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world with more than 1.5 million members in North America. Masons can be found on every continent and in every ethnic group on earth. North American Masons donate more than \$2 million a day to help others, and conduct many activities for the betterment of their communities, nation and the world. Masons focus on self-improvement through education and development, charity for others, family, community, friendship, and camaraderie. Many famous men of great integrity and genius were active Freemasons such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Winston Churchill and many other important men who impacted our world. (For additional definitions, see Section 8 – Communication, page 2.)

### ***I don't have time to be involved in anything else.***

We all find time to do the things we really want to do. What concerns you about committing your time? (Is he most concerned about the time it takes to become a Mason or is he worried about attending meetings? Answer his main concern. Mention One-Day Classes. Tell him he doesn't absolutely need to attend meetings every month. Masonry is designed to permit members to put in as much time as they want.)

### ***My religion won't allow me to join.***

(If the concern is that Masonry is a religion...) Masonry is not a religion. In fact, Freemasonry advocates that members should participate in their own denominations and never place Masonry ahead of their religious involvement. No Masonic beliefs conflict with religions.

(If the concern is secrecy...) Masons meet in buildings that are clearly marked and publish schedules of activities and meetings. The only things we don't share are the signs and words that we give other Masons to identify ourselves as members of the fraternity. That is part of being a member of a fraternity. Many other groups also have signs and words they don't share with the public.

(If Masonic penalties are mentioned . . .) They are symbolic and not intended to be taken literally.

### ***I don't think I can memorize.***

This is not much of an issue in Nebraska with the changes in required proficiency and use of manuals. In addition, One-Day Classes further reduce memorization.

### ***My family might object.***

Our Lodge is family friendly. We hold activities that involve all members of the family. In addition, wives can become involved in Eastern Star, daughters in Job's Daughters or Rainbow for Girls, and sons can join DeMolay. There are other organizations that you and your family can join once you are a Mason. All these organizations believe in the same principles and encourage the involvement of families.

### ***How much does it cost to join?***

There is a \$ \_\_\_\_ initiation fee to join, and \$ \_\_\_\_ is due when you submit your petition for membership. The remainder can be paid at that time or you will be notified when to pay it. Our annual dues are only \$ \_\_\_\_.

### ***What do Masons do?***

Your involvement will give you a chance to share camaraderie with other men of like interests, serve our community and learn more about what qualities make a better man. In our Lodge we...(describe your Lodge's activities and service work).

## **Planning A “Who are the Masons?” Meeting**

A formal presentation of information can be provided to prospective members at a “Who are the Masons?” meeting, which is a proven recruiting tool. This involves the preparation of a meal, presentations about Masonry and a tour of your lodge. And, most importantly, it brings the prospect face-to-face with other brothers in your lodge.

Included in this section are step-by-step directions for laying the groundwork and implementing this event, as well as suggestions for the procedures, program, materials, and recommendations for follow-up leading to new petitions and degree work. This will result in renewed enthusiasm and growth for your lodge.

From your targeting exercise, you have developed a list of prospective new members. Send a letter from the Master of the lodge inviting them to learn more about Freemasonry at the “Who are the Masons?” meeting.

### **Plan, Plan, Plan and Be Organized**

A Friends of Masons Night can be very rewarding for your lodge if planned and carried out properly. To ensure it’s success, it must be planned months in advance and include a letter of invitation, a dinner with a program about Masonry, and a follow-up visit, if necessary, with the prospect. The following step-by-step approach has worked successfully and will work equally well for your lodge. Laying solid groundwork is an important key to holding a successful “Who are the Masons?” meeting.

First, appoint a committee to organize the meeting. Name a chairman who is a detail person and who has good follow-up skills. The first task of the committee is to schedule the “Who are the Masons?” meeting on a date that the most people can attend. Check the school, community, sports and especially other Masonic organizations’ calendars. Many lodges have success with a Sunday or Wednesday evening event. Determine where it will be held. If your lodge isn’t clean, presentable and handicapped accessible, find another location. Don’t assume the event will just happen. A poorly planned and implemented “Who are the Masons?” meeting gives a bad impression of your lodge and Masonry. Pay attention to detail and ensure all plans are completed correctly. Remember, it only costs a little more to go first class and is well worth the effort to make a good first impression.

The committee should study materials about Masonry so they may answer questions a prospective member may have about our Craft and your lodge. Ensure brothers who are good communicators are selected to present information.

