



Ideas That Work



Please Forward to Other Lodge Leaders

Vol. 1, No. 5 – May 2008

What Motivates Men to Become Masons?

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.glna.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.

Targeting Potential New Members

Have your lodge members hit the proverbial brick wall when it comes to thinking of men who should join your

lodge? In every community without exception, there are men who will join. Perhaps all you need is something to jog

Targeting (continued) . . .

your members' memories. A simple process called targeting can do just that.

Make enough copies of the form on the last page of this newsletter titled, "Prospective Lodge Members," so every member has one. It lists categories of people you interact with regularly to start your members thinking of possible candidates.

At your next meeting, reserve time to hand them out to every member, along with a pencil. Read each category aloud and give them time to write names on their form. Then, read the next category, etc. until all the categories have been read.

Tell your members to hold onto them until after the meeting at which time they need to

give you each person's address and phone number. Your lodge phone book will be in great demand.

Collect the forms and this is your contact list of potential new members.

This process has worked successfully in lodges across the state, and it will work for you equally as well. Give it a try. You'll be surprised how many different names, no matter the size of your community, will be on the list.

The next step is to send them an invitation to attend a "Who Are the Masons?" meeting. See the following article, and for more details refer to Section 7 of the Lodge Leadership Manual.

How to Hold a "Who Are the Masons?" Meeting

A proven recruiting tool is a "Who are the Masons?" meeting, which is a formal presentation about Masonry to prospective members.

This involves preparing a meal, a presentation about Masonry and a tour of your lodge. Most importantly, it brings the prospect face-to-face with your brothers.

Appoint a committee to organize the meeting, and name a chairman who is good with details and has follow-up skills. If your lodge isn't clean, find another location. 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 a prospective member's questions.

Besides prospects, also invite lodge members to attend. Mail the letter three weeks before the meeting. Include in the letter the name of the lodge member who will contact them who has similar characteristics and interests to make him feel more comfortable. He should contact his prospect three to four days after the letters of invitation are mailed, ask if he received the invitation, and tell him he will contact him about one week before the meeting.

At that time, he tells his prospect about the meeting plans and child care service that will be available. Tell him 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.

Plan a dinner meeting (covered dish, steak fry, etc.). Be sure to serve quality food in proper quantities.

Provide name tags prepared ahead of time for everyone using different colors for the Masons and prospects. Plan a program for the meeting. A welcome and an invocation are needed before the meal.

Present the program and tell them about Masonry, what your lodge does on the local level, the good programs the Grand Lodge sponsors, and Masonry on a national level. 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 that the Craft develops leadership.

“Who Are the Masons?” (continued)

Tell them you want them to join, handout and ask them to sign a petition.

Give each prospect a brochure about Freemasonry from the Grand Lodge office. The entire program should never take longer than one hour. Follow with refreshments to provide an opportunity for fellowship and to answer questions on a one-to-one basis.

In the week following the event, contact the prospect and ask if he has any questions. Then, ask him to submit a petition, if he hasn't already.

If the prospect declines to immediately submit a petition, 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.

If the prospect completes the petition during this event, tell him 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 to 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.

Put George Washington Back in Your Local Schools

Do you remember entering your elementary school and the first thing you saw was a portrait of George Washington? It seems that has become a tradition of the past. Your lodge can change that in your community with the help of the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

Most of those portraits were placed there to remind students of his character and leadership. His life and legacy can still provide inspiration to each new generation by returning him to that place of prominence and influence.

First Lady Laura Bush kicked off a campaign to distribute portraits of George Washington to every school in America earlier this year. The George Washington Masonic Memorial has joined with Mount Vernon to support this worthy endeavor.

During her remarks, Mrs. Bush told the students, “You can honor George Washington by following his good example

of good citizenship. I hope that each of you will be a leader, set a good example for others in your school and community, and, as President Washington reminds us, all it takes is one citizen who loves his country to change America for the better.”

Sponsorship of a single portrait is \$275. Sponsors can participate in the school selection process and are encouraged to be involved in any ceremonies surrounding the placement of the portrait.

With more than 150 lodges in Nebraska, we are in a unique position to help make sure that George Washington will once again greet students in Nebraska schools, inspiring them to lead lives of virtue, character and vision.

Visit the Memorial's Web site for more information and to access a participation form at

<http://www.gwmemorial.org/main.html>.

From the Field . . .

The following ideas were submitted by Grand Lodge officers.

Open Up Your Lodge

Open the lodge after community celebrations and serve free refreshments. It's a great way to introduce the fraternity to your community.

Visit Other Lodges

Form a traveling team and go on monthly visitations to other lodges. The experience builds camaraderie in your lodge and friendships in other towns.

Area Degree Teams

Get three area lodges to agree to each form a degree team and perform ritual work in each other's lodge.

School Activities

Check the interests of your members, make contact with local high school and get members involved in working with school clubs (FBLA, FFA, National Honor Society, etc.).

Recruit Help with Ritual

Each month recognize the anniversary of members raised that month. Invite them back to lodge and introduce them. Ask them to comment on their raising, update on the latest happenings in their life, etc.

Parades

Build a lodge float for local parades, such as the July 4th and County Fair parades. It's a great way to introduce Freemasonry to your community.

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://glne.org/fileDownload.aspx>.

Activity ideas are suggested in these areas of lodge performance.

- **Lodge Meetings** - Nothing kills a meeting quicker than a Master who doesn't have a clue about the business for the meeting. He needs to be in charge while involving everyone. That means creating an agenda for every meeting. Before arriving, he should discuss the agenda with the Secretary and talk with committee chairmen about their progress and what must be reported and decided at the meeting.
- **Ritual Work** – Repetition of degree parts, partially or in full, at stated meetings helps all brothers review the work or familiarizes them with the work and could possibly interest them in learning it. Including explanations of

where the presented work occurs in the degree and what it means adds interest. In addition, understanding the meaning eases comprehension and memorization..

- **Fellowship** – 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.
- **Community Service** – 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, work as library aids, work with teachers, go on field trips with classes and handle special projects or events. Reading assistance was most often mentioned.)
- **Membership** – Become familiar with well-known men in world history who also were Masons. Learn about local celebrities and officials and foreign dignitaries so you can bring them up in conversations. Armed with good

Lodge Leadership Manual (continued)

background information, you are ready to start identifying and getting prospects.

- **Communication** – News releases help you get the word out about Masonry in your town. Prepare a news release about community service activities and special events at your lodge. The Lodge Leadership Manual has sample news releases you can use for the following

lodge activities: installation of officers; Masonic educational scholarships, Masonic All-Star Marching Band scholarships; and Bronze Jordan Medal and year-pin presentations. Download them from the Lodge Leadership Manual on the Grand Lodge Web site at the Downloads tab under the Publications category: <http://www.gln.org/>.

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>.

What's Going On in Your Lodge?

Ideas That Work provides activity ideas for your lodge's annual calendar of events.

Its success also is dependent on you to send 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, please send it to us. Write a one paragraph 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 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.

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.

Prospective Lodge Members

Relatives (sons, grandsons, nephews, etc.)

Church, synagogue, worship associates

**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.)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Business owners/managers (grocery, auto-
motive, hardware, jewelers, printers, etc.)**

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

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