



Ideas That Work



Please Forward to Other Leaders in Your Lodge

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Summer Time!

It's now Summertime and Summer Time! What do I mean? Well, the first is obvious, it's that time of year for cook outs and vacations and kids getting out of school! And it's also that time of year when your Lodge should be concentrating on Summer

activities for the Lodge. Plan a pic-nic or a movie outing or an Ice Cream social. There are so many things that Summer Time can be filled with. Get out of the hot Lodge and into your community!

Lodges and Web sites

(This month, I'm going to step back from the geek speak and get into the heart of the matter...how do I build a web site.)

There are many different ways to build a web site. How difficult or easy it will be is hard to state in general terms. A lot depends on what the web site is for, how many pages it will be, if you will be doing e commerce and so on. Nonetheless, let's look at the 3 easiest methods. By using one of these methods or using them in combination, you should be able to create any kind of web site you want.

The 3 major methods are:

1. Online Site Builder software
2. Offline Web site development software
3. Outsource to a design firm

Let's look at the pros and cons of each of these methods.

Site Builder Software

Many hosting sites (like www.TLHInteractive.com) will provide

online site building software. For many small web sites this is a quick and easy way to get started.

The site building software consists of pre-done templates that you can modify to suit your needs. You simply browse through the templates, pick a layout you like, fill in the blanks, point and click on the options you want and Ta Da! you have a web site.

The advantage to this method is speed and independence. You can put together a decent web site in well under an hour and you can change it whenever you want simply by using the site builder software to make the changes. Also, there are no special skills involved and no technical stuff to learn. Just point and click.

The downside to this is you are limited by the software to the templates shown and are also limited as to which areas or features of the template you can change. You also may end up accidentally picking the same template as a competitor! No one likes

coming to the party and finding someone else with the same outfit on!

Offline Web Site development software

For those of you with a little more adventure in your soul, you could always buy a good web site development package and learn how to make your own custom web sites.

Development software can vary from the low cost to the very expensive kind. In the past you would have had to learn how to write in HTML code, the underlying code that makes a web page look like a web page. But many packages now allow WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) design. This means you can type in text and draw graphics and so on to make the page, just like if you were using a word processor or graphics program and the development software will write the code for you. It's really quite fun, in a nerdy sort of way.

The advantage to this is the freedom to make any kind of changes you want. You can change websites as you mood changes if you wish. You are in complete control of how your site looks and acts.

The disadvantage is that you have to learn the development software. This can be pretty time intensive and you have to enjoy the geek speak quite a bit. There also the cost of the software.

Outsource to a Design Firm

While this might sound like a very expensive way to do things, it can be surprisingly affordable! Considering that buying a copy of Frontpage or Dreamweaver, the two most popular web site development packages, will cost you

Grand Master Initiatives

The Grand Master has set a very aggressive schedule of events for himself,

several hundred dollars plus the time it takes to learn how to use them, the use of a design firm starts sounding better and better.

The process is fairly simple. Most designers will ask you to fill out a questionnaire telling them what your site is about, what kind of look and feel you want and so on. Then they will ask you for some sites you like and for some you don't like. So far, this is same work we would have done regardless of which method of development we had chosen.

The design gnomes then go to work and after a couple of days, they will send you out some sample web pages to look at and comment on. Once you've found a sample you like, just provide them with the text and OK the project. They will write all the needed code and in a few days send you a brand spanking new Web site to put on your hosting space! You can even get them to put it up on the hosting space for you and avoid all the geekery!

It's also possible to use a combination of these techniques. You could throw up a quick site using the site builder software while you are learning the development software. Or you could have the site professionally designed but do the upkeep and changes yourself using development software.

Whichever method you choose remember, it's just software and you can change your mind or approach any time you want!

the Grand Lodge and the subordinate Lodges for 2009. The GM has done so

because experience tells us that an active Lodge is a healthy Lodge! The more things you offer, the wider the variety of things you offer, the better off your Lodge will be.

Let's review what is coming up the next 3 months on the Calendar for your suggested Lodge Activities:

1. **June** – Donate time / money to a CHIP event! This not only helps a child and their family, it gives good exposure to Masonry
2. **July** – Study Masonry – We all took an obligation to improve ourselves through the study of Masonry. In

July the Grand Lodge will launch a web site full of information for you to study. There will be articles and other resources for all levels of study.

3. **August** – The Blood Drive- This will be the first time ever for a state wide blood drive. If your Lodge isn't big enough, get together with several other Lodges and hold a drive. Every pint you donate will save at least 3 lives! How can you pass that up?

If you missed an earlier activity, it can still be done, just check the GL.org web site for more details.

Summer Activities

Summer is wonderful time of year in Nebraska. After a generally long winter and little outside activity, most people want to get out and do something! This is the perfect spring board for Lodge activities! Remember not all Lodge activities have to take place in a tyled Lodge. There are many things you can do as a Lodge to build fellowship, activate the members and show Masonry to the public in a very positive light.

Let's look at just a few ideas:

1. Load up a car and go visit other area Lodges on their meeting night.
2. Request permission to move your charter and hold Lodge someplace else. Examples: Another Lodge, outside, in a restaurant (remember you still have to be able to tyle the room)
3. Go see Angles and Demons as a Lodge. Not as Masonic as the first Dan Brown movie but a ripping good adventure.
4. Meet at the local coffee shop and hold a Socrates' Cafe Discussion.

Easy to do, just pick an important Masonic topic and discuss!

5. Hold an Ice Cream Social with the Lodge and invite some other organization to join. Fun for the whole family
6. Hold a ritual round table. Get several members around the table and start repeating ritual whereby each person does one line. See how many time you can go around the table before you mess up.
7. Clean up and paint the Lodge. Summer time is a great time to put that extra shine on the Lodge.
8. Clean up and paint a senior members home that isn't able to keep up the maintenance any longer. Show some Brotherly love.
9. Take your wives and girlfriends out to a Ladies at the Table dinner.
10. Volunteer as a group for some community project that is understaffed.

There are tons of fun Summer things like this for a Lodge to do to stay active. Use this list as a source of discussion to come up with what is right for your Lodge.

Masonic Relief

Last month we rolled out the online store of the Grand Lodge to support Masonic Relief (see article below). Response has been slow, probably due to the change in weather and a lesser need for a good coat. Well, let's get stuff in the store you can use around the Lodge or Home! Please send me your ideas for Masonic branded products you'd like to see in the Masonic Relief Store. remember, 100% of the profits go to Masonic Relief. This makes it a great project for your Lodge as well. Send you ideas to me at tomshop1@me.com. And I'll do my best to get stuff in stock!

The Grand Master designated March as Masonic Relief Month in Nebraska but the need for Masonic Relief is an ongoing issue. The Grand Lodge maintains a fund for the relief of poor, distressed Master Masons, their widows and orphans and receives several applications per year for assistance. This fund has been seriously drained in the last 2 years and it's time to step up to the plate and fulfill our obligations. So how can we do that?

W. John Maxell (Grand Senior Steward) has put together a two part program that is going to really boost our funds and provide our membership with a great opportunity to show their pride in Masonry! And the best part is how easy it is to do! Just go to the Grand Lodge web page (www.glne.org) and click on the Masonic Relief Banner. Then chose the item or items you want and use any major credit card or your PayPal account to order. It's safe, easy and supports our Masonic Relief effort.

Keep Sending In Those Activity Ideas

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.