Using the list of targeted prospects, the committee develops and sends invitations to prospective members. A sample letter of invitation, inviting them to a “Who are the Masons?” meeting, is included on page 20. Also invite all lodge members to attend.

Mail the letter to each prospect three weeks before the “Who are the Masons?” meeting. The letter should give prospects all the essential information about the event including the day, date, time, place and the name of the lodge member who will contact them. Don’t expect them to attend with no contact from a member. Personal contact is a necessity if prospects are going to attend your program. Know the prospect’s profession and background and assign him a Masonic “sponsor” with similar characteristics to make him feel more comfortable.

The appointed lodge member should contact his prospect three to four days after the letters of invitation are mailed and simply inquire if he received and read the invitation, telling him he will be back in contact in approximately one week before the meeting. At that time, your member tells his prospect about the nice evening the lodge has planned and about the child care service that will be available. Identify suitable attire for both he and his wife, and ask if you can pick them up or if they prefer to meet him at the lodge. The committee and members who contacted prospects need to arrive

early the night of the meeting so that when their guest arrives, they will be present to greet and introduce him to others.

Plan a dinner meeting (covered dish, steak fry, etc.) for the evening. Remember, if a dinner is planned and guests are expected, it is important that quality food be provided in the proper quantities. Offer child care services, if needed.

Have a program planned for the meeting. A welcome and an invocation are needed before the meal. It may be necessary to delay introductions until you move from the dining area to the lodge room. Make sure name tags are prepared ahead of time for everyone (use different colors for the Masons and the prospects to help identify each group). Make special effort to encourage your lodge members to the "Who are the Masons?" meeting so they can show support for the lodge.

Once convened in the lodge room, the Master gives a short welcome. First, introduce any distinguished guests followed by any other introductions of other lodge officers, prospective Masons, etc. But, don't introduce everyone.

After an invocation and dinner, present the program the committee has prepared regarding Freemasonry. If you sponsor a student to band camp or have a local essay contest winner, invite them for dinner and ask them to give a short talk. It is a nice way to start the program. Tell them about Masonry, what your lodge does on the local level, the good programs the Grand Lodge sponsors, and about Masonry on a national level. Tell them you would like to become members of your lodge. Visual aids, such as posters, videotapes and flip charts are helpful.

Impress on prospective members the benefits of meeting new friends, enjoying the company of other men and making new connections with like-minded people. Mention the opportunities your lodge offers for the involvement of his wife and the importance of the family to the fraternity. Show the things your lodge does for the community, and how he can participate. Mention how the Craft develops leadership. Make men aware that the time required during initiation is longer than the time for meetings.

It is best to confine the program to blue lodge Masonry. Presentations from other appendant bodies (Scottish Rite, York Rite, Shrine, etc.) only confuse prospective members about Masonry and add to the length of the program. The other appendant bodies depend on the blue lodges for new members and will benefit from your work at a later point in time.

A few remarks by the Master thanking everyone for attending, as well as a benediction, close the meeting. Present each prospect with the "Who Are The Masons?" brochure or other literature about Freemasonry to take home and read. Offer them a petition and encourage them to complete it before leaving. (See the list of membership publications on page 27 in this section.) The entire program should never take last longer than one hour. Follow with refreshments to provide an opportunity for fellowship and to answer questions on a one-to-one basis.

The most important part of making your "Who are the Masons?" meeting successful occurs after it ends. In the week following the event, personal contact with each prospect is essential. Preferably, the sponsoring Mason who invited him to the "Who are the Masons?" meeting should get in touch with the prospect and ask if he has any questions. If the prospect's questions cannot be answered fully and properly, the sponsor should ensure the prospect they will discover the answers. Then, the sponsor should ask him to submit a petition. Finally, sponsors should impress on the prospect the honor and privilege it would be to recommend his initiation into Freemasonry.

If the prospect declines to immediately submit a petition at that time, but indicates it is forthcoming, the sponsor should inform him of the date it needs to be completed so it may be forwarded to the lodge secretary and read at the next meeting. Remind the prospect of the 30-day holdover period so he may plan ahead for the ensuing degrees.

If the prospect completes the petition during the "Who are the Masons?" meeting, he should be informed that a visitation committee will make an appointment to visit with him to discuss his

qualifications and answer any further questions. Ensure he understands this is the standard procedure for all candidates for the degrees of Freemasonry.

