



Ideas That Work



Please Forward to Other Leaders in Your Lodge

Vol. 1, No. 6 – July 2008

How Nebraska's Top Recruiter Gets Men to Join Lodge

The following article was written by W.B. Patrick Barger who earned the top membership recruiting award twice, and most recently at the 2008 Annual Communication. He also was trained as a recruiter for the military. In addition, he edited and added additional useful information to Section 7 – Membership in the Lodge Leadership Manual.

By W.B. Patrick Barger

A lodge's success in growing their membership doesn't totally rely on a strong recruiting program. Men must be motivated to join. Before they sign a petition, they must see reasons to join, be active and to remain members.

The most effective recruiting tool available to your lodge is to build an active and enticing program of activities that meets the interests of today's men.

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 of Masonry.
- 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.

This list of motivators could be the beginning point when planning your lodge's year of activities. Review each bulleted item above and think of ways your lodge can answer the needs expressed here.

You can find more than 400 activity ideas in the Lodge Leadership Manual online at <http://www.gln.org>. Simply click on "Downloads" and scroll down to "Publications." Work through the twelve sections of the manual and when you finish, you will have a complete plan constructed for the year you'll be Master.

The sad fact is that on average, after the first year of membership, 80 percent of all new members do not return to lodge meetings and activities.

In 2007, Nebraska lodges raised 306 members. On the negative side of the ledger, the biggest reason for losses was 455 suspensions, which were 41 more than deaths.

Imagine if our lodges were meeting the needs expressed by Masons in this article. Suspensions would diminish, men would be attracted to join and our fraternity and your lodge would be growing.

Register for the Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award

The deadline to register your lodge for the Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award is August 31.

In the first two years of its existence, the award has been given to a Nebraska lodge each year. Each received \$1,000 as part of the award. North Bend No. 119 received the Twain Award for a 2006 activity, and Cotner No. 297 was named a winner for a 2007 activity.

The purpose of the award is to recognize lodges that “seriously support Masonic awareness both within the lodge and throughout the community.”

For more information, check out the Twain Award Web site at:

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

The Award is sponsored by the Masonic Information Center at the Masonic Service Association of North America.

Successful Lodge Activity: Masonic Youth Night

By **W.B. Keith Neisler**

Worshipful Master, Omaha No. 1

On March 3rd, Nebraska Lodge No. 1 hosted “Youth Night” for our monthly business meeting. The idea behind this was to expose and educate the brethren and their spouses about the Masonic youth groups that we are fortunate to have in Nebraska.

We began the evening with a dinner and dessert box auction served by Westside Assembly No. 22, International Order of Rainbow for Girls, which meets in our building. The brothers bid on the dessert and then had dinner with the young lady. It allowed the lodge to get to know the girls of the Assembly. The proceeds of the auction totaled over \$700 and went to offset the cost of the girls to go to Supreme Assembly in Chicago in July.

Following dinner, we had a short business meeting, and I must emphasize **short**. Although the meeting was brief, much was accomplished in 30 to 40 minutes, including a Masonic education moment, which was presented by M.W. Phil Lorenzen.

After the meeting, the spouses and other guests joined our lodge for a special presentation by the youth groups. Betty Garwood, Supreme Deputy of Rainbow; Mike Stuhr, Executive Officer of Nebraska DeMolay and Kim Reid, Guardian of Job’s Bethel No. 1 gave a presentation of each group. However, the best part of the

program was to see each of the bodies present a portion of their ritual. The ladies of Job’s Bethel No. 1 presented the Living Cross, DeMolay State Senior Councilor Ryan Grazier gave the Ceremony of Light lecture and Past Worthy Advisor of Westside Assembly No. 22 Caryn Stuhr (currently the Grand Worthy Advisor of Rainbow) presented the Rose Lecture. Those in attendance enjoyed a great evening and came away with the assurance that the next generation of the Masonic family is in good hands.

