



Ideas That Work



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Ideas That Will Work in Your Lodge

What is this? Several wardens have asked the Grand Lodge to distribute successful ideas and activities used by lodges for possible use in their lodge. That's what we hope to accomplish with this e-mail publication.

That's why lodge Masters and Wardens are receiving *Ideas That Work*, which contains successful ideas the Grand Lodge officers see occurring within our state, hear about from other Grand Lodges as well as your ideas that have worked in your lodge. At least one idea will be presented in each edition of this publication for your consideration to include on your calendar of activities when you are Master.

The wardens requesting more ideas recognize the need for their lodge to hold activities that will entice members back to their lodge and encourage the increased involvement of active brothers. The activities here will be aimed at accomplishing just that.

This first issue is lengthy and provides Worshipful Masters-elect many ideas to start 2008 off on a good course.

Each idea in this newsletter will be retained for future reference on the Grand Lodge Web site at:

<http://www.gln.org/Ideas.aspx>.

Besides offering activities, *Ideas That Work* will also provide information about available Web sites and Grand Lodge programs to assist you in planning a program for your term.

In addition, **the success of *Ideas That Work* hinges on your input.** If your lodge has held an activity that resulted in a positive response from your members, or had a positive long-term impact on your lodge, please write a short summary and send it to: michelle@gln.org.

While this issue is lengthy, future editions will include just a few ideas. But, it all depends on you.

We hope the information included in *Ideas That Work* will help you develop year-round programs that make a difference for your lodge and give you a more successful term as Master.

More Activity Ideas Will Soon Be on Their Way

Monthly Program, a brochure to be sent each month to Nebraska lodges, will provide in-depth information about lodge activity ideas.

The brochures are a product of the Grand Lodge of Michigan Renewal Programs. The Grand Lodge of Nebraska is

paying for the brochures to be sent to every lodge in the state.

Lodges are urged to secure the brochures for the use of future officers after the current officers have read them. The activities are designed to help your lodge retain members

by providing interesting and entertaining programs.

- Cigar Night Program
- Festive Boards
- Progressive Lodge Meetings
- Community Group Thank You
- Masonic Hobby Night

Ideas included in the mailings are:

- Lodge Greeters Program
- Who I Am Program
- Bring a Brother to Lodge
- Poster Perfect Project

Enrollment Program Training Is AC Workshop

Keeping members interested and involved in your lodge can be achieved by mentoring them when they join so they feel comfortable attending lodge, understand what's expected of them and are encouraged to participate. You can learn how to mentor members at the Friday afternoon workshop at Annual Communication when the Enrollment Program will be presented.

Each lodge will be given a CD to take with them that includes the Enrollment Program manual and details about how to work with new members as well as specific points to discuss when mentoring them.

In addition, the Enrollment Program manual is online at:
<http://www.gln.org/pdf/MentoringMan-nocode.pdf>.

Resources for You at the Nebraska Grand Lodge

Looking for a variety of ideas for the year you'll serve as Master of your lodge? Masters-elect and advancing line officers can find more than 400 activity ideas in the Grand Lodge of Nebraska's Lodge Leadership Program manual. The manual is part of a training program to help you plan an active year for your lodge.

The following are the topics included in the Lodge Leadership Program manual. Most sections include a list of suggested activities as well.

- Planning for Your Year as Master
- Lodge Meetings & Regular Events
- Ritual Work
- Grand Lodge Activities
- Fellowship
- Service to Community & Fraternity
- Membership
- Communication
- Finances
- The Master & His Lodge
- Lodge Officer's Manual
- Resources

In addition, the manual includes a Lodge Planning Calendar and forms to assist you in planning and scheduling activities.

The manual was written by Nebraska Past Masters who planned effective activities and terms when they served their lodge. To review the manual and suggested activities, click on this link:
<http://www.gln.org/pdf/lodgeleadership.pdf>.

Awards Offer Activity Ideas and a Plan for Your Lodge

If you're looking for ideas to plan a good year for your term as Master, you can find answers in the Grand Lodge awards program. While the awards offer you and your lodge opportunities

for recognition, they can more importantly serve as a planning guide to provide ideas to ensure your time as Master is filled with activities that will move your lodge forward.

The programs are designed with the intent to provide you a plan, as Master, for a successful year for your lodge. Throughout the forms for each award are ideas and requirements to include when planning your lodge's activities, which can serve as great idea-starters.

