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# **A GUIDE FOR PLANNING YOUR YEAR AS WORSHIPFUL MASTER**

Most Worshipful Edmund Cohen  
Grand Master in 2008  
Grand Lodge of Virginia





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## PLANNING YOUR YEAR AS WORSHIPFUL MASTER

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### I. Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help you plan for your year as Worshipful Master. Review it when you are first put in line in your Lodge. It will help you to begin thinking about what you want to accomplish when you are the Worshipful Master. When you are elected Junior Warden, it will be particularly useful for you to attend the Reid Simmons Academy of Masonic Leadership where you can participate in a seminar covering this topic. Working through this guide at the Reid Simmons Academy should allow you to put together a detailed preliminary plan for your year as Worshipful Master. When you return from the Reid Simmons Academy, you will want to discuss that plan with some of your Lodge Brethren and refine it further. Finally, you may benefit from attending the Reid Simmons Academy as Senior Warden. This will allow you to further discuss your plan, and get any additional help and guidance you need to put it in final form so that you are ready for a successful and enjoyable year as Worshipful Master.

In preparing to be Worshipful Master, you have to learn the ritual you will need in order to open and close the Lodge and conduct the degrees. You have to become familiar with Masonic law (the Methodical Digest) and Masonic Protocol so that you can effectively run your meetings. You need to be knowledgeable about the budgeting process so you have the financial means to run the Lodge and conduct your programs. All of these skills are important if you are to have a successful year as Worshipful Master. But, first you need to plan your year and your program, and this guide concentrates on four topics that will assist you. These are:

**Planning Your Meetings and Activities:** obligatory programs, other programs, activities for the Brethren, activities for the family and Masonic family, community activities.

**Building the Team:** picking and evaluating your officers, holding officer meetings, building a multi-year program, and balancing the home and Masonic obligations of your officers.

**Attracting Candidates and Turning Them into Dedicated Masons**

**Motivating Your Members**

## II. Planning Your Meetings and Activities

We start with “planning your meetings and activities,” not because it is the hardest or most difficult of the four topics, but because it tends to worry most of us the most, and getting a jump on this is helpful because you want sufficient lead-time to invite speakers, publicize events and make all necessary preparations.

### A. The Structure of the Meeting.

Before I get into specifics about programs, I want you to think about the Stated Communication in a very special way. Your Stated Meeting is a crucial element in the life of your Lodge. Good meetings keep the Brethren active and energized. Poor meetings lead to poor attendance and reduced participation in the Lodge and in Freemasonry. So a key part of your responsibilities as Worshipful Master is to effectively manage this block of time in the life of your Lodge we call the Stated Communication.

As a guideline, a meeting ought to last about two hours. A very short meeting that has no real content is a waste of everyone’s time and should be avoided. But a meeting that is much longer than two hours is an imposition on everyone’s time, and it also should be avoided.

The next issue for the Worshipful Master is how to best fill the two hours. Again, as a guideline, I would suggest an hour of substance and a half hour of administrative issues. I suggest that the substance come first, both as a courtesy to the speakers and so the members are able to concentrate on the program while they are fresh.

#### 1. The Main Event

**Right after opening the Lodge, the Worshipful Master should have the featured speaker give a 20 minute presentation, with perhaps another 20 minutes for questions and discussion.** The discussion part of the program is sometimes as important as the talk itself. This is because while talking heads are fine, up to a point, a lively discussion keeps the interest of the Brethren and gets them involved. The bottom line is that you want the Brethren to have experienced something at the meeting that is interesting and exciting, and perhaps motivating. The “takeaway” should be something he can talk about with his colleagues or his wife when they ask him what he did at Lodge last night.

#### 2. Two Additional Program Elements

The second item on the agenda should be a short educational program by one or even two of the Brethren lasting 5-10 minutes. We need to involve the Brethren, and

asking a Brother to give a 5 minute presentation on some Masonic topic during the course of a year is not too much to ask. It will encourage him to do some research online or to read a Masonic article or book and report back to the Lodge. This is an important role for the Brother, and it will contribute to the Masonic education of both the Brother giving the short talk and the members listening to it.

The third item should be a “let me tell you about myself” talk by one of the Brethren. This could be autobiographical or simply a brief talk on a hobby or interest or an interesting experience. Again we are talking about 5-10 minutes. There should be no specific requirement as to what the Brother has to say, so he will neither feel that his privacy is being violated nor that he is constrained in what he wants to say. This part of the program is designed to ensure that the Brethren know each other better. This is important because the more the Brethren know about each other, the stronger their ties and the stronger the Lodge. And, again, asking a Brother to talk about something of interest for 5-10 minutes is not a difficult assignment.

### **3. The Business Part of the Meeting**

These three talks should result in an interesting evening and a good Masonic experience for the Brethren, but all together take only about an hour, leaving the next half hour for the secretary to clear his desk and for you to take care of business and introductions. And given the two-hour guideline, you have a half hour slack time in case something runs over.

As Worshipful Master you should consider yourself the stage manager or director of the meeting. You want to allow more time when interesting events are occurring, and move things along when they bog down or get boring. Accordingly, as Worshipful Master you should streamline the meeting where possible. Thus, if announcements are taking too long, consider having most of them typed up before the meeting and passed around to the Brethren. This will have more impact, save time, and leave the Brethren with something they can keep and refer to. Similarly, you should ask the Secretary to clear his desk rather than wasting time asking if there are new petitions, maturing petitions, bills, etc. The Secretary can cover what is on his desk without this dialogue. And, of course, the Master will want to ensure that the minutes are summarized – to cover the major events of the meeting. There is nothing more discouraging then to listen to a long recitation of the minutes where the Secretary rereads the correspondence, or identifies each committee selected to do introductions and details the progress of the Brother from the altar to the East. The Brethren were there. They don't want to hear it a second time. As Worshipful Master you want to work with your secretary so that minutes take no more than five minutes to read.

### **3. Dinner before the Meeting**

There is one last point to consider. If it is at all possible, it would be a good idea to have a dinner before the meeting. There are three reasons why this will boost attendance. First, except for those directly involved in the program or very excited about their Lodge, Brethren who go home, kick off their shoes and have dinner are not prone to go back out to attend a meeting. Second, if the Brethren come to Lodge directly from work, they will very hungry if they have to wait until after the meeting to eat. And third, many of the Brethren may have to get up quite early in the morning, and may have to leave right after the meeting. A dinner before the meeting gives them time to socialize with their Brethren.

### **B. General – Building the Agenda**

In building your agenda, you need to take care of required programs and then add to that.

**Meetings: Certain Obligatory Lodge Programs** - There are at least seven program elements that might be labeled obligatory.

1. Reception of the District Deputy Grand Master
2. Visit of the District Masonic Home Ambassador
3. Founders' Day Program
4. Visit of the District Blood Coordinator
5. Visit of the District Education Officer
6. Visit of the District Instructor of Work
7. Discussion of Grand Lodge Resolutions in Advance of Grand Lodge

**Other Lodge Programs:** There are also a number of other programs that you may wish to consider.

8. Past Master's Night
9. Warden's Night
10. George Washington or Patriotic Program
11. Community Service Presentation



12. Eagle Scout & Girl Scout Gold Award Presentations
13. Scholarship Award Presentation
14. Bring A Friend Nights
15. Bring A Mason Night

**Additional Programs:** If there will be a special occasion during your year as Worshipful Master, you may want to invite the Grand Master to attend. Because his calendar is planned years in advance, to ensure his availability you will need to ask him when you are Junior Warden and he is the Grand Senior Warden. In addition to meetings at your Lodge there are a number of social and community service programs that can be a part of your Masonic year.

**Additional Programs - For the Brethren:**

16. Lodge Visitations and the Traveling Gavel
17. Special Visitations
18. Fishing Trips, Golf Outings, and Baseball Games

**Additional Programs - For the Family and Masonic Family**

19. Lodge Picnic
20. Dinner Theatre
21. Ladies Night
22. St. John's Worship Service
23. Everything Day

**Other Programs - Community Service**

24. Blood Drives
25. Child ID Programs
26. Daily Telephone Contact with Widows and Elderly
27. Adopt a Resident and Visits to the Masonic Home

By now you should feel somewhat more relaxed – you have more than enough to fill the calendar and the trestleboard for your Masonic year. But let me also tell you that next year your Grand Lodge and the Committee on Masonic Education will be providing you a safety net. Each Lodge will receive an educational program each month. We are not telling you that you have to use the program, but if your speaker gets sick, or if you can't get a speaker, this way you can still have a program for your Stated Communication. It will be written in spoken English and you can simply select a Brother can present it to the Lodge.

### **C. More Detailed Planning**

Once you have decided upon a tentative agenda for your year, what do you do next? The five points listed below are essential building blocks for developing support for your programs and ensuring that they are a success.

1. **Discuss** your draft agenda with your officers, past masters, and some of the Brethren.

Your year will be most successful if the Brethren see it less as your program and more as their program. You can move in this direction by circulating a draft program for discussion. You may get additional ideas, you will see where there is enthusiasm for some things and a lack of interest in others, but most of all you will get their buy-in.

Even with respect to the so-called “mandatory” programs, if you discuss them with the Brethren you may get new ideas as to how to make them more interesting.

2. When you have gained agreement or consensus on your agenda, **delegate responsibility** to plan each meeting or program to two of the Brethren or to one of the officers teamed with one of the newer Brethren.

It is not that you cannot do it yourself, but you cannot do everything and it is better to delegate. This helps to keep your long-time members actively engaged, and it is important to get new Brethren involved in the work of the Lodge. One of the best ways of keeping your newer members active is by giving them a significant task and then helping them to achieve a result.

3. **Pay Attention to Details:** This minimizes disasters and makes the difficult look easy. For example, in planning a program with an invited speaker, keep in mind the following six points.

- a. Line up your speakers well in advance.
- b. Clearly communicate your expectations as to what you want them to cover and how long to speak.

- c. Keep in regular touch with your speaker and advise him about what is happening in the Lodge so the talk can be more tailored and more relevant.
- d. Ensure there is a point of contact for the speaker who will check if there are special requirements (for example, a computer, a slide projector or VCR), who will provide clear directions to the Lodge, and who will greet and stay with your speaker.
- e. No matter how much business you need to conduct, plan to have your speaker give his talk early in the evening while the Brethren are alert and receptive. That also gives the speaker an option to leave early.
- f. Have a back-up plan for the unexpected emergency. For example, plan now to have a talk or a speaker held in reserve in case a scheduled speaker fails to appear.

4. **Build a Communications Plan:** You will, of course, put out a trestleboard announcing your program, but consider other ways to develop awareness of and enthusiasm for your programs in order to ensure a respectable turnout.