A successful “Who are the Masons?” meeting, followed by new petitions and degree work can be an exciting time in any lodge. Make your plan and carry it out well and you will ensure success.

Incentives for members who bring new members into your lodge can play a significant role in your membership efforts. Incentives, such as the lodge paying one year’s dues, can encourage a member to talk to a friend or relative about Freemasonry and about joining. Also, recognize brothers in lodge meetings who bring in new members.

### **“Who are the Masons?” Meeting Planning Calendar**

The following is a suggested planning calendar to use for your “Who are the Masons?” meeting. Use this calendar in conjunction with the Lodge Planning Calendar in Section 12.

#### ***9 Weeks Before***

- Appoint the “Who are the Masons?” meeting committee.
- Establish the event location and date and identify any conflicts.
- Arrange supervision and entertainment for the children of guests, if necessary.
- Plan table and room decorations.
- Assign follow up calling to the guests’ Masonic sponsor.
- Begin planning the meal.
- Designate a greeting committee.

#### ***8 Weeks Before***

- Select a theme for the "Who are the Masons?" meeting.
- Compile prospect names as well as those of their spouse and children.

#### ***7 Weeks Before***

- Check prospect list for duplication of names.
- Design the letter and/or invitation.
- Finalize plans for food, decorations, favors, prizes, etc.

#### ***6 Weeks Before***

- Finalize plans for the program and the content of the informational packet.
- Order any special printing and begin gathering materials for the information packet.
- Arrange for staffing of child care and order the necessary supplies.

#### ***5 Weeks Before***

- Meet with committees to check their progress. Discuss any problems.

#### ***4 Weeks Before***

- Remind lodge members of the "Who are the Masons?" meeting and invite their wives. If attendance is usually small, write to local brethren and encourage them to attend.
- Address invitations.

#### ***3 Weeks Before***

- Mail invitations so all prospects have at least 3 full weeks before the event.
- Follow up with phone calls 3-4 days after mailing the invitation. Encourage them to mark the date on their calendar.

#### ***2 Weeks Before***

- Sponsors of the guests should contact prospects to verify they will be attending, and ask if their spouse or significant other will accompany them. Also inquire if child care is needed and the number and ages of the children. Offer to drive them to the event.

### ***1 Week Before***

- Make sure all supplies arrive.
- Clean the lodge and decorate the dinning room.
- Confirm the program and make any notes needed to introduce speakers and other important people.
- Determine the number of prospects, wives, and children who will be attending.
- Meet with committee to make sure everything is covered and nothing has been forgotten.
- Prepare name tags for members and guests.

### ***The Day of the Who are the Masons? meeting***

- Complete the final touches on decorations.
- Make sure supplies for name badges are in place. Preprinted nametags look more professional and are highly encouraged. Verify the spelling of names.
- Be certain that food preparation begins on time, or confirm with the caterer.
- Make sure the building is unlocked and the lights are on and appropriate room temperature is established at least one hour before starting time.
- Ensure your greeters arrive before the guests.
- Remind brethren that the focus is on the prospects. If you see brethren standing around, ignoring the guests, quietly encourage them to mingle.
- At the conclusion of the program, make petitions available and invite the prospects to become Masons.

### ***Two Days After***

- Send thank you notes to those who attended.
- Send a letter to those who did not attend and enclose the informational packet presented at the event. Offer to provide any additional information they want to know about Masonry.

### ***One Week After***

- Personal contact by the sponsoring member of the lodge.
- Determine if the prospect has any additional questions about Freemasonry.
- Invite him to sign a petition to become a Mason.
- Impress upon him what an honor and privilege it would be for you to recommend him to your lodge for membership.
- If they are not currently interested, be friendly.
- Invite them to future activities and stay in touch unless they request to be taken off your prospect list.

## Sample Letter Inviting Prospects to a“Who Are the Masons?” Meeting

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

*(Name of recommending Mason)*, a member of *(Name of lodge)* Masonic Lodge No. *(Number)*, holds great respect for you and he believes you may be interested in learning more about Freemasonry. Have you wondered if Freemasonry has something to offer you? Would you like to learn more about this centuries-old fraternity, its many charities and what Freemasonry accomplishes in our community, the state of Nebraska and the world? You will discover the answers to these questions and more if you accept this invitation to learn more about our fraternity by being the guest of *(Name of your Lodge)* Masonic Lodge on *(day of the week)* evening, *(Month/day)*, 20\_\_.