Grand Master's Leadership Award

The Grand Master's Leadership Award is an incentive to Worshipful Masters to gain recognition for their efforts to lead their lodge to greater growth and development. It includes three facets: the Grand Master's Leadership Award, the Grand Master's Leadership Award with Distinction and Master of the Year. Any Master can earn the Grand Master's Leadership Award by completing the required activities. This award aims to encourage Masters to plan and implement activities that will result in a successful year for their lodges and members. After all the entry forms are received, one among that group will be selected the Master of the Year. In addition, the Grand Master's Leadership Award can be earned with distinction by achieving the Grand Master's membership goal for your lodge. You can find the 2008 information on this award in the near future at the following location: <http://www.glne.org/pdf/GMLead.pdf>.

Nebraska Pillar Award

The Nebraska Pillar Award recognizes lodges that perform a minimum number of activities that will lead to a successful year, a stronger lodge and a fulfilling experience for members. Any lodge can earn this award. The qualifications to earn the Nebraska Pillar Award are considered by the Grand Lodge to be basic activities every lodge should complete in a year. Meeting the requirements of the award should set your lodge on a course to success, especially if the award is earned each year. Information about this award for 2008 can be found at the following location: <http://www.glne.org/pdf/NEPillar.pdf>.

Rock Maul Awards

And, don't forget the Rock Maul Awards, which are annually presented to a large and a small lodge that are the most active in the state. Awards are also presented to the three runners-up in each area. While the form includes more than 100 ways to earn points toward the award, it also serves as a good source for activity ideas in a variety of areas in which a lodge should work. Among the areas of work are: Grand Master's Activities, Leadership, Lodge Meetings and Operations, Ritual Work, Grand Lodge Activities, Fellowship, Community and Fraternal Service, Membership, Communication and Lodge Finances. The Rock Maul Award 2008 form will soon be available at: <http://www.glne.org/pdf/RockMaul.pdf>.

The awards encourage a Master to earn the Grand Master's Leadership Award, and with more effort the lodge can earn the Nebraska Pillar Award. Through additional effort, the lodge may find itself in the running for the Rock Maul Award.

North Bend No. 119 Wins \$1,000 for 2006 Activities

North Bend Lodge No. 119 received \$1,000 for earning the Twain Award sponsored by the Masonic Information Center in Silver Spring, Maryland.

An outgrowth of the report of a task force that produced the pamphlet "It's About Time!" (see the following three articles) the

Twain Award was presented to 11 lodges in recognition of their outstanding performance in 2006.

For more information about how your lodge can qualify for the Twain Award, click on this link:

<http://www.msana.com/twainaward/resources.html>.

Ideas That Work in Other Jurisdictions

A lodge in **El Cajon, Calif.**, focused attention on student achievement and attracted 350 parents, educators, local dignitaries and fellow Masons at a lodge recognition event: http://www.freemason.org/news_news.php?mselect=detail&id=2702.

A Past Master discusses his journey to revive his lodge in **Mill Valley, Calif.** The innovation of his lodge brought greater community recognition and many new members: http://mill-valley.freemasonry.biz/growing_lodge.htm.

Plan Now to Earn the Twain Award for Your Activities

Participation in the Twain Award is simple and with a plan to meet the objectives of the program, it is attainable.

To participate, you must register your lodge as a participant by June 1. The deadline for the submission of entries is December 1. For more information, go to: <http://www.msana.com/twainaward/call.html>.

The purpose of the award is to not only recognize lodges that achieve greater Masonic awareness in their lodge and community, but also to share their award-winning activities with other lodges across North America.

Winners of the award for 2007 activities will be announced in February at the Conference of Grand Masters. Up to 50

lodges can win the award each year. The final year of the program is 2008.

A lodge can win the award by demonstrating its commitment to energy, innovation and creativity toward achieving the objective of moving Masonry into the 21st century. It provides evidence of activities that clarify and communicate Masonic identity.

The award was named in honor of author Mark Twain who was known as a lively, innovative communicator, whose work consistently challenged his listeners and readers to think and act responsibly, to ask questions, and to seek enlightenment.

“It’s About Time!” Report Seeks Greater Public Awareness

It’s About Time! is the report of a task force of the Masonic Information Center to examine how the fraternity can achieve greater public awareness.

The task force observed that even at Masonry’s membership’s lowest point in 1941, Freemasonry still had 800,000 more members than today - its lowest level in at least 80 years. This is not a cyclical trend. Other factors are at work.

Among the statements in the report are:

- Masonry’s challenge is to focus on making Masonry relevant to our changing communities.
- Clearly, Masons are not satisfactorily addressing ways of keeping our

members involved and enthusiastic about Masonry.

- We have failed to accept the fact that the world is a different place than it was in the 1940s and 1950s. Family time is squeezed into the evenings and very often the children have their own activities. The technology explosion has provided a source for entertainment/activity that competes with any organization requiring a time commitment. Freemasonry has done little to keep pace with change. Freemasons still grouse about any increase in dues or per capita. It is time to readjust our thinking and come to

realize that both time and money are necessary factors in creating a quality organization.