5. **Make Each Program Serve Double Duty:** Do not view a program as a box you check off to fill a void between clearing the secretary's desk and reading the minutes. Instead, use the program as a platform to achieve some Lodge purpose. In the discussion of the various programs that follows, examine how your main speaker or program can serve double duty.

Too often when the DDGM, DIW, DEO, Blood Coordinator, or Masonic Home Ambassador is paying a visit to the Lodge he is the program. This is not right. Unless your official visitor has agreed to give the feature presentation, you should not expect him to carry the meeting. You want to impress him with your program for the evening, not expect him to be the program. But you do want to consider linking the program with the visitor. For example, when the DDGM pays his official visit, have a great program to impress him with the quality of your meetings. And, rather than passively listening to the DDGM talk about the GM's program, you should use the occasion of the official visit to tell the DDGM how the Lodge is planning to support that program.

Using this approach, you will want to outline what Lodge projects are planned to help the Masonic Home when the MAHOVA Ambassador is paying his official visit. And your program might be to have a speaker talk about financial planning or retirement that evening. This will make the Ambassador's talk even more relevant. Similarly, you will want to discuss the schedule of Lodge blood programs when the District Blood Coordinator is paying his official visit. And you might consider having a speaker talk about aging or health issues that evening. Again, this will provide a great lead in for his remarks. And unless the DEO or DIW is going to present your main program, it would

be suitable to have a talk on Masonic history, philosophy or symbolism when these District officers are visiting.

## **D. A Review of Each Program**

Below are some additional ideas and planning considerations with respect to each of the 26 possible programs listed above. Although we list 26 programs, you could easily double the list and you should work with your Lodge to find new programs that will capture the interests of your Lodge Brethren.

### **1. Reception of the District Deputy Grand Master**

By the time the DDGM pays his official visit to your Lodge, you and your officers should know the specifics of the Grand Master's program. Link the DDGM visit to a discussion of your annual Lodge program plan and how it complies with the Grand Master's program.

The DDGM visit also is a good time to have a discussion about Grand Lodge in general. If your Lodge's attendance at Grand Lodge is spotty, have a Past Master or PDDGM who has recently or regularly attended Grand Lodge explain what occurs. Review the resolutions that passed and some of those that failed. Go over the Jurisprudence Committee process and the opportunity to discuss resolutions at Grand Lodge. Stimulate a discussion at the meeting about any changes that your members may want to see in the Methodical Digest. And, if there are issues of concern, appoint a committee to study whether a resolution should be submitted to Grand Lodge.

This approach has at least three advantages: It will more closely link your Lodge's activities with Grand Lodge programs, and it will increase understanding of the role and purpose of Grand Lodge and encourage members to attend the Grand Annual Communication.

Second, it may encourage members to attend the Division Leadership Conferences where they can meet the Grand Line Officers and where each Lodge Officer can meet and discuss issues with their Grand Lodge counterpart.

Third, it may also stimulate thinking about the Methodical Digest and what the law says, identify concerns about the way the Lodge and the Fraternity operates, and perhaps generate ideas for improvement.

## **2. Visit of the District Masonic Home Ambassador**

The objective of the District Masonic Home Ambassador's official visit is to give greater visibility to the Masonic Home. Some Lodges have been enthusiastic supporters year after year, but even here new and different approaches can spark even greater enthusiasm. Other Lodges have been more tentative in their support and, if this is the case in your Lodge, you will want to focus your District Masonic Home Ambassador on the reasons for such lukewarm support. You will want to use this official visit to raise awareness about the Home and its value to the Fraternity, the Lodge and all of its members, and to enable your members to ask questions about the Home and its functions.

From the perspective of making each program serve double duty, you could use this official visit to launch your fundraising efforts for the Home for the year, to launch a special project dealing with the Home from a wish list provided by the District Masonic Home Ambassador (for example, buying an exercise bike to aid in resident fitness programs), or in conjunction with the "Adopt a Resident" program discussed later.

But don't forget, the Home is there for all of us and so don't neglect to explain to the Brethren what is available there. First, and most important, it is there for any of us who may find ourselves in real financial difficulty. Despite any reverses we may suffer, we have a real safety net. The Home is the place for us to have a happy, secure, and fulfilling old age. And what makes this place different from other retirement communities is the caring and sharing among the residents – in short our great Masonic way of life is imbedded in our Masonic Home. And given that special atmosphere and the availability of everything from full independence to assisted living, to the care center and the beautiful, state of the art memory support wing, all of us should examine whether this might be the community we want to retire to. There are rooms and two bedroom cottages for the paying residents. Everyone should check it out – and Family Day at the Home might be a particularly convenient time to do so.

## **3. Founders' Day Program**

This program is generally focused on the Masonic Home of Virginia, but it also is an opportunity for your Lodge historian or any Brother with a historical bent to present a short 5-10 minute program on the early history of the Grand Lodge of Virginia or on some of the major changes in Virginia Freemasonry over the years. There is an impression that the injunction that there be no innovations in the body of Masonry means that the way we have done things has not changed over time. Your members will be interested in learning about the evolution of the catechism and that for a substantial part of our history there was no memorization requirement, or how the rules on balloting have changed over the years.

In addition, you may ask your Lodge historian to provide a bit of history about the Masonic Home – how it came to be founded, its early role as an orphanage and some of the orphans who grew up at the Home and went on to successful and challenging careers, how it changed to its current status as a senior citizen’s residence community, and its growth over the years to meet the changing needs of Virginia Freemasons.

Finally, you might ask your Lodge Masonic Home Ambassador to reflect back to the visit of the District Masonic Home Ambassador and take stock of the progress you have made in meeting the goals you set for supporting the Home.

#### **4. Visit of the District Blood Coordinator**

Few of the programs we Masons support are more important than the blood program. Statistically all of us will need blood at some point in our lives and we all know of family members, neighbors, and friends who have had medical emergencies requiring blood. Not every one can give blood, but even those who cannot can encourage a family member or a friend to become a part of the program.

Fear of giving blood and a lack of motivation to give are the two biggest impediments to a successful program. Your use of the visit of the Blood Coordinator to revitalize your blood program is important. And nowhere is a telephone tree more important to remind and get out the donors. But, instead of just relying on our traditional approach of announcing a date for the blood drive and inviting all to attend, you also might consider building self-sustaining teams of three to give blood together on a regular schedule. They can make it a social occasion, going together and then going to lunch or a movie.

#### **5. Visit of the District Education Officer**

The visit of your DEO should be a high point of the Masonic year, but the key to Masonic education in your Lodge should be your Lodge Education Officer and the support you give him.

Masonic education should not be reserved for one meeting but needs to be infused into every Masonic occasion. At a minimum, your LEO or a designee should give a Masonic education talk at each and every meeting.

The candidate joins the Fraternity at least in part because he is interested in learning about Freemasonry. And the fact is that Masons educated in Freemasonry become dedicated and committed Masons; Masons who are not educated in Freemasonry fall away from the Fraternity after a brief period. So we neglect Masonic education at our peril.

You might ask how, with crowded meetings and busy schedules, we meet the challenge? Here are some suggestions.

- i. Have your LEO pick out a topic for each meeting, drawing upon the monthly MSA Short Talk Bulletin, or on subjects found in the Philaethes Magazine, the Scottish Rite Journal, or other Masonic publications.
- ii. At a District Meeting share your list of education topics for the year with the other Masters and, working with the DEO and the LEOs, seek to have a non-duplicative list from all the Lodges in the District so that a Brother visiting any Lodge in the District will add to his Masonic knowledge.
- iii. All you want is a 5-7 minute talk. You will be amazed at how much you can communicate in that time.
- iv. Try to leave at least a couple of minutes to invite questions. The more sidliner participation there is the more interesting the meeting will be. Members who participate are engaged, members who are engaged are not bored, and members who are not bored return meeting after meeting.

The bottom line is that your DEO visit should not only be the occasion for a great talk on Masonic Education, it should help you to solidify a year-long Masonic education program in your Lodge, if not in the District.

## 6. Visit of the District Instructor of Work

The official visit of your DIW should help to stimulate interest in the ritual. The ritual is full of symbolism, and many experienced Masons, and certainly most of the newer Masons, have only a vague and cursory understanding of the full meaning of the ritual. So the visit of the DIW is a wonderful opportunity to shed additional Masonic light on the deeper meaning of our degrees and ceremonies. At an officer's meeting or in Lodge, you might solicit questions about parts of the ritual the Brethren would like explained, and then let the DIW know about some of the topics that are of particular interest to your Lodge.

## 7. Discussion of Grand Lodge Resolutions

**After the Call is issued, and before the Grand Annual Communication, plan to have an officer or other knowledgeable Brother read the resolutions to be considered at Grand Lodge and lead a discussion of their merits.** This gives the Brethren a better understanding of some of what goes on at Grand Lodge and

gives the Worshipful Master an appreciation for the views of his Lodge Brethren on some of the issues that will be under consideration.

## **8. Past Masters' Night**

Your Past Masters can be a terrific resource for you and can contribute a great deal to the Lodge, so keeping them active is important. One way to recognize the active Past Masters and encourage the return of those who are less active is to have a well-planned Past Master's Night program.

One idea is to have a dinner before the meeting, and perhaps have the Past Masters occupy all of the chairs and run the meeting for you. You might, in addition, give each Past Master the opportunity to talk about the highlights of his year or ask one of the Past Masters to put on the program for the evening.

Since the objective is to involve the Past Masters, it might be useful to call a meeting of your Past Masters and ask that they plan the program.

## **9. Warden's Night**

Nothing sharpens the mind quite like the need to actually perform, and having all of your officers move up one position and having your Senior Warden in the East during one meeting is a useful exercise. Plan this meeting for the latter part of the year and ask the Wardens to take responsibility for planning the entire meeting including a program.

## **10. George Washington Program**

Freemasonry values and inculcates patriotism. The George Washington program is an opportunity to explain how Masonic values played a role in the life of Brother Washington. Many of our founding fathers were Masons and there have been many eminent Masons throughout the history of our great country. One idea, that might even be adopted as a District project, is to develop a list of Great Masons by decade or century in a number of fields such as politics, medicine, sports and then provide a page or paragraph long biography of each Brother.

## **11. Community Builder's Award Presentation**

A program that you can schedule either as a separate open meeting or as part of your regular meeting, calling from labor to refreshment, is a Community



Builder's Award Presentation. To give you more assistance in how to plan such a program we will address it in greater detail.

A good way for Masons to support their community and the citizens who labor on its behalf is to **recognize those community leaders and "good Samaritans"** who have helped to make a difference in the community in the past year or past several years. This might be the mayor or other official, a police officer or fireman, a teacher or civil servant. The person recognized need not be an elected or appointed official or a civil servant, but could be anyone who has benefited the community.