The evening will begin at *(Time)* p.m. with a *(your choice of meal)* dinner at *(Lodge's Name)* Masonic Lodge located at *(Address)*. A short, yet informative and insightful program concerning the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska will be presented by *(Name and Title)* at *(Time)* p.m. Any questions you have regarding Freemasonry will be answered during this event or prior to it by Brother *(Recommending Mason)*.

Please mark your calendar now and plan to enjoy the evening with us. We extend this invitation to your wife or significant other as well. Brother *(Recommending Mason)* will contact you concerning the evening. Child care, if needed, will be available to you at no cost.

We have planned a very special evening for you and would be delighted to enjoy your company.

Sincerely,

*(Name)*

Master, *(Lodge Name)* Lodge No. *(Lodge Number)*

## Letter to EA Candidate

Dear

Congratulations on making the decision to become a Freemason by joining \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_. Your initiation will be \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge is located at \_\_\_\_\_ Street. You may park \_\_\_\_\_. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the ceremony starts.

This letter provides information about what occurs during your Entered Apprentice Mason (EA) initiation. First and foremost, nothing will occur to embarrass you. Initiation is a serious ceremony explaining the principles of Freemasonry. For part of the ceremony, you will wear clothing representative of the teachings of Freemasonry. Enclosed is a booklet entitled, *A Word to the Candidate about Freemasonry*, which explains more about our origins, the Entered Apprentice ceremony and answers to frequently-asked questions. Please read it before your initiation.

Any Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft or Master Mason can attend your initiation. If they are not members of our Lodge, they must show a current dues card and prove they are a Mason. I encourage you to invite any of your friends who are Freemasons to attend.

In keeping with the dignified meaning of the ceremony, the officers and members will wear business attire such as a suit/sport coat with tie, slacks and dress shoes. You may feel most comfortable in such attire as well.

Your initiation should take about one hour and 45 minutes. The members of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge enjoy camaraderie in the dining room following the ceremony where they will greet you.

When your initiation is completed, you can attend the initiations of others who are becoming Entered Apprentice Masons. You can attend the Fellow Craft and Master Mason ceremonies of others after you're initiated in those degrees. On becoming a Master Mason, you may attend any Lodge degree. You are encouraged to attend any other non-degree Lodge activities prior to your initiation into any of the three degrees of Freemasonry.

You paid the initiation fee for the first of three steps to become a Master Mason. Before the two ceremonies that follow, it is necessary for you to pay a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Or, you may have already paid the entire \$\_\_\_\_\_ fee. Once you become a Master Mason, annual dues are \$\_\_\_\_\_. This year, your dues will be prorated at \$\_\_\_\_\_ for each month after you become a Master Mason.

Following the EA ceremony, you will receive a booklet providing additional insight to the EA degree. You should read the booklet and answer the questions in the back as soon as possible. Some answers will also be found in *A Word to the Candidate about Freemasonry*, included here. There is a short speaking part to memorize. A member of our Lodge will review your answers to the questions and to help you memorize the part. It is not difficult and must be verbally presented to Lodge members before your next step in becoming a Master Mason. When you have learned it, your passing to the degree of a Fellow Craft Mason will be set.

If you need to contact us on the evening of your initiation, the Lodge phone number is \_\_\_\_\_. If you have questions before the ceremony, you may contact the member who signed your petition, or me, the (*Title*) of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_.

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world with more than 1.5 million members in North America. Masons can be found on every continent and in every ethnic group on earth. North American Masons donate about \$3 million a day to help others, and conduct many activities for their communities, nation and the world. Masons focus on self-improvement through education and development, charity for others, family, community, and friendship.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lodge was chartered in \_\_\_\_\_. About \_\_\_\_\_ men are members. You will find our members friendly and willing to quickly include you. If you would like more information about \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge, visit our Web site at:

Again, congratulations on joining our fraternity. We look forward to your initiation.