I know some will ask how many people would come to a program like this on a lodge business meeting night? The answer is 65. I know this included spouses and people from other lodges, but the idea that so many people came to celebrate the youth in the Masonic family is very encouraging for each of the youth organizations, but also shows that strong connection between Masons and the youth is essential for the continued relevance of the fraternity in this state. Additionally, each person came away with a better understanding of the Masonic youth organizations.

Since this has taken place, several lodges around the state have contacted our lodge so that they may do a similar event in their area.

This is an “Idea that Works!”

Successful Lodge Activity: New Format for Education

By W.B. Bill Coker

Worshipful Master, Beatrice No. 26

When I became Master in Beatrice this year, I made it my goal to ensure the guys were thoroughly schooled in Masonic history or education, to give them a MUCH deeper understanding and appreciation of our fraternity, in the hopes to stem the attrition which has plagued every Masonic lodge in recent years.

I assigned the task of Masonic education to a Past Master, who has a very deep understanding of Masonic history.

At the beginning of each regular business meeting, he plays the part of Grand Master

Hiram Abif, enters the lodge and conducts a newer member around the room while lecturing him about the reasons why certain scriptures are read during circumambulation, and other topics, which normally are never provided during the degrees or the lectures.

To my amazement, our lodge members greeted these history lessons very positively, with rounds of applause after each lesson.

This new format sure beats the standard bills and warrants format.

We found this a good way to spice up regular business meetings as well as help the newer members.

Keep Sending In Those Activity Ideas

You should have already noticed the three preceding articles in this issue of *Ideas That Work* from the Brethren. We know there are many, many more activities lodges have performed that have been successful. Don't be shy. Share them with us. Your lodge activity ideas may end up helping another lodge.

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, please send it to us. Write a short summary and send it to: michelle@glne.org or mail it to the Grand Lodge Office at: 1240 No. 10th St., Lincoln, NE 68501-1852. If additional information is needed, we'll call.

This newsletter will be sent to you as often as we have ideas. It will take you only a few minutes, but it could help our fraternity across the state. Thanks for your help.

Program Ideas Available from Masonic Renewal Committee

The Masonic Renewal Committee of North America provides monthly program ideas at its Web site: <http://www.masonic-renewal.org/>. Click on "Check Out the New Resource Library" to see all the program ideas.

The following is the first in the series of 19 monthly program ideas. We will feature one each month. This month's suggested program is **Masonic Heroes Night**.

"One of my heroes is a member of my lodge. He served in World War II in the Rangers and saw action on Iwo Jima. He came back home, married his childhood sweetheart and raised his family in a little house that he and his wife still own. Fred never made a fortune, never was president of a large corporation, or a famous celebrity. Fred was a simple man that did the best he

could and made the world a better place because of his commitment to others.

Heroes come in many different forms. Some show themselves through their virtue and others through their charity. Still others show themselves by their community service or their service to their faith.

I know of a wonderful man who after many successful years in business gave his company to his employees upon his retirement! In my world, and in his employees', he is most certainly a hero.

Others have given themselves to kids, to seniors, to boys and girls without big sisters or brothers.

Others have given themselves selflessly to the fraternity, to their lodge or perhaps to their Eastern Star chapter or to one of the youth groups. These men are heroes as well and our world is better because of them.

How many of us can remember a point in time when our heroes meant more to us than just about anything?

Remember when the good guy always won, the bad guy always wore the black hat and good always prevailed over evil? I certainly do. As a matter of fact, I still have lots of heroes in my life! Most of them can be found as members of a Masonic lodge. Some of them are as near as my own lodge and some of them are from across the sea, but all of them are my heroes and they make

my life better because of their commitment to the fraternity, to our youth, our country, church, their families and in some very rare cases, all of the above.

This program is dedicated to those Masonic heroes in our lives who have inspired us to live our lives better and with more meaning.

Let's give a toast to our heroes. They deserve it!