By presenting these awards for community service, we not only show our appreciation for the contributions of these individuals, we also bring Freemasonry to the attention of the broader community.

The Grand Lodge has established two awards with handsome certificates suitable for framing.

There is the **Community Builder's Award** for non-Masons who have made a significant contribution to the community; and the **Award of Excellence** for a non-Mason of recognized character and accomplishment in his or her chosen field.

The first step is to appoint an Award Program Chairman and a committee to select a person for one or both of these awards and to plan the program. Then sit down with your Chairman and committee to outline for them the following ten-step plan.

1. The first task is to determine the award to be given and the type of person to be awarded. One approach is to pick an organization each year, rather than an individual. The Lodge, for example, might select the police department this year, the fire department the next year, and a hospital the third year. If this approach is adopted, the Chairman would make contact, for example, with the police or fire chief, or hospital administrator early in the year, state that the Lodge wishes to give an award and recognition to an outstanding employee, and let the chief or the department head select the individual.

A second approach is to have the committee recommend one or more specific individuals to the Lodge. The members of the Lodge could then vote for the individual who would receive the award.

2. After the selection criterion and approach has been decided, it is necessary to establish a timetable.

Select the date when the award will be presented, leaving plenty of time for preparation and planning. Ensure that the individual who is to receive the

award is selected well in advance of the time of presentation so that the certificate or plaque can be prepared, friends of the awardee can be notified, a speaker can be invited, and publicity arranged.

\*Be sure the date does not conflict with other major events and, if another organization is involved (i.e., the police department), that the date is convenient for that organization.

3. Decide whether the award will be presented in Lodge or at another location, and whether at a stated communication or at a different time.

4. Plan to have a meal before the presentation and dessert or light refreshments afterward, and appoint someone to be responsible for the meal and refreshments.

5. Decide whether there will be a speaker before or immediately after the award presentation and, if so, appoint someone to obtain the speaker.

\*The speaker should be able to talk on a topic that bears some relationship to the work for which the awardee is being honored. The speaker could be a Mason, whether or not a member of the Lodge, an individual from the organization or profession to which the awardee belongs, or a person who knows the awardee.

\*The speaker should get a written invitation with the time he or she is to appear, the amount of time he or she is to speak, and clear directions to the Lodge or place where the presentation will be held. A contact person and phone number must be included in the letter, and the contact person must stay in touch with the speaker to ensure that there is no mix-up or last minute change of plans.

6. Contact the awardee to be sure he or she will accept the award and that the date is convenient. Determine if the awardee would like to make some remarks upon receipt of the award, and perhaps talk about his or her activities. By giving the awardee time to think about this, you will increase the chance that his remarks will be polished and informative.

\*As with the speaker, the awardee should get a written invitation with the time he or she is to appear, the amount of time he or she is to speak, and clear directions to the Lodge or place where the presentation will be held. Again, provide a contact person to stay in touch with the awardee.

7. Decide whether a certificate or a plaque will be given to the awardee. Have the certificate filled out and framed, or the plaque engraved.

8. Contact local radio and television stations that do public service spots and provide them with information about the award ceremony and the speaker. Also provide the local newspapers, especially the community newspapers, with press releases about the event so that a feature article might be written or, at a minimum, the award presentation listed in the community events section.
9. Work with the organization, if any, to which the awardee belongs. That organization may help you publicize the event.
10. Be sure the award presentation is featured in your Lodge trestleboard, and be sure to inform the other Lodges in your area. When you are within two weeks of the event, start a telephone tree to remind the members and their families to attend the presentation.

**RECOMMENDED PRESS RELEASE:**

Contact: John Smith  
Henry Lodge  
234 Elm Street  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 445-1234

**STEVE R. HOWE TO RECEIVE COVETED MASONIC AWARD**

**FAIRFAX, SEPTEMBER 3:** The Community Builder's Award, one of the most prestigious awards that Virginia Freemasons can award, is being presented to Fairfax County police officer Steve Howe for his work with area teens.

This year, the members of Henry Lodge in Fairfax will present the Community Builder's Award to officer Steve Howe at a special dinner and program to be held at the Lodge on September 22, 2006. Howe's many friends in the community, and the public are cordially invited to attend.

Officer Howe, assigned to the McLean District Station, has devoted many hours of his own time to working with area youth and is credited with turning bored teens away from drugs and toward community service projects to help the homeless.

Henry Masonic Lodge is located at 234 Elm Street, Fairfax. For more information, call (703) 445-1234.

**RECOMMENDED RADIO/TV SPOT**

**COMMUNITY BUILDER'S AWARD  
30 SECONDS**

On September 22, 2006 at 7:30 P.M. Henry Masonic Lodge in Fairfax will present the Community Builder's Award to officer Steve Howe, an outstanding police officer and citizen of Fairfax County.

All of you, his friends and neighbors, are invited to be with him on this important evening when he receives this special recognition for his work with area teens.

For more information call (703) 445-1234.

### **COMMUNITY BUILDER'S AWARD 60 SECONDS**

For ten years, Steve Howe has been a citizen of Fairfax County and a valued member of its police force. In addition to his distinguished work on the force, he has devoted many hours of his own time to working with high school students, encouraging them to avoid drugs and to get involved in helping others less fortunate. Through his efforts he has gotten area teens to become a major force helping to feed the homeless.

On September 22, 2006, local Masons, members of one the oldest fraternal organizations in the world, will honor officer Howe with the Community Builder's Award. This honor will be presented to him at a special dinner and program at 7:30 P.M. at Henry Lodge, 234 Elm Street in Fairfax. You and your family are cordially invited.

For more information call (703) 445-1234.

## **12. Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold Award Presentations**

**The Grand Lodge of Virginia supports scouting and recognizes young men who attain the rank of Eagle Scout and young women who achieve the Girl Scout Gold Award. A Grand Lodge certificate can be presented to Eagle Scouts and to Girl Scout Gold Award winners in your area.**

The principles of scouting are in accord with many of the principles and values of Freemasons and it is appropriate that we recognize those young men and women whose achievements have enabled them to reach the highest ranks in the Boy and Girl Scouts.

A well-planned program is also a very good community outreach effort, particularly if the family, friends, teachers, and scout leaders of the young man or woman being honored are also invited.

## **13. Scholarship Award Presentation**

Many Lodges have set up scholarship programs and solicit applications each year from needy and deserving students. Often the scholarships are given to young

men and women with some Masonic relationship. But, even then, inviting the family, friends and teachers of those being granted scholarship awards can help to introduce Freemasonry to those who are unfamiliar with our Fraternity.

## 14. Bring A Friend Night

There are few programs more important to a Lodge than the “Bring a Friend Night” or Lodge Open House Program. We are proud that as Freemasons we contributed over \$700 million to charity last year. However, we should not overlook an important non-monetary contribution we all can make, and that is bringing a worthy friend into our Fraternity.

Freemasonry seeks to build a better world by building better men, and when we raise a Brother who lives his Masonry, that individual has an impact on others. When our Lodge is active, it has an impact on the community in which it is located. Finally, the fraternity as a whole, by working together for the betterment of the larger community, can be a force for good in the world.

All of this good begins with the individual Mason and, so, when we hold a "Bring a Friend to Lodge" program, we are doing something quite important.

It is necessary, in this regard, to be clear about the non-solicitation rule. We will not stand on the street corner with a sheaf of petitions asking if anyone wants to join. **There can be no coercion; a man must come of his own free will and accord. But as our Grand Master has pointed out, none of this should be interpreted as preventing us from discussing Masonry with others, from approaching those we know and respect and who we consider to be a potentially suitable applicant, and encouraging them to consider becoming a part of Freemasonry and joining our Lodge.**

Given the importance of this event, we address the planning for it in greater detail, particularly since you may wish to plan a series of "Bring a Friend to Lodge" programs, perhaps one each quarter (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall). Each time you hold one, your Lodge hones its ability to run these evenings, and the experience which the Brethren acquire in participating in such a program will help teach them how to gain members at the Lodge's other open Lodge events – because every open Lodge event should be an opportunity for the Lodge to increase its membership!

The first step, and by now you know the drill, is to appoint a committee with three or four Brothers to be responsible for the event. And here is what you need to instruct them to do:

### 1. **Engage the Brethren and Establish a Telephone Subcommittee:**

The purpose is to reach out to all of the Brethren and encourage their support and participation. The goal is to have every Brother bring at least one guest. This is a realistic goal that every Brother is capable of fulfilling, but the success of your program will depend on getting the commitment of a number of the Brethren to invite and bring a guest. The committee must keep a count of those who will attend so that **invitations can be sent out** and there are ample refreshments on hand for all in attendance.

The committee should speak with the Brethren a week before the open house to remind them to call their guests a couple of days before the event to confirm their attendance. It is a good idea for each Brother to go to his guest's home and drive him to lodge. This ensures that the guest will not get lost, will feel more comfortable, and probably will have a better time.

### 2. **Prepare Invitations and a Program Agenda:**

The invitations can be plain or fancy, but they should contain an explanation of the event and relevant information such as dress, time, and the location of the Lodge. The invitations can be sent out by the committee or given by each of the Brethren to the friends they invite. In addition, it is helpful to have a typed agenda. It adds class to the occasion and helps everyone keep on a tighter time schedule.

### 3. **Set Up the Program:**

We suggest the following tried, tested and successful program, but you should feel free to improve upon it, or be creative and innovative and come up with your own plan.

During the course of the evening we want to expose qualified men, your guests, to a sampling of:

Masonic History

Masonic Literature

A Mason's Commitment to his Community through Masonic Charity and Community Service

The Degree System and Masonic Regalia

The Uplifting Symbolism of the Working Tools, and,  
Masonic Fellowship

To accomplish all of this, your "Brother Bring a Friend Night" could consist of a series of three 10-minute presentations and a 20-minute video. The suggested program could be set up as follows:

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <u>Receive guests in the Lodge Room</u>           | (7:30-7:45 P.M.) |
| <u>Program in the Lodge Room</u>                  | (7:45-8:45 P.M.) |
| Welcome by the Master of Ceremonies               | 5 minutes        |
| Speaker 1: Masonic History and Some Famous Masons | 10 minutes       |
| Speaker 2: Masonic Community Service Programs     | 10 minutes       |
| Video   | 20 minutes       |
| Speaker 3: The Degree System in Freemasonry       | 10 minutes       |
| Closing Remarks by the Worshipful Master          | 5 minutes        |
| <u>Program in the Social Hall</u>                 | (8:45-9:30 P.M.) |
| Review of the Displays                            | 15 minutes       |
| Questions and Answers                             | 10 minutes       |
| Refreshment and Fellowship                        | 20 minutes       |

Welcome and Closing Remarks are important because they set the tone for the evening. The welcoming remarks should put everyone at ease and make it clear that the program will be interesting and informative, and the evening enjoyable. The Master of Ceremonies should ask each person to introduce himself in a sentence or two, but there should not be long or formal Masonic introductions! Similarly, the closing remarks by the Worshipful Master should set the stage for the displays, the fellowship, and the refreshments to follow. The guests should be invited to ask questions and made to feel at home.