- Membership loss is *not* the major problem; it's a symptom of a larger problem: loss of Masonic identity as an observable part of life and lack of energy invested in Masonry. Masons must take ownership of an identity that distinguishes Masonry from other men's organizations. Masonry is a process of lifelong learning and discovery that delivers a way of living a principled life, observable in the simplest behaviors, whether at lodge, at home, or in the workplace.
- Masonry is no longer identified as an elite organization. Within eye and ear range of the public, Masons have failed to perform what they profess; consequently, they have lost their significance within the context of community.
- Current Masons do not understand the true meaning of our fraternity.
- Public awareness of Masonry begins at a grassroots level. Masons must be visible in the community to demonstrate Masonic values in many aspects of their lives.

- Freemasonry must be lodge-centered, giving members opportunities to express themselves through activities that improve the experience of the lodge and benefit the life of the community.
- We need ways of recognizing success, encouraging creativity, and rewarding accomplishments. Small actions, kind words, and expressions of concern for others are just a few examples. Our work on Masonry's public image begins with work on ourselves.
- Beginning at the lodge level, plan meaningful activities that put Masonic values into action. Consider how you and your lodge can make each and every activity uniquely Masonic.
- Think carefully about how you invest your time, and we ask that you use your time on programs and actions that are uniquely Masonic. As we work together, we must ask each other how a program, a meeting, or an event improves and demonstrates our experience of being a Mason.

To read the full report, go to:

<http://www.msana.com/twainaward/abouttime.pdf>.

Twain Award Provides Ideas for Lodge Activities

Listed below are suggestions from the Masonic Information Center's Twain Award Web site to focus your lodge on using its time to its greatest Masonic advantage:

1. Apply concepts of education and self-improvements to current print and non-print communications tools of individual lodges, Grand Lodges, and national Masonic organizations and societies.
2. Improve the environment of lodge-based fellowship; refresh the look of the lodge; welcome new members; improve presentation skills; provide

mentoring to study degrees; strengthen communications skills.

3. Organize group activities based on education and self-improvement that can enrich lodge-centered fellowship such as: welcoming committees, lodge renovation and clean up campaigns, leadership development conferences, mentor meetings, workshops on such things as Masonic ritual, history, symbolism, architectural works, art, and cultural works.
4. Initiate workshops on Masonic personal growth topics such as

- leadership, stewardship, ethics, philosophy, and spirituality.
5. Call on local educational faculty to present on topics that enrich the body, mind, and spirit of the brothers.
 6. Tap the talents of individual members and build a community of experts to help facilitate Masons to improve themselves and their community.
 7. Improve community accessibility to Masonry through public outreach activities and program or group hosting, tutoring, and mentoring.
 8. Offer Masonic recognition and

- incentive programs for educational initiatives, visitor programs and Chamber of Commerce presentations.
9. Honor the Mason within yourself.
10. Share success stories with other lodges through the Twain Award network.
11. Communicate regularly with neighboring lodges.

“Dummies” Author Offers Ideas to Make Lodges Effective

Christopher Hodapp, author of *Freemasons for Dummies*, proved he’s no dummy when it comes to making a lodge successful.

Hodapp was integral in helping his lodge, Broad Ripple Lodge No. 643 in Indianapolis, Ind., rise from near extinction to dramatic growth and good health today. To learn more, visit the lodge’s Web site at: <http://www.brldodge.org/>.

Here is a list of ideas that he and others implemented at Broad Ripple Lodge that helped it to go and grow, including:

- **All stated meetings were table lodges for a year.** Minutes were printed and circulated, and NOT read.
- **Redecorated the lobby and entry area.** (Ratty furniture, no art and accessories from the 1950s made a terrible first impression on potential new members. If you think it looks ugly, how will a new member see it? If you don’t know, ASK YOUR WIFE!)
- **Landscaped the front yard.** (Ours was full of rocks and overgrown shrubs.) If your building looks tired, unkempt and decayed, what does that say about Freemasonry to a potential new member? What does it say about your own pride of membership?

- **Professional look of Web site and KEPT UP TO DATE.** If a potential member sees that your site is dated 1997 and none of the hyperlinks work, they’ll move on.
- **Monthly Trestle Board with photos.** Make lodge look fun, and if they don’t participate, then they’re missing great experiences.
- **Stopped charging for meals, including Thanksgiving.** We provided catered or convenience food rather than the same few brothers chained to the kitchen. They burn out.
- **Added a stereo system and big screen TV to the dining room.** (Football and basketball nights after practices. Make lodge a place to hang out, not “eat, meet and flee.”)
- **Purchased motorized stair climbers to assist older members up the steps.**
- **Started the Masonic Angel Fund for local kids.** (See our Web site for details.)
- **Made \$100 donation to Masonic Home Foundation for every month a member(s) died.**
- **Poinsettias were personally delivered to lodge widows at Christmastime by the Master.**

They'll love you forever. Get them on your side and their grandson may join.