## **Rusty Nail Degree**

*The Rusty Nail Degree requires the participation of several members, and the decision to put on the degree should be made by the entire Lodge. It may be a good idea for several Lodges to go together and perform the degree. The Worshipful Master should appoint a Committee to be in charge of preparing the event.*

*The Rusty Nail Degree is a great time to invite sojourning brethren into your lodge as well as those members of your lodge who have not attended in quite some time.*

*Each member should make a conscious effort to contact someone who has not been in Lodge for some time and offer to bring them to the event. You could also advertise in your local paper to reach the sojourning brethren.*

*To assure that the brother does not get cold feet at the last minute, he should be called two days before the meeting by another brother, who should inform him that he will be picked up and brought to the Masonic temple for the degree. One brother could bring three other Masons with him to the Lodge.*

### **OBJECTIVE:**

- 1. To instruct the brethren present in the proper manner of giving the steps, due guards, signs, grips and words of all three degrees, and the personal conduct required of them when visiting a lodge, and in the opening and closing of a Master Mason's Lodge.*
- 2. To promote Masonic fellowship, and to increase the bond of brotherly love and affection between the brethren present by affording them the opportunity to sit together in closed, tyled session.*

### **TIME:**

*Delivery time is approximately 35 minutes*

### **TEACHING PROCEDURE:**

#### ***Introduction:***

1. Introduce self, and all lodge officers present (Put names and titles on the chalk board)
2. Bring out any interesting information about the sojourning members present (e.g. total number of years in Masonry represented, how many different states represented)
3. Announce the Title of the Lecture
4. Announce the Objectives
5. Present Charter and show its important characteristics
6. Proceed with presentation

**PRESENTATION:** *(most easily done with four assistants)*

**Entered Apprentice:**

1. "My brothers, what we are going to do tonight is demonstrate and explain, in examination form, all of the important points of the first three degrees of Freemasonry, which were taught to you in the lessons of the degrees. At the conclusion of tonight's work, you should have no difficulty in gaining admission to any Masonic lodge, anywhere in the United States or abroad."
2. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please assume the step of an Entered Apprentice and explain the step."
3. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please go to the altar and kneel as you did for your Entered Apprentice Obligation and explain the due form."
4. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please give me the due guard of an Entered Apprentice and explain."
5. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please give me the sign of an Entered Apprentice and explain."

**Fellow Craft:**

6. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please assume the step of a Fellow Craft and explain the step."
7. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please kneel at the altar as you did for your Fellow Craft Obligation and explain the due form."
8. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please give me the due guard of a Fellow Craft and explain."
9. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please give me the sign of a Fellow Craft and explain."

**Master Mason:**

10. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please assume the step of a Master Mason and explain the step."
11. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please kneel at the altar as you did for your Master Mason Obligation and explain the due form."
12. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please give me the due guard of a Master Mason and explain."
13. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please give me the sign of a Master Mason and explain."
14. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, you may rise from the altar now, and thank you for your assistance. Please pair off now, for the next phase of instruction."

*(In preparation for the next events, the instructor should draw a fist diagram on the chalk board, and label with arrows, those knuckles used in the grips).*

15. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please assist me in demonstrating the grips, and the manner of arriving at them. Brothers, take each other with the grip of an Entered Apprentice."
16. "Brother \_\_\_\_\_, please reply for all. What is that?" *(etc., going through all the grips up through the Master Mason pass.)*

17. "My brothers, we have now reviewed the pertinent parts of the 1st and 2nd degrees, and the first half of the 3rd degree. Before proceeding with a review of the second section of the 3rd degree, let's have a quick recap."
- a. *Have everyone demonstrate the steps as a group.*
  - b. *Have everyone demonstrate the due guards and signs.*
  - c. *Have everyone demonstrate the grips and words.*
18. "Great! Now, if you will all have a seat again, we will proceed with the second section of the 3rd degree."

"During this part of the degree, you represented our ancient G.M.H.A. during the building of King Solomon's temple."

19. Tell the story - -
- a. South gate
  - b. West gate
  - c. East gate
  - d. Temple rubble
  - e. Burial and acacia placement
  - f. The seafaring man
  - g. The 12 Fellow Crafts
  - h. The search by the 12
  - i. The wayfaring man
  - j. Solomon's charge
  - k. Acacia
  - l. The capture
  - m. The punishment
  - n. Again the search
  - o. Again the acacia
  - p. The grave
  - q. The jewel
  - r. The report to Solomon
  - s. The procession
  - t. The raising (demonstrate)
  - u. Stress the five points of fellowship, then convey the substitute word to each brother present, in the proper manner.
  - v. Demonstrate the Grand Hailing Sign and words.