4. Obtain the Speakers and Films:

It is extremely important that you enlist Brothers who are powerful and impressive speakers. There may be good speakers in your Lodge, but feel free

to consult with your District Officers, if you need help in finding the right speaker.

The speakers from outside the Lodge should get a written invitation with the time they are to appear, the amount of time they are to speak, and clear directions to the Lodge. A contact person and phone number must be included, and the contact person must stay in touch with the speaker to ensure that there is no mix-up or last-minute change of plans.

\*Speaker 1, who is to speak on Masonic history, should be prepared to touch upon the development of Masonry in Europe and its origins and influence in America. He should speak about the Masonic principles of Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love, and talk about some famous American Masons.

\*Speaker 2, who is to speak on community service, should spotlight the estimated \$2 million a day Masons contribute to charity, the charities of the Grand Lodge and the Masonic family organizations, and the work being done by your Lodge.

\*Speaker 3, who is to speak on the degree system, should explain the Masonic tradition that prospective members have to request to join. He should touch upon what Masonry offers, focusing on the friendships made all over the state, the country, and the world; the service to the community; and the chance for self-improvement. He also should cover the petition and the degree process, and the necessary time commitment. Finally, he could explain something about how we are organized into Lodges, Districts and a Grand Lodge.

Films and videos –generally about 20 minutes long --and which explain various aspects of Masonry in an interesting way, are available from Grand Lodge (1-804-222-3110), the Imperial Shrine Headquarters (1-813-281-0300), the Masonic Renewal Committee of North America, which is sanctioned by the Conference of Grand Masters (1-888-891-8235 – toll free), and the Masonic Service Association (1-301-588-4010). These include:

“Understanding What It Means to be A Mason”  
Masonic Renewal Committee of North America

“Friend to Friend”  
Masonic Renewal Committee of North America

“I’ve Heard the Name, What Does it Mean?”  
Masonic Renewal Committee of North America

"Symbol of Pride"



Produced by the Imperial Shrine and describing the true meaning of Freemasonry

"Quiet Fraternity"

Produced by the Grand Lodge of Connecticut -- describing Masonic history--from operative Masonry to today's Lodge, and detailing Masonic concern for humanity--from youth organizations to the elderly

"Freemasons: Who Are They?"

Produced by the Grand Lodge of Oregon

"Brotherhood and Service"

Produced by the Grand Lodge of New York explaining Freemasonry

"Onward Brother Masons,"

A documentary depicting Masonic pomp and ceremony in Australia

"The Freemasons,"

A longer film produced by the Grand Lodge of England, which depicts English Freemasonry and answers a host of questions about our fraternity.

##### 5. Obtain Supplies and Set Up the Displays:

Display tables set up in the Social Hall are an important part of the evening. They should provide interesting information to supplement the Lodge Room program, and they should stimulate our guests, escorted by the Brethren who invited them, to ask questions and seek answers. Each exhibit should have a written explanation attached to it, but knowledgeable Brethren also should be at each table to comment on the display and answer questions. The displays might include:

**Masonic regalia:** include officers' jewels and working tools, as well as a variety of Masonic aprons (the white lambskin apron, the officers' aprons, the Past Master's apron, the purple District aprons, and any other aprons available to the Lodge such as Grand Lodge officers' aprons and aprons from other Grand jurisdictions).

**Masonic literature:** include a wide range of old and new Masonic Books and publications, for example, of the Grand Lodge, Philalethes, York and Scottish Rite, and Shrine. The display is meant to show our guests the richness of our heritage and the extent of our activities.

**Masonic Information:** include information about Lodge activities and a variety of Masonic brochures, such as "For Your Information" should be available for the guests to take and read.

6. Fellowship and Refreshments:

Some Lodges might want to serve a complete meal, but providing some tasty desserts in the Social Hall where the displays are set up has worked well. The time in the Social Hall is for socializing, so keep it light and introduce your guest to some of the members and let them converse together. Be ready to answer any additional questions, but keep in mind that you are not there to give a hard sell, push your guest to join, or even give him a petition--unless he asks for one. However, if he does ask, be sure to have one with you, and present it to him for his immediate completion, if possible. Read it over and be sure to sign it as a voucher.

7. Post Event Steps:

Have the committee and the inviting Brother follow-up after the evening is over. If you keep in touch with those who have attended the Bring A Friend Night, then, if they have an interest in Freemasonry, they will ask to join.

Remember, that one purpose behind any Lodge event involving the public is to seek out and follow-up on qualified prospective members who, because of our efforts, are interested in learning more about Freemasonry. So this post event step also is important after other open Lodge events. Always be sure to obtain the names and telephone numbers of everyone who attends your open event. Without undue delay, contact those who are worthy of your interest. Invite them to your home, visit them in their homes, or invite them to your next open Lodge event. Follow-through is important and there should be at least one contact per month to give the individual an opening to ask for more information and see if he is interested in joining.

**RECOMMENDED PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: John Smith  
Hay Market Lodge  
134 Fir Street  
Haymarket, VA 22069  
(703) 444-1234

**MASONS TAKE "THE MYSTERY OUT OF FREEMASONRY"  
AT SPECIAL FRIEND'S NIGHT PROGRAM**

**HAYMARKET, SEPTEMBER 7:** On Monday evening, September 25, 2006, Hay Market Masonic Lodge will sponsor a special "Friend's Night" program that will explain to members of the community more about the world's oldest and largest fraternal organization. The program will begin at 7:30 P.M. with refreshments and dessert to follow.

Bob Baker, the presiding officer of Hay Market Lodge said that the program would feature brief presentations on the origins of Freemasonry, its ritual and traditions and what it contributes to the community. There will be exhibits and a chance to ask the questions you've always wanted to ask.

Baker noted that some of America's most famous citizens have been Masons, like John Hancock and Benjamin Franklin--who were among the nine signers of the Declaration of Independence known to be Masons. Baker added that former astronaut and Senator John Glenn and former President Gerald Ford also are Masons. "I am certain that the men and their families who attend this Friend's Night program," Baker said, "will be surprised to learn of the many friends and neighbors who are members of the Masonic fraternity.

For more information about the program, phone (703) 444-1234.

### **RECOMMENDED RADIO/TV SPOT**

#### **MASONIC FRIEND'S NIGHT 30 SECONDS**

Masonry, what it is and what it stands for, will be the topic of discussion on September 25, 2006, at 7:30 P.M. at Hay Market Masonic Lodge in Haymarket.

Gather with your friends and neighbors for an evening of discovery and fellowship. Learn how the world's oldest fraternal organization continues its important work.

Call (703) 444-1234 for information.

#### **MASONIC FRIEND'S NIGHT 60 SECONDS**

What is Freemasonry all about? You and your friends can learn about this ancient fraternal order on Monday evening September 25, 2006, at 7:30 P.M.

On that night members of Hay Market Lodge will present a short but informative program, answer your questions about Masonry, and furnish dessert and refreshments.

You'll be surprised how many of those Masons have been your friends and neighbors in Haymarket for years.

Masonry is not the secret society it's rumored to be. You'll be surprised at what you will learn about the Fraternity, how community minded it is, and of the famous people throughout history who were Masons, such as General George S. Patton, President Harry S. Truman, Chief Justice Earl Warren, actor John Wayne and many many more, including fourteen U.S. Presidents.

Call (703) 444-1234 for more information about this evening of fellowship with your local Masons.

## **15. Bring A Mason Night**

Almost as important as the “Bring A Friend Night” is the “Bring A Mason Night” program. The former is important because attracting new members is key to our survival as an organization. This program is important because reactivating our existing Masons can mean the difference between a strong, active, and successful Lodge and one in decline. You should consider every meeting, called or stated, as part of your Bring A Mason program, and you should do something to encourage at least one Brother who does not generally attend Lodge to come to each of your meetings. In section V of this publication, “Motivating Your Members,” you will find a number of ideas that may be of help.

But the “Bring a Mason Night” program is more specific. It is a special program to encourage members of your own Lodge who have not been active and have not attended Lodge meetings for years to come to a special meeting in order to refresh themselves with the signs, tokens, and words, to meet with all of the newer and now active Lodge Brethren, and to generally introduce or reintroduce themselves to the Lodge. It also seeks to attract sojourning Masons who have been in the area for some time but have not come to Lodge. As a result of your “Bring a Mason Night” Program, sometimes called the Order of the Rusty Nail or Rusty Trowel, inactive Brethren, whether from your Lodge or sojourning Masons, will feel at ease rather than uncomfortable, relaxed rather than embarrassed, when they attend your meetings and, as a result, will be more willing to come to a meeting.

Again, the first step is to appoint a committee, perhaps chaired by the Junior Warden, with three or four Brothers to be responsible for the event. The Chairman would provide overall coordination and direction for the event and perhaps be responsible for arranging the program. One member would be responsible for the outreach to inactive Lodge Brethren; a second member would be responsible for outreach to the sojourners. The third member would be responsible for arranging the screening and examination of sojourners at the meeting and for welcoming the Lodge Brethren, and the fourth would oversee the meal or refreshments.

After you have formed your committee, pick a date for the program that is several months in the future and then follow these four steps:

## 1. **Outreach to the Brethren**

Call all of the inactive Brethren to alert them to the meeting and solicit their attendance. Call repeatedly every couple of weeks, both to remind them and to establish a relationship so that they feel they know you and look forward to coming to the meeting. Most important, call the week before and again the day before to make certain they have not forgotten, encourage them to attend, and see if they need transportation to Lodge.

As you conduct your outreach and make contact with each Brother, ask him about his Lodge experiences and whom he was friendly with. You want to find out if someone now active knows him, and, if so, designate that Brother to call and to be the point of contact with him.

And, of course, when each of these Brethren arrive at Lodge, have someone designated to stay with him, so he is made welcome and doesn't feel alone.

One additional point, although you need a committee for this event, and you need one of the members of that committee to be the focal point for contacting inactive Brethren, you should consider every member of the Lodge to be a part of the committee, and you should energize all of your active members to make an effort to contact someone who has not been in Lodge for some time and offer to bring him to the event.