- **Started an Annual Chili Cook-Off with permanent trophy at the lodge.** The noisier the rivalry gets, the better. Encourage outlandish claims and bragging rights.
- **Presented Lifetime Achievement Award for older member 64 years a Mason who comes to every meeting and degree.** These men built our lodge. Acknowledge their achievements publicly.
- **Insisted on post-meeting gathering at local tavern for members, spouses and friends.** Do NOT hang out in the parking lot of the Lodge complaining after meetings. That's not a way to forge new friendships.
- **Regular dialogue with the OES Worthy Matron.** Keep them involved in your public events.
- **Sought help for our degrees from other lodges.** Liberal use of honorary membership for regular visiting helpers.
- **If you are a young Mason who does not know all ritual for all degrees, learn ONE degree well, and have your Wardens do the same for the other two degrees.** Performing a smaller number of parts well is more important than stumbling through many of them badly. Do NOT get pressured into doing more than you are able by the "In MY year I had to know all of the degrees," crowd. If they know it all, ask THEM to take a part. Remember: a man gets to hear each of his degrees for the first time ONLY ONCE. If you can't do it properly with feeling and meaning, GET SOMEONE WHO CAN.
- **Hold a joint picnic with other lodges.**
- **Let a lodge from a Temple that goes dark in summer hold Craft practice at your building.** Join in with them.
- **Dramatically expanded our library.** Write book reviews of new books and promote them in your Trestle Board.
- **Started a book exchange open to everyone in the lodge family.** Place the bookshelf in your dining room.
- **Leave officers chairs empty for two years rather than push new members into them immediately.**
- **Make sure lodge name is seen in the community.** Business cards, pins, jackets with the square and compass and lodge name, who to contact for information on the door of the lodge as well as your lodge's Web address. If the building is closed, how will a new man find someone to ask?
- **Extend invitations to Prince Hall lodges to visit.** Check with the Master of the PHA lodge if you need permission from the Prince Hall Grand Master. We have helped a group of PHA lodges with their annual Thanksgiving dinner for the poor and we made Indiana Masonic history by conferring the Master Mason degree on two Prince Hall Candidates.
- **Always keep petitions in your car.**
- **If 200 members stay away, get new ones who won't!** If only seven show up, have fun with each other.
- **Make a new member's notebook containing:**
 - Introduction to lodge etiquette.
 - Lodge history.
 - List of Masonic Web sites, research and recommended book list.
 - Directory of lodge members, their addresses and phone numbers.
 - Introduction to Freemasonry for a Mason's lady.
 - List of all lodge widows.
 - List of all lodge committees.
 - List of area lodges to visit.
 - Lodge by-laws.
 - Brochures from the York Rite, Scottish Rite and Shrine, but not

- petitions. Encourage them to wait at least one year before joining.
- Our lodge Masonic Angel Fund brochure.
 - The latest Lodge Trestle Board.
 - Three petitions and Grand Lodge Masonic brochures and DVD.
 - Masonic license plate form.
- **Freemasonry IS NOT RITUAL.** If you can do all parts flawlessly, yet never have candidates and no one comes to meetings, how will the ritual save your lodge?

- Plan with your wardens so there is continuity for years to come. Stop re-inventing the wheel every year. Do NOT hide good ideas from your Master so you can claim victory during your year. Do NOT pass on problems to the next Master. Solve them now!

To purchase Hodapp's book, visit:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0764597965/bookstorenow600-20>.

To read his blog, go to:

<http://freemasonsfordummies.blogspot.com/>.

Help Make This Newsletter Helpful and Successful

We hope you find this publication helpful as you seek to plan activities for the year you serve as Master. As indicated in the opening article, you play an important role in this publication's success. We are relying on you to send us good activity ideas to share with other lodges. What may seem commonplace to you because your lodge has held an event for many years, may be new to someone else. If it's working for your lodge, then please send it to us. Write a short summary and send it to: michelle@gln.org or mail it to the Grand Lodge Office at: 1240 No. 10th St., Lincoln, NE 68501-1852. If we need additional information, we'll contact you.

We entertain any ideas for the next issue, but we ask you to also think about spring-related activities your lodge holds or has held that were successful.

This newsletter will be sent to you as often as you and the Grand Lodge Officers provide good ideas about activities that have worked for your lodge. It will take only a few minutes and it could help our fraternity across the state.