



# Ideas That Work



Please Forward to Other Leaders in Your Lodge

Vol. 1, No. 8 – September 2008

## A Response for Activities to Get a Lodge Growing Again

A Master sent a request to the Grand Lodge Office for a list of ideas about how to get his lodge growing again. Here are the ideas that were sent to him:

- **Meals before every regular meeting.** Pass the responsibility around to various members. The Stewards coordinate who handles each meal. Charge for the meal and use that money (if the meal is donated by the member in charge of it), or if he takes his costs out of the kitty, the remainder goes to community projects or donations.
- **Hold a 15-20 minute program on Masonic education following each dinner.**
- **Rusty Nail Degree.** One of the challenges in getting members back is that they don't remember the work and don't want to be embarrassed at the meeting by not knowing the due guard, sign, grip and word. This short ceremony provides instruction on these points. Then they will feel more comfortable attending meetings.
- **Provide Masonic education during each regular meeting.**
- **Lodge newsletter.** Send a lodge newsletter (even if it's one sheet, front and back, or only a calendar for the next two months) on a regular basis to all members to inform them about upcoming activities. If a few

paragraphs can be written about upcoming activities, and the good times that were had in past activities, the members' interest may be increased.

- **Lodge Leadership Training.** At least your Wardens and Deacons (it's open to anyone) should attend a Lodge Leadership Training Course. There are hundreds and hundreds of ideas in eight key areas of lodge work.
- **Community activities.** There is a great opportunity for lodges to partner with local schools to help them in the face of the current budget crisis. Supporting the schools brings great visibility to the lodge among the right group of adults at school and with parents.
- **Make a plan for the year.** A plan is very important for the success of a lodge. The goal at installation is that the Master presents his program for the year with all the activities on a calendar and the pre-meeting Masonic education scheduled as well.
- **Membership.** At a meeting, hand out a form with prompts about men in various activities and professions they may know. This form can be found in the Lodge Leadership Manual on the Grand Lodge Web Site.

## From the Field . . .

The following ideas were submitted by Grand Lodge officers.

### **Tribute to Veterans**

Hold a Veterans Recognition Banquet for Veterans Day on Nov. 11. Consider get a shortened version of The Vacant Chair Ceremony from the Grand Lodge Office and invite your brothers and the public to attend.

### **Masonic Jeopardy**

Hold a Masonic Jeopardy game before or after your lodge meeting. The Masonic Education Committee has developed several versions of this popular TV game show. Or, make up your own categories and answers. It would be a great way to learn more about our fraternity.

## Newsletter

Newsletters are proven as an effective way to inform members about upcoming activities. And, a newsletter doesn't have to be hard to produce. Send it by e-mail, which makes it easy to prepare and mail. See the

section on Communication in the Lodge Leadership Manual or the mention on <http://lodgeleaders09.com> Web site for easy ways to put a lodge newsletter together.

## 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.*

- **Fellowship** – With the holidays approaching, arrange a party near the date of one, and focus on children..
- **Community Service** – Mount a drive to collect coats for kids. Arrange to have them cleaned.

## Program Ideas Available from Masonic Renewal Committee

*The Masonic Renewal Committee of North America provides monthly program ideas at: <http://www.masonic-renewal.org/>. Click on "Resource Library" to see all 19 program ideas. We will feature one each month. This month's suggested program is **Cigar Night**.*

One of the greatest benefits of belonging to the fraternity is that of associating with other men that we normally might not have a chance to meet. Younger men put a great deal of emphasis on gathering together to do nothing more than having conversation and enjoying each others company in a relaxed and comfortable environment.

This program is a very simple one for us to enact, while it is not for every member of your lodge, it may very well be exactly what some other members of your lodge are looking for. While we certainly understand that smoking is not necessarily to be encouraged, for those of our members who do like an occasional cigar, the opportunity to join together in friendly conversation over a good cigar is an event they very much enjoy!

Be sure that all of your members know that on the evening of your Cigar Program that there will be smoking on the premises and that those brothers who have an allergy or other issue with smoking should conduct themselves accordingly. This program is

strictly voluntary and is not to be construed as encouraging our brethren to take up the habit. However, for those who enjoy a good cigar this evening is for them.

Set an evening aside this month for a Cigar Event to be held at your lodge. Perhaps if the weather is nice it can be held out of doors with a little picnic. Have each brother who wants to attend bring a cigar for himself and one for someone else. Take all the extra cigars and place them in a box or hat. Pass the hat around and have each participant remove one cigar. This will allow the brethren the opportunity to sample a cigar they might not otherwise have the chance to smoke. If any of the members are knowledgeable about cigars have them make a short presentation on this topic. Where was it made, how is its taste different from other tobacco, is it made by hand, how much does this cigar cost and how are the prices set and so on.

### **What supplies do we need?**

Absolutely none. The members bring their own cigars and if necessary their own ashtrays and receptacles. Make sure that the building has adequate ventilation and that the rooms are properly cleaned afterward. The event can be very negatively received by other groups if it is left smelly and dirty with ashes and butts. We emphasize again, please clean up after the event!

This is also a great opportunity to have the brothers tell a little about themselves. Utilize the “Who I Am” program from April to make this event one that all will remember and look forward to attending in the future. Don’t forget that this is a great chance to let the brethren play a little cards or shoot some pool anything that allows the membership the opportunity to fellowship together is a good thing.

Be sure to have fun on your cigar night! But don't forget those who do not smoke the same opportunity for fellowship as those who do. It would appropriate to host a no smoke night at the lodge. At your no smoke night you conduct all of the same kinds of programs, such as card playing, pool

shooting, storytelling and so on, just without the smoke. At this evening’s program, smoking is not allowed; period!

So, while our brothers who smoke are given their time to enjoy their pleasures, so too, our brothers who do not smoke are given the same opportunities for fellowshiping together.

That makes a great lodge. Focusing on the needs of all of its members and affording them the opportunities to join together and have fun.

Light ‘em up and enjoy!

**Enjoy your cigar in moderation.  
Break out the cards and let the membership play a game of Euchre, Poker or Cribbage!**

## 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.

## 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](mailto:michelle@glne.org) or mail it to the Grand Lodge Office at: 1240 No. 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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.glne.org/Ideas.aspx>.