## 2. **Outreach to the Sojourners:**

For one month prior to the "Rusty Trowel" night, advertise the event in the local newspapers. The notice could read:

Sojourning Masons: If you have not attended Lodge in years, but would like to, if you are concerned that you might not be able to gain admittance because your work is too rusty, we have the solution for you! We will be putting on a special "Rusty Trowel" degree to get you back up to speed and give you an opportunity to meet the Brethren. Please call \_\_\_\_\_ for details."

The ads should be designed with oversized print to be both eye-catching and easy for someone with failing eyesight to read. A recommendation is that the first ad is two columns by four inches, and the second ad is one column by seven inches.

An essential part of the information, the time of the meeting, is purposely left out of the notice so the sojourning Brother will have to call the committee member in charge. When a call is received, you should find out

the person's name, mailing address, phone number, and his Lodge's name and number.

The information taken when the Brother calls allows you to be sure he is a member of a recognized Lodge, and also assists you to prepare name tags and first time visitor cards prior to the meeting. The inquiring Brother should be assured that the purpose of the degree is to prepare him to pass an examination without embarrassment.

To assure that the Brother does not get cold feet at the last minute, he should be called two days before the meeting by another Brother, who should inform the sojourner that he can be picked up and driven to Lodge if that would be helpful. And, remember, if you have limited help, one Brother can bring three sojourners with him to the Lodge.

When the sojourners arrive, they should have their dues cards checked. If no one sat in Lodge with the sojourner, your examination committee should examine him --gently and intelligently. The examination on Rusty Trowel night is a typical Tiler's examination. Ask enough questions to be certain the participant is a Master Mason, but be careful that the examination does not become an interrogation. Remember that the participants may not have been in Lodge for many years and we do not want to embarrass them. Accordingly, the examination committee should have been designated in advance and consist of Masons skilled in making others comfortable in a strange environment. The committee should have enough members to insure that the participants spend as little time as possible waiting for their examination.

### **3. Planning the Program:**

There are many ways to put on the program. Here is one idea. Have everyone gather in the Lodge room and be welcomed by the Master, who will introduce the officers and any distinguished guests. These introductions should be quick and short. Then have inactive Brethren and the sojourners introduce themselves and give a little of their Masonic history.

After introductions, the Master turns the program over to the committee members. The presentation could begin with a five-minute history of the Lodge and some of its recent activities. Then the Master of Ceremonies explains that the committee will demonstrate and explain, in examination form, all the important points of the three degrees of Freemasonry so that at the conclusion of tonight's work, no one should have difficulty in gaining admission to any Masonic Lodge anywhere." One or more of the Brethren should then demonstrate the signs, due guards, and words of each degree and perhaps review the highlights and teaching of each degree.

Give the Brethren an opportunity to go through the signs together and then have a quick review of the opening and closing of a Lodge, including a review of the gavel raps, the proper manner to address the Master and to enter or retire from a Lodge, the attitude of prayer, and the procedure followed in any Lodge for first time visitors. Review quickly other Lodge customs and procedures and leave a few minutes for questions and answers.

Immediately after this instruction, the Master should thank all for attending, review upcoming meetings and events of the Lodge and of some of the appendant bodies, and invite everyone to the social hall for refreshments.

### **4. Refreshments and Fellowship:**

If you have conducted the meeting efficiently, no more than an hour should have passed from the time you began and the night is still early. This leaves plenty of time for the Brethren to eat and talk. You want to have substantial refreshments, because a number of the Brethren may not have had time to go home from work to eat. And you want to ensure that the environment is conducive to good conversation and good fellowship, remembering and reminiscing about past Masonic experiences. Let the evening end early and be fun. Then follow up with each of the attendees and encourage them to come to a meeting and participate in an activity that may appeal to their interests.

One final point, if your Rusty Nail or Rusty Trowel program is a success, it will reactivate Lodge Brethren who have gotten into the habit of not attending. And it will provide sojourners in our jurisdiction the opportunity to renew their Masonic careers. Although a single Lodge can conduct the program, it also can be run as a District program. In the latter case, you will be able to share some of the expenses and obtain additional help with the presentations and other work.

## **16. Lodge Visitations and the Traveling Gavel**

One of the rights and benefits of Freemasonry is the right of visitation. Regularly visiting the Lodges in your District is a great way to cement relations between these Lodges to the benefit of all. Meeting and becoming friends with the Brethren in neighboring Lodges creates increased opportunities for Masonic fellowship and Masonic education.

The Grand Lodge promotes a traveling gavel program with the objective of having Brethren from a Lodge travel with the gavel and present it to another Lodge in the District, or arrange to have a second Lodge come to its Lodge to get the gavel. It is hoped that the gavel moves with some frequency from Lodge to Lodge, but, like many things in Freemasonry, the gavel is only symbolic of the more important value of having the Brethren visit with each other.

Getting in the habit of visiting other Lodges in the District makes it easier to visit other Lodges in the larger surrounding area. And that makes it easier to visit Lodges in other Masonic jurisdictions. Although there are many recognizable similarities, there are many differences in ritual from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and this makes visiting sister jurisdictions so interesting. What remains the same from Lodge to Lodge and jurisdiction to jurisdiction is the fraternal welcome and warmth that joins Masons across the country and across the world.

Today, with the Internet, we can interact instantly with Masons across town or across the ocean. But it is so wonderful when we travel to far away places where we know no one and may feel quite alone, that we are able to find our Brethren and feel at home and at ease in Lodges all over the world.

## **17. Special Visitations**

A number of Lodges have developed special fraternal relations with Lodges in other jurisdictions in the United States and in other countries. These Lodges trade visits at periodic intervals. In some cases a Virginia Lodge will develop a special relationship with a European Lodge and alternate visits every three or six years. Closer to home, a Virginia Lodge might visit a particular Maryland Lodge every year and that Maryland Lodge will return the visit.



Once these relations have been set up, the officers stay in contact to plan these visits. In the case of a Virginia-Maryland relationship, the Wardens would stay in touch to do the planning. They would agree on the dates and types of programs. If a Lodge wants to put on a degree in the other Lodge, dispensations from the respective Grand Lodges are needed. These relationships once established have lasted for many years and are quite popular with the Brethren to the point that buses have been chartered to take all of the Brethren who want to be a part of these events.

## **18. Fishing Trips, Golf Outings, and Baseball Games**

Here are just three things you can do as a Lodge outside of regular Lodge meetings. You should survey the interests of your Lodge Brethren, and you may come up with many other ideas for outings and activities. The key is to select something that will have a critical mass of participants. The objective is to inject some excitement and novelty into Lodge activities. It is up to you and the Lodge whether to develop some of these activities into an annual or periodic tradition or think of something new each year. What you do is less important, but that you do these activities with your Lodge Brethren is important, because doing them together will help to deepen the relationships developed in the Lodge and bring the Brethren closer together.

## **19. Lodge Picnic**

As important as it is to have out-of-Lodge activities for the Brethren, some believe it is even more important to have activities for the Mason and his family. Younger Masons building their careers and raising a family have precious little free time. Allowing them to combine Freemasonry with time with family is a win-win situation. In addition, the more spouses know about the Fraternity, the more they feel a part of it. And the more they become friends with wives of other Masons, the more accepting they are likely to be about the time spent by their husbands on other Masonic activities.

Planned correctly, a Lodge picnic can be a great way for the Mason and his family to have fun and to interact with other Masons and their families. Moreover, the Lodge picnic can include the Masonic family organizations as well. Planning a joint activity with the Star and the Masonic youth groups lightens the load for everyone and brings increased participation.

Depending on circumstances, a picnic can be held at a park, on Lodge property, or at the home of one of the Brethren. Games for the children; a Mason-Youth Group softball, volleyball or badminton game; and plenty of good food will ensure a great day.

## 20. Dinner Theatre

A second event for Masons and their wives is a dinner theatre or other similar event. Most of us will plan a fun night out – a dinner out and a movie, a show or a concert, or combine the dinner and show at a dinner theatre. Planning one or two night-out events for the Lodge can be quite popular, and given group discounts that are available, can be less expensive when tickets are purchased by the Lodge rather than by the individual.

A number of dinner theatres reserve certain dates when public service, fraternal, or charitable organizations can buy out the performance and use the event as a fundraiser. Tickets can still be cheaper than when individually purchased, but any difference between what needs to be paid to the dinner theatre and what is charged can be used for Lodge expenses or for charity.

## 21. Ladies' Night

A third social event, and one that generally includes the widows of deceased Lodge Brethren is an annual Ladies' Night event. This can be held at the Lodge with dinner and entertainment. But it also can be held at a dinner theatre and the group discount can subsidize the price of the tickets for the widows.

The date for a Ladies' Night program needs to be set well in advance to allow plenty of time for planning and to allow the Brethren and ladies to reserve the date on their calendars. When inviting the widows, it is important to ensure that they either have transportation available or will be picked up and driven to and from the event. It also is a good idea to allow the widows to bring a friend so they are not alone. One final point: this is the **ladies' night**, so don't ask them to prepare the dinner or do any of the work!

## 22. St. John's Worship Service

Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist are regarded as the Patron Saints of Freemasonry, and we observe St. John's Day in a number of ways. One observance that has become somewhat of a tradition in American Freemasonry is to have the Lodge invited to attend a church service in observance of St. John's Day.

## 23. Everything Day

A program that brings together the entire Masonic family for fun and fundraising is an "Everything Day" at the Lodge. For example, the main event can be a

rummage sale organized by the Masons and open from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. During this period, the Rainbow Girls can serve a pancake breakfast from 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M., the DeMolay can run a car wash, for example, from 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M., the Jobs Daughters can serve a submarine sandwich lunch from noon to 2:00 P.M. and the Eastern Star can serve a spaghetti dinner for members of the Masonic family organizations in the evening.

Here are seven steps to help you organize an "Everything Day."

1. Hold a meeting with all of the Masonic family groups that will be involved in the project to gain agreement on and support for the fundraiser. Decide how the proceeds will be divided or used. There are many ways to handle the profits of the fundraiser. Each organization, for example, might retain the monies it collects. Each organization might retain only a part of the profits, with the rest going to a fund for Lodge repairs, or to charity. A third alternative is for all of the funds to be set aside for a single purpose, for example, to pay for a new roof, a new kitchen, a scholarship fund, etc.
2. Once agreement is reached, form a committee to coordinate the total effort. The committee should have a chairperson for the entire event, and a representative from each organization who will be in charge of its part of the fundraiser. Have the committee select a date that is far enough in the future to provide sufficient time for planning and preparation.
3. With respect to the rummage sale run by the Masons, solicit items to be sold and ask that they be brought to the Lodge. The night before the event have a team of volunteers at the Lodge to price the merchandise and set them out by categories on tables in the social hall. Have a team of volunteers available to help at the rummage sale the next day and two cashiers to collect the money. Make sure your cashiers have sufficient change.
4. Contact local radio and television stations that do public service spots and provide them with information about the rummage sale and other events scheduled for that day.
5. Provide the local newspapers, especially the community newspapers, with press releases about the event so that a feature article might be written or, at a minimum, the rummage sale and other events can be listed in the community events section.
6. Be sure the "Everything Day" fundraiser project is featured in your Lodge trestleboard, and be sure to inform the other Lodges in your area. When you are within two weeks of the event, start a telephone tree to remind the members and their families to attend and show their support for the fundraiser. Keep in close touch with the chairpersons from the Masonic family organizations that will play a part in the day's events.