Masonic Heroes Night

This program is an easy one. Choose or ask for volunteers to give a short presentation on their Masonic heroes at the next meeting of the lodge. Ask them to keep it as brief as possible and be sure they understand it is a description of the qualities that make the honoree a hero. We are not trying to diminish others, but recognize those who carry a special place in our lives for being an example that others can emulate.

That is the whole point of being a hero; giving to others, selflessly and without expectation of reward. In so doing, they should receive those very things from us; respect, and the reward of knowing they have had a positive impact on the lives of those around them.

Enjoy your evening remembering your Masonic heroes. The other members of your lodge will too.

From the Field . . .

The following ideas were submitted by Grand Lodge officers.

Youth Night

Hold a Masonic youth group dinner where the lodge officers serve as cooks, waiters and bus the tables.

Membership

Include in your lodge newsletter a return postcard asking each member to write the name of one person who should become a Mason and drop it in the mail. It won't cost members anything to mail if you place a

stamp on the card. Then, vote on the submitted names using the form for Recommendation of a Candidate, which can be found at:

<http://www.gln.org/fileDownload.aspx> and go to Forms-Membership Petitions and Applications.

Attendance of Younger Members

Increase the attendance of younger members by asking Masonic youth groups to offer child-care during lodge meetings.

Ideas from the Lodge Leadership Manual . . .

The following are just a few of the more than 400 ideas in the Lodge Leadership Manual. To review the manual and to start planning the year you'll serve as Master, or for ideas this year, go to:

<http://gline.org/fileDownload.aspx>.

Activity ideas are suggested in these areas of lodge performance.

Lodge Meetings – Men want to attend meetings when there is a special program that interests them. Consider the following steps when preparing for a meeting:

- Plan for every meeting in detail. A pre-planned meeting forces you to consider the needs of members.
- Make something special happen at least six times a year during meetings. Involve your members in the program and its planning.
- Call on people in your community who can provide excellent programs for your lodge, whether they are related to Masonry or not.
- **Ritual Work** – Set a ritual practice schedule for the officers who will serve during the year you are Master. Also, allow time later in the year for the incoming officers to prepare for proficiency examinations conducted by your Deputy Grand Custodian.
- **Fellowship** – 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.

- **Community Service** – Recognize teaching or instructional excellence by granting annual awards or scholarships to teachers who met or exceeded expectations in working with children. (A cash award could be used to further the winning teacher's education or involvement in the school.)
- **Membership** – Find ways to cause people to ask you about Freemasonry, such as the following: wear a Masonic ring; discuss famous Masons; place the square and compass emblem on your car; bring up Freemasonry in any way that you can without asking others to join; point out Masonic influence on history; and invite prospects to non-Masonic social gatherings with Masons.
- **Communication** – Tips on how to write an effective news release are contained in the Lodge Leadership Manual, which can be found on the Grand Lodge Web site. (See the opening paragraph to this article.)

Web Site for 2009 Masters Available

Next year's Masters can learn about 2009 Grand Lodge activities and begin planning for their lodge's year by visiting a Web site geared specifically for them. It can be found at:

<http://www.lodgeleaders09.com/>

Included on the site are:

- **Planning Tools** – A lodge planning site that each month will provide a guide to planning the year they'll serve as Master. Those who complete each section, each month will have next year planned before the end of this year.

- **2009 Trestle-Board** – An explanation of the activities and programs of the Grand Lodge in 2009.
- **2008 Programs** – An explanation of this year’s Grand Lodge activities and programs.
- **Leaders Blog** – A chance for next year’s Masters in Nebraska Freemasonry to comment on ideas, thoughts, activities and events.
- **From the DGM** – Comments from the Deputy Grand Master.
- **2009 Calendar** – The 2009 calendar that will be updated throughout the year.

Past Issues of *Ideas That Work* Are on Grand Lodge Web Site

To ensure the information in *Ideas That Work* is available in the future, the tips and issues of this

publication can be found on the Grand Lodge Web site at: <http://www.gln.org/Ideas.aspx>.