20. "And that, brothers, concludes the first part of our instruction. The second part is simple. It's a quick review of the opening and closing of a lodge."
21. Review and demonstrate:
  - a. Gavel raps
  - b. Attending the East, with signs (Mention that the signs are used as private grand honors)
  - c. Attitude of prayer
  - d. Entering and leaving a lodge at labor (Check the bible)
  - e. First time visitor procedure
22. "That's it! We will now take a five minute break. Then we will assemble back here, open lodge, take a refreshment break, then return and close lodge and be finished for the evening."



*You may want to advertise during the month prior to the Rusty Nail Degree to let the Sojourning Masons in your area know what you are doing. It is best not to put all of the information in the ad so that they must call someone in the lodge and you can talk to them and encourage their attendance.*

*A sample ad is shown below.*

*This will possibly bring in some sojourners, but you need to personally contact those members of your lodge who have not attended recently.*

**SOJOURNING MASONS**

Have you not attended your Blue Lodge in years?  
Have you felt unable to attend another Blue Lodge, but would like to?  
Are you afraid you can't gain admittance because your work is too rusty?

Then **Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>** is your night!

Lincoln City Lodge No. 526 will put on a special "Rusty Nail Degree" that evening. Call the Junior Warden Mike Anderson, at 402-777-3000 for details.

## Dues Notice Letters

*(First Dues Notice)*

Dear Brother \_\_\_\_\_,

*(Body of letter.)*

*(Last paragraphs...)* \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge has established a fund which is used for assisting in the payment of dues for brethren of the Lodge who are unable to meet their dues obligation. The Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth should not allow a member to be dropped from the rolls for non-payment of dues. Should funds be remaining at the end of the year, they may be used to augment charitable giving or fundraising by the Lodge.

If you desire to contribute to the fund, simply include an additional amount on your dues check. Your contribution and the names of those who are in need of assistance will be maintained in the strictest of confidence if you so desire.

Fraternally,

Secretary

Your 20\_\_ Lodge Dues are: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Our records show arrears dues of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total outstanding: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact the Secretary if your records do not agree.

*(Second Dues Notice)*

Dear Brother \_\_\_\_\_,

In reviewing our Lodge records, I notice we have not received your 20\_\_ dues payment.

\_\_\_\_\_ Lodge is required to send the per capita payment to the Grand Lodge prior to the tenth of April of each year, so your cooperation in remitting payment at this time would be greatly appreciated.

If you find that you are unable to comply with your dues obligation at this time, please let me know. \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge has established a fund to assist those brothers in such a situation. It's part of our obligation as Masons to do so and will be done in strict confidence.

Thank you for your support of \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge and Nebraska Masonry.

Fraternally,

Secretary

Your 20\_\_ Lodge Dues are: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Our records show arrears dues of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total outstanding: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact the Secretary if your records do not agree.

*(Third Dues Notice)*

Dear Brother \_\_\_\_\_,

I have been advised by the Lodge Secretary that you have not responded to his notices regarding your \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge dues.

We have determined that, if we truly live by those great Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth, no member should ever be dropped from the rolls for nonpayment of dues. To do so would harm the brother by losing his and his female relatives' the right to apply for admission to The Nebraska Masonic Home, his ability to visit other Lodges, membership in appendant bodies such as the Shrine, the honor of a Masonic Funeral Service, eligibility to receive membership awards, and other rights and privileges afforded a Master Mason in good standing.

Because of this, and the generosity of your brothers at \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge through a fund to assist in the payment of dues, I am please to enclose your 20\_\_ dues card. Be assured this is done in the strictest of confidence.

If we can be of further assistance to you, or should circumstances change that would enable you to pay your dues, please contact me.

Fraternally Yours,

Master

*(Letter to Brothers Who Pay Their Dues)*

**Enclosed is your 20\_\_ Masonic Dues Card!**

We thank you . . .

Your remittance has been received and it is a pleasure to enclose your 20\_\_ dues card. Sign the card and always carry it with you. It is your record of good standing in this Lodge and on proper examination entitles you admission to Lodges around the world.

Your support of Freemasonry, and \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge No. \_\_\_\_\_ in particular, is appreciated and we offer the best wishes and kindest regards from the officers and your fellow brethren.

If you know of a prospective member for our beloved fraternity and don't have a petition or are uneasy about contacting him, please contact the Secretary!

Lodge meets the \_\_\_\_\_ of each month at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. Please join us for fellowship.