7. On "Everything Day," be sure to have literature on Freemasonry and the Masonic family organizations prominently displayed and available for your visitors to read and take with them.

**RECOMMENDED PRESS RELEASE**

Contact: John Smith  
Henry Lodge  
234 Elm Street  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 445-1234

**FLEA MARKET AND CAR WASH  
AT HENRY MASONIC LODGE**

**FAIRFAX, SEPTEMBER 7:** Come to what is fast becoming an annual tradition in Fairfax: the flea market and car wash at Henry Lodge at 234 Elm Street in Fairfax, just across from the Holiday Inn. On Saturday September 16, 2006, from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M., you will find clothing and collectibles, books and crafts, oddities and treasures at our annual flea market.

From 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. there also will be a terrific pancake breakfast at a great price. From noon to 2 P.M. you can purchase a tasty submarine sandwich lunch and while you shop and eat, you can have your car washed too!

Mark your calendar: Saturday, September 16th at Henry Lodge in Fairfax. Bring your family, bring your friends, and take a fun break from your other Saturday chores. For more information, call (703) 445-1234.

**RECOMMENDED RADIO/TV SPOT**

**FLEA MARKET AND CAR WASH  
30 SECONDS**

On September 16, 2006 from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Henry Masonic Lodge in Fairfax will have its annual flea market and car wash. Come early and have a great breakfast at an outstanding price. Come later and have a submarine sandwich lunch. And while you searching for collectibles and treasures, or books and crafts, you can get your car washed.

Henry Lodge is located at 234 Elm Street in Fairfax, just across from the Holiday Inn. For more information, call (703) 445-1234.

## **FLEA MARKET AND CAR WASH 60 SECONDS**

Come early or come late, but don't forget to come to Henry Lodge for its annual flea market and car wash on Saturday September 16, 2006. From 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. you will find clothing and collectibles, books and crafts, oddities and treasures at our annual flea market.

From 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. you can get a terrific pancake breakfast at a great price.

From noon to 2 P.M. you can purchase a tasty submarine sandwich lunch

and while you shop and eat, you can have your car washed too!

Remember this is all at Henry Lodge, 234 Elm Street in Fairfax, just across from the Holiday Inn. For more information, call (703) 445-1234.

### **24. Blood Drives**

We noted when we discussed the visit of the District Blood Coordinator that few of the programs we support are more important than the blood program. And while you can use the District Blood Coordinator to help you, the need for your personal and active leadership as Worshipful Master in promoting this program cannot be overemphasized. The blood program literally saves lives, and our support is so essential to those, including Masons and their families, who need blood.

Although a few of the Brethren are unable to give blood, most do not because they are afraid or because they have not gotten into the habit. So the keys to a successful blood program are persistence and follow through. Talking about the program once a year just will not work. There needs to be a regular cyclical program to encourage those who can give blood to do so and to motivate those who have been giving blood to continue to do so.

You first must address the fear, and you can do this by educating the Brethren about the safety, speed, and painlessness of giving blood. And then you must address the positive aspects. Not only must the Brethren really understand that giving blood is giving the gift of life, they also need to know that with a little effort, it is possible to have a blood program in place that will cover all of the members of the Lodge and their families. You should explain that arrangements could be made with local hospitals so that, if a certain proportion of the members give blood, then all will be covered.

Finally, you must put in place an approach that makes the giving of blood a habit. You need to enlist the support of the Brethren, their families, and the Masonic family organizations so that blood drives are successful, but we also suggest that

you experiment with self-sustaining teams of three to give blood together on a regular schedule.

## **25. Child ID Programs**

One community service project that Virginia Masons have come to be associated with, and which has been a great success, is the Child Identification Program. The public has reacted enthusiastically to this project, and it has given Masons high visibility and very favorable attention in their local communities.

The concept is as simple as the need is clear. Every year thousands of children are snatched, get lost, or run away. Finding these children requires quick action by parents to get information about their child to the police and the media. Having current information about the child close at hand is crucial, particularly if the child disappears while the family is away from home, for example, on vacation. The Child ID program, endorsed by many federal, state and local law enforcement organizations, provides the parent with a CD containing descriptive information of the child, digitally generated fingerprints, 4 photos consisting of frontal, rear and both profile angles, and a short video showing mannerism and voice pattern. Also generated is a printout with the descriptive information, fingerprints and the frontal photo and on the bottom of the page are 2 small cutouts that can be cut out and laminated to keep in the parents possession. A DNA swab and/or hair sample can also be taken, as well as tips on child safety and how to help prevent child abduction and what action to take when a child is missing.

For information on the Child ID Committee (VACHIP) please refer to either [www.vachip.org](http://www.vachip.org) on the VACHIP Documents tab or the GL website ([www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org](http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org)) under the Child ID Committee and clicking on the VACHIP Manual. This manual explains in great detail the VACHIP Committee Organization, Operation, and Publicity Protocols, and a EZ CHILD ID Computer Users Manual. Also on either website are the Forms needed to conduct an Event and a Flyer for Publicizing and Promoting an upcoming Event.

To reserve a Grand Lodge computer(s) for an Event you must register your request at [www.vachip.org](http://www.vachip.org) in the Event Request tab. Fill out the form COMPLETELY with full contact information and any special details in the Comments Box. This MUST be done even if you do not need Grand Lodge units to ensure you are given credit and recognition for having your Event. Indicate this in the Comments Box. You are also required to report the results of your event to the Committee. This includes the number of kids done and the number of Masonic and non-Masonic Volunteers helping at your Event. This information is added to the VACHIP website, which is located at the bottom of the Home Page.

It is this Committee's hope and desire that you will join us in working to make the children of Virginia safer through this much needed no-cost to parents service by Virginia Masons.

### **RECOMMENDED NEWS RELEASE**

Contact: John Smith  
Herndon Lodge  
1234 Birch Street  
Herndon, VA 22070  
(703) 678-1234

### **CHILD IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM AT THE HERNDON DAY FESTIVAL**

**HERNDON, SEPTEMBER 16:** For the second year in a row, Herndon Masonic Lodge will sponsor a "Child Identification Program" in conjunction with the Herndon Day Festival on Saturday, October 21, 2006.

The Child ID Program is a nationwide community effort supported by law enforcement and public officials to provide a means of identifying missing or lost children. The program consists of a CD containing descriptive information of the child, digitally generated fingerprints, 4 photos consisting of frontal, rear and both profile angles, and a short video showing mannerism and voice pattern. Also generated is a printout with the descriptive information, fingerprints and the frontal photo and on the bottom of the page are 2 small cutouts that can be cut out and laminated to keep in the parents possession. A DNA swab and/or hair sample can also be taken, as well as tips on child safety and how to help prevent child abduction and what action to take when a child is missing..

There is no charge for this service, and neither the Lodge nor its members retain any information about your child. So while enjoying yourself at the Herndon Town Festival, please take a few minutes and bring your children to Herndon Masonic Lodge to participate in our Child ID Program.

This year the program will begin at 9 A.M. and conclude at 3 P.M. at Herndon Lodge, located at the corner of Birch and Oak Streets in downtown Herndon. In addition to a five-minute presentation on the Child ID program, we invite you to visit our historical Lodge and enjoy our hospitality.

For additional information, call (703) 678-1234.

## **RECOMMENDED RADIO/TV SPOT**

### **CHILD IDENTIFICATION**

#### **30 SECONDS**

While enjoying yourself at the Herndon Town Festival, please take a few minutes and bring your small children to the Herndon Masonic Lodge this Saturday, October 21, 2006, to participate in a free Child Identification Program. They will provide you with a CD with your child's photograph and fingerprints. They do not retain any information about your child.

Herndon Lodge is located at the corner of Birch and Oak Streets; the Program is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### **CHILD IDENTIFICATION**

#### **60 SECONDS**

You can help to protect your children by participating in the Child Identification Program sponsored by Herndon Masonic Lodge during the Herndon Town Festival on Saturday, October 21, 2006.

The Child ID Program is a nationwide community effort supported by law enforcement and public officials to provide a means of identifying missing or lost children. The program consists of a CD containing descriptive information of the child, digitally generated fingerprints, 4 photos consisting of frontal, rear and both profile angles, and a short video showing mannerism and voice pattern. Also generated is a printout with the descriptive information, fingerprints and the frontal photo and on the bottom of the page are 2 small cutouts that can be cut out and laminated to keep in the parents possession. A DNA swab and/or hair sample can also be taken, as well as tips on child safety and how to help prevent child abduction and what action to take when a child is missing..

The service is free and available to you from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M at Herndon Lodge, located at the corner of Birch and Oak Streets--just two blocks away from the festival.  
The Lodge keeps no information about your child.

So while enjoying the Festival, visit Herndon Lodge to get your free Child ID CD, see the historic Lodge and enjoy the hospitality of the Masons.

## **26. Daily Telephone Contact with Widows and the Elderly**

One of the obligations we take as Master Masons is to look out for our Brethren and their widows. And one way to utilize some of the Brethren who may not be active or who do not get out much any more is to ask them to play a role in keeping in contact with the widows and the elderly. Enlist the Brother to call one or two of the widows every day just to check that they are all right and to report to the Master or one of the officers if



there is a problem, and also to call the Master or that officer once a month so that the widows can be remembered to the Lodge at the stated communication. The Brother benefits from having an important task to perform. He now has regular and meaningful contact with the Lodge, and he benefits by becoming friends with the ladies he calls. And the Lodge benefits by activating a Mason who would otherwise be uninvolved and by helping to provide a more effective outreach to its Masonic widows.

## **27. Adopt a Resident and Visits to the Masonic Home**

It has often been said that the Masonic Home of Virginia in Richmond is the crown jewel of Virginia Freemasonry, and those who have visited the home would support this statement. Here is a facility for those Masons and those widows of Masons who need it that we all can be proud of. State regulators and old-age care providers all agree that it is a superior facility. It is not a warehouse for the aged or a place where people go to die. It is a residence staffed by caring people where our Brethren and their spouses can live in dignity. It is that way because for many years Masons have cared. They have cared enough to dig into their pockets for a few dollars or a lot of dollars.

But as wonderful as life in the Home is, something is missing for those residents who have outlived their families and friends and for others who have moved there from other parts of the state and do not have anyone to look in on them or visit them. A great thing for your Lodge to do would be to adopt one of the residents in such circumstances. Send the resident cards and letters, particularly on his or her birthday and on holidays. And, on occasion, have a few of your Lodge Brethren pay them a visit at the Home, and perhaps take them out to lunch, dinner or a movie.

You can imagine how welcome these contacts and visits will be for the resident. And you can be sure that the relationship will be equally as heartwarming and rewarding for your Lodge Brethren. There is no question that your financial support to the Home is important, but no less important is the person-to-person and face-to-face contacts you will develop. Through such a program, the Home will not simply be the subject of an annual talk in Lodge and an annual appeal for funds, it will be what it should be, a real place where Masons live and where we all can live our Freemasonry.

### **III. Building the Team**

Picking and evaluating your officers, holding officers meetings, building a multi-year program, and balancing home and Masonic obligations of your officers.

#### **A. Selecting Your Officers**

One of the most important things you will have to do when you are elected Worshipful Master is to nominate and select your officers. This not only means picking

someone to the bottom of the elected line, and to empty places in the elected line, but also nominating those who will advance in the line.

We recognize that there will be times where the choices are limited and some compromises need to be made. But throughout your time in line you should be keeping your eye out for those who will make a good Worshipful Master and you should be grooming them to get in line when it is your turn to nominate them. You also should be evaluating the people in line with respect to their leadership and management potential and their commitment to the Lodge.

Few things are more difficult than deciding not to advance someone already in line. At a minimum, the Brother you advance to Junior Warden, and certainly to Senior Warden, should be someone you believe will at least be a caretaker, leaving the Lodge no worse off for having been Worshipful Master when it is his turn in the East. But that is not sufficient. You want to nominate someone who will be more than a caretaker, someone who will strengthen Freemasonry and leave the Lodge in better shape than when he took office.

If someone in line is not learning the ritual, does not show leadership potential, or is proving to be a divisive figure, you need to be talking with that individual during your year as Senior Warden so a decision not to advance him is not a surprise. You need to determine what the problem is. You need to determine if he simply needs more time to learn and prepare and perhaps should remain as Junior Warden for another year. And at the end of your analysis, you need to explain to the Brother how he needs to improve. If the Brother does not improve, but does not wish to step aside, you need to consult with the Worshipful Master and Past Masters to try to gain a consensus as to what to do. You need to review your options and do a cost-benefit analysis on keeping him in line vs. moving him out of the way.

All of this will be much easier if your Lodge already has an effective management structure that includes both regular officer meetings and a multi-year program. If this is in place, the officers will be a cohesive team, and those who are not pulling their weight will stand out and get the help they need and the encouragement to improve. If they do not improve, there will be more of a consensus that the good of the Lodge may require that they do not advance or perhaps do not stay in line. If regular officer meetings are not a normal part of your Lodge management, you will want to suggest the practice when you are a Warden and begin the practice when you are the Master.

A multi-year program also is important. It is not good for the Lodge for each Master to simply implement last year's program. That eventually gets boring. But it is equally bad for the Lodge for each Master to ignore what the last couple of Masters have done just so he can make his mark. That simply causes the Lodge to lurch from cause to cause and from project to project each year. The multi-year program provides both continuity and change. It allows each Master to retain what is working and build momentum for efforts that are taking root. Without throwing out Lodge traditions, it also

allows him to add new activities and make incremental changes that improve the Lodge, kindle enthusiasm, and add excitement to the Masonic year.

Building the Team also requires creative use of your appointed offices and your committee structure. Not only do these offices and committee assignments assist you to run the Lodge, they turn sideliners into active members with a real role in the success of the Lodge.

## **B. Reviewing Your Committee Structure**

Lodge Committees serve at least three very valid functions.

- First, by appointing a committee, the Worshipful Master focuses attention on programs of importance to the Lodge and to Grand Lodge.
- Second, committees serve to involve the Brethren in the activities of the Lodge. Membership on a committee helps new members to bond with the Lodge, gives sideliners a more significant role to play, and encourages Past Masters to share their experience and provide a "lessons learned" perspective.
- Third, the systematic involvement of line officers in supervising the work of the committees helps them to become more effective Masters. This is because, by the time they reach the East, they will have been personally involved in all aspects of running the Lodge, and they will have gained a thorough understanding of Lodge operations.

Unfortunately, all too often the Lodge committee structure does not live up to expectations and does not achieve these purposes. Often there are too many committees, but they are not active or effective. They may be hollow committees, consisting of a chairman and no one else. And the line officers often do not have any involvement with the committees.

One approach that you might want to consider is to both reduce and rationalize the number of standing committees. You might consider, for example, only four committees. A Strategic Planning/Finance Committee chaired by the Worshipful Master, a Masonic Family Committee chaired by the Senior Warden, a Membership Committee chaired by the Junior Warden, and a Lodge Operations Committee chaired by the Senior Deacon.

### **Strategic Planning/Finance Committee**

This Committee should have five main functions:

**1. Developing a Master Plan:** The Committee will look five to seven years in the future to forecast trends and identify opportunities. The Committee will advise the

Lodge what it can expect in terms of membership, finances, and expenditures. It will identify the issues the Lodge will need to confront, the problems the Worshipful Master will need to solve, and the programs that will have to be put in place. The first time around, the Committee will propose a strategic plan. In subsequent years, it will evaluate the plan; propose revisions as appropriate, and track progress toward implementing the plan.

**2. Raising Money:** The Committee will periodically assess the adequacy of the dues structure against needs, encourage and design gift programs with suitable incentives (buy a chair, be recognized on a wall plaque), encourage and facilitate trusts and bequests, promote perpetual memberships for existing and deceased members, and develop ideas for raising funds.

**3. Investing Funds:** The Committee will review investment options (CD, Ginny Mae funds, other investments), and review how much or little risk should be tolerated in the context of fiduciary responsibilities to safeguard Lodge funds.

**4. Apportioning Money:** The Committee will review existing budgets, suggest ways to promote greater efficiency, and suggest setting up dedicated funds, for example, for Masonic charity, scholarships, building repair, and capital improvements.

**5. Prioritizing Expenditures:** The Committee will establish repair and capital improvement priorities and suggest a spending plan.

Because of the nature of its charter, this Committee should be chaired by the Worshipful Master and could include the Trustees, the Secretary, and Treasurer. Other officers and members should be encouraged to attend and participate in the deliberations.

### **Masonic Family Committee**

This Committee will have two main functions:

**1. Promoting Masonic Family Activities:** The Committee will work with all of the organizations that meet at the Lodge to plan, coordinate, and jointly support each other's activities. The Committee also will have responsibility for the Lodge picnic, Ladies' Night activities, and other similar events. It will promote visits to and contributions for the Masonic Home, and take charge of running fundraising activities. It will promote attendance at the installations of Masonic Family organizations, schedule youth programs at the Lodge, promote and run the scholarship selection process, and run the Child ID programs and the blood drives.

**2. Promoting Activities with the Families of Masons:** The Committee also will plan activities that Masons can share, as Masons, with their own families. It is important that there be regular occasions for Brethren to get together socially that will interest and involve wives and family. One possibility is a monthly "meet and socialize" night where

interested Masons and their wives can come to the Lodge, for example, on a Saturday night, and those who show up can decide on a restaurant to attend or a movie to see.

This Committee should be chaired by the Senior Warden, and include the Stewards, the Chaplain, the Marshall and a number of other active members. Close involvement of the Senior Warden with the Brethren and their spouses, and with Masonic Family activities, will ensure that he is well known and increase the amount of support he can expect when he becomes Worshipful Master.

Obviously, there should be coordinators appointed for each activity, like the Lodge picnic or Ladies' Night. But by centralizing and focusing all of our social and fundraising activities in a single committee, the Lodge can better assist all of the coordinators, ensure that they are not working in isolation, or worse yet, at cross purposes, and can promote and develop synergy between all of the planned activities.

### **Membership Committee**

This Committee will have three main functions:

**1. Obtaining New Members:** The Committee will ensure that all Masons know how to use the Grand Lodge "For Your Information" publication, and know how to approach potential members and interest them in our fraternity. The Committee will help to educate Masons in the history and traditions of Freemasonry so they understand what to say to a non-Mason to explain what the Fraternity is all about and what the Lodge does. The Committee will be responsible for Lodge public relations so that Lodge activities come to community attention, and be responsible for the "Bring-A-Friend" nights.

**2. Keeping in Close Contact with Members and Widows:** The Committee will be responsible for institution of a telephone system that not only serves to alert the Brethren when there is a funeral or other emergency, but also ensures that each member and widow is called at least once every two weeks. This should be a short call to keep in contact, to check on health, to see if assistance is needed, and to simply find out more about the Brother or widow.

**3. Reactivating Inactive Members:** The biweekly calls will reestablish a relationship between the inactive Mason and the Lodge. At a minimum, the Lodge will know when the Brother is ill and can send a card or provide other assistance. The Brother can likely be encouraged to attend Lodge two to four times a year. And learning about the Brother's available time and talents will enable the Worshipful Master and Lodge officers to find a place for the Brother on a committee or to enlist him to share his interests and experiences with the Lodge, for example, by putting on a Lodge program or giving a talk.

The Committee, as a result of its calls and contacts, will report on the widows, on sickness and distress, and can make every meeting a "Bring-a-Mason" night. In addition,

this Committee should reach out to sojourners and ensure that visitors to the Lodge are truly made welcome and comfortable, and not left alone and isolated in the social hall.

This Committee should be chaired by the Junior Warden, and include a mixture of older and newer members. Older Masons will know many of the Lodge Brethren and can be on your “telephone subcommittee,” newer Masons can be a good source of petitions, and by involving them actively on this Committee, they will quickly become acquainted with other members of the Lodge.

### **Lodge Operations Committee**

This Committee will be responsible for a variety of activities essential to the proper functioning of the Lodge. These include:

- 1. Grounds and Facilities**
- 2. Investigation of Petitioners**
- 3. Catechism Instruction**
- 4. Lodge Ritual Instruction**
- 5. Lodge Leadership and Education Programs**

The Senior Deacon, who also would be responsible for ensuring that all the requirements for the Hillman Award are being met, should chair this Committee. The Committee should include Past Masters, the Lodge Instructor of Work and Lodge Education Officer, and other experienced Masons who have responsibility for the five functions listed above, as well as other Brethren with skills in these areas of Lodge operations.

The Worshipful Master, as Chief Executive Officer of the Lodge, should periodically meet with his Executive Committee (the line officers) to review progress in implementing the annual program plan. Organizing the work of the Lodge in four standing committees, as outlined above, helps the Master and his officer corps to keep track of all Lodge projects, helps them to evaluate whether they all contribute synergistically to the overall program plan, and encourages them to reformulate or even eliminate projects which are not working. In sum, this approach helps to tie a large number of seemingly disparate activities into a coherent whole.

There are other benefits as well. At the periodic Executive Committee meetings, each officer should report on the work of the standing committee that he chairs. The experience on each committee helps the officer to develop his organizational and leadership skills, and it keeps him focused on meeting specific goals and objectives. The Executive Committee meeting and group discussion also ensures that each officer

understands how his specific responsibilities contribute to the overall goals and objectives of the Lodge.

In summary, carefully selecting your officers, having regular officer meetings, developing a multi-year program, and putting in place an effective committee structure can make your Lodge more successful. At a minimum, this program will help to build a consensus among the entire line as to the proper direction in which to take the Lodge. And a program that has been developed through cooperative discussion and peer review will be more successful. It will have support and staying power and, thus, will be of significant benefit to the Lodge.

There is one final point to consider. You must help your officers to balance work, home and Freemasonry, and you must be sensitive to officer overload. Although you must demand a certain level of participation and engagement from your officers, you should be judicious in what you require. Meetings, practices, visitations and other demands on time can make it virtually impossible for those with jobs and families to be officers and you may lose the assistance of very qualified men. You need to carefully plan how many evenings a month you are calling upon your officers to be away from home and family.

#### **IV. Attracting Candidates and Turning Them into Dedicated Masons**

##### **A. Attracting Candidates**

In Freemasonry, as in other organizations, membership has been cyclical; there have been times when membership has gone up and times when it has gone down. We have been in a downward period in recent years. In part, because, notwithstanding all of the new “timesaving equipment” that we now have, life is at least as stressful as it has ever been before, and many men feel that we have less not more time. So, given increased family and work pressures, and the availability of entertainment alternatives on cable and the Internet, fewer men are joining organizations than was previously the case.

But there are countervailing indications that give us reason to believe that the downward slope is beginning to turn around, and we need to be positioned to take advantage of this. The need for association is still a basic human need and notwithstanding how busy many men are, even during their peak child-raising and career-building years, they often feel isolated and alone. They have many acquaintances, but these are situational and, when they no longer meet these people as a result of their children’s activities or when they leave their current job, they have no expectation that they will ever see them again. These men are looking for something more permanent, and Freemasonry can meet that need.

There also are many men who are “empty nesters” and on the verge of retirement. They are used to being fully engaged. And while they may welcome a brief respite from a very busy schedule, they will soon cast about for new challenges and opportunities.

Many of them are well educated, community minded, and have stable incomes. These men will be looking for organizations to join, and they will engage in those organizations with the same passion, enthusiasm, and intensity that they have given to all of their other activities.

## **B. Turning Candidates into Active Masons**

Have you ever considered why it is that a man will spend months going through the degrees and learning the catechism and then, after coming to a couple of meetings, never show up again?

This might be because our programs do not challenge him, or because he feels uncomfortable, or even neglected. Many of us are not sensitive to the fact that the new Mason has spent a great deal of time with his catechism coach, but little time with the rest of the Lodge. He may have bonded with his catechism coach, but if his coach is not in Lodge, he feels like a stranger. And too often we let the new Mason sit by himself, or we unconsciously exclude him from the conversation when we are socializing with old friends in the social hall. But regardless of the reason, he loses interest and fades away before he has even spread his wings as a Master Mason.

This does not need to happen. A new Mason is a spark of energy and enthusiasm waiting to be fanned into the warm flame of a dedicated Master Mason. Our job is to develop that spark, not let it go out.

As Worshipful Master you will have a special responsibility to ensure that a new Master Mason becomes an active member of the Lodge. Your newly raised Mason is ready to work for Freemasonry and the Lodge. He just needs to be asked and he needs to be involved. And the best way to ensure that this happens is to immediately engage the new Master Mason in the work of the Lodge! Give him a function, something he is responsible for. And bear in mind that there are so many jobs available beyond that old standby, serving as steward. We already have discussed using your committee structure. If today your Lodge committees consist only of a chairman, put your new Masons on those committees. If it is an active committee, you will be giving real support and assistance to your committee chair, who often is a mainstay of the Lodge. If it is an inactive committee, giving your chair some help may be exactly what is needed to make it an active committee. Once engaged and interested in the operation and activities of the Lodge, the new Master Mason will stay active and his efforts will help you to improve the Lodge.

## **V. Motivating Your Members**

Reactivate an Inactive Mason. When you consider the difficulty we have in attracting new Masons and the effort we expend to put them through the degrees, it is very discouraging to have them come to one or two meetings and then never see them again. And it is sad when someone demits and says that it is because he has lost interest



or has no time for Freemasonry. This so clearly misses the boat and it betrays a real misunderstanding of the role that our Fraternity can and should play in our lives.

Freemasonry values moderation and balance. We learn in the Entered Apprentice Degree about the twenty-four inch gauge which we are taught to divide into three equal parts; whereby are found eight hours for the service of God and the relief of a distressed worthy Brother; eight for our usual vocations, and eight for refreshment and sleep. What this balance means in terms of Lodge membership is that no matter how busy a Mason is, he should not withdraw himself from the Fraternity. But neither should he so overextend himself that he becomes stressed and burned out.

Freemasonry is meant to be a life-long adventure that fits well into each of our life styles. Freemasonry is pro-family, and pro-work, and it does not ask that you fail to meet your family or job obligations. We all have heard the expression "within the length of my cable tow." This short phrase recognizes that sometimes we have more time and sometimes less to devote to the Lodge. Freemasonry recognizes that when our jobs get frantic or when family demands increase, we may have to cut back on Masonic activities. Freemasonry also recognizes that there are times, for example, after our children have grown up, after we retire, or after, God forbid, we lose a loved one, when there is a void in our lives and we may have more time and energy to devote to the Fraternity.

The point is that Freemasonry and Lodge attendance is a habit. If we get into the habit of coming to lodge, it becomes a regular part of our lives. Indeed, we begin to feel badly if we miss a meeting or two. But inactivity also is a habit, and once we get into the habit of not coming to lodge and not being active in the Fraternity, then Freemasonry starts to become more and more remote, until we actually feel awkward about coming. We don't know the ritual, we don't remember the word, and we don't know any of the Brethren. Unfortunately, this is the situation into which many of our members have gotten themselves.

The strength of your Lodges depends in no small measure on your ability to maintain the enthusiasm of your new members and few things can do more to revitalize a Lodge than reactivating its older members. This has got to be one of your priorities as Worshipful Master. So let us discuss some ideas as to how to activate and retain active Blue Lodge Masons.

**(Motivation):** First, you need to know each of your members well enough to know what interests them, what generates their enthusiasm, and what has or will motivate them to come to Lodge.

And then you need to address how the Lodge can meet **their needs** so that they can, in turn, contribute to the Lodge.

**(Curiosity):** Some joined out of curiosity and now that their curiosity has been satisfied, see no reason to return. Your job is to fan that curiosity and spark further interest. One way might be to suggest some books on Freemasonry, its history and

philosophy, what it stands for and what it has accomplished and, as I will get into a little later, ask if he would prepare a brief program based on that book or a part of it. It will keep the Brother interested and get him focused. He will learn about our Fraternity, and might provide you an interesting program for one of your meetings. That will benefit all the Brethren and ensure his attendance, at least at the meeting at which he is going to be the speaker.

**(Ritual):** Some come because they love the ritual and want to see it, learn it, and participate in the degrees. They are ritualists at heart and that is the hook for them. If this is the case, rather than saying why don't you take a part in one of the degrees, - which is like saying why don't we get together for lunch - we rarely do get together when it is couched that way—say instead “here is a part in one of the degrees, it is 14 lines and I need you to learn in two months.”

**(A Friend):** Some come or came because they had a friend that they went to Lodge with or had a sense of obligation to one of the officers and wanted to support him. If this is the case, you need to try to institutionalize that loyalty and help them build a relationship with someone else in the Lodge as well.

**(The Lodge):** Some have been members for a longer period of time and have developed a sense of belonging and a desire to help keep the Lodge going - again a sense of commitment and loyalty -- but to the organization rather than to some of its officers. Well if they are coming out of loyalty to the Lodge, you need to ensure that over time they don't get discouraged if things don't improve. You have to periodically stir their enthusiasm and there is no better way than to find them a niche or a function.

I would note in passing that one reason Brethren become discouraged, is because you discourage them. I recall Worshipful Masters who planned an event - generally they did not delegate very well - and when there was less participation than they hoped, took out their frustration on the loyal members who did show up. This was worse than simply preaching to the choir, this was blaming the choir for the sins of the congregation. The result was to dishearten the regulars and things only got worse. So without being unrealistic or a Pollyanna, you need to encourage and motivate not discourage and demotivate your members.

**(Fellowship):** Some come because they enjoy the fellowship - after all we are a Fraternity and it's good to get together with your Masonic Brethren on any occasion, particularly a Lodge meeting. If so, you have it made. But even then you can build upon that motivation. Perhaps you can make them your membership chairman with the mandate of the Lodge to regularly call a few of the Brethren.

**(A job):** Some come because they have a role to play - a job or purpose or responsibility. They may be the Secretary or an officer. This is great. But you need to monitor their situation so they don't get bored or burned out. Nothing loses Masons so quickly as the “supernova phenomenon.” You know the type. They are super active and

can never say “no” to anything. They take on too much and soon what had been fun becomes stress and they drop out entirely.

So while you must demand a certain level of participation and engagement from your officers, you should be judicious in what you require. Meetings, practices, visitations, and other demands on time can make it virtually impossible for some Brethren with jobs and families to be officers and you may lose the assistance of very qualified men. You need to be very conscious of how many evenings a month you are calling upon your officers to be away from their home and family.

It is particularly important that you help your officers to balance work, home, and Freemasonry, and that you are sensitive to officer overload. You have to watch your officers to them to ensure that they like what they are doing and that it remains a joy not an increasingly less welcome obligation. And, if you see signs of boredom or overwork, take the initiative to shift things around to help. If you intervene before they realize they are in over their heads, you will keep that Brother active and engaged.

**(A program):** Some come because they are interested in a particular cause or program. You need to know this in order to encourage them to get involved in an activity that care about, such as the Child ID, Blood or Scholarship programs, one of our charities such as the Masonic Home of Virginia, or a new engagement that the members of your Lodge would be excited about beginning.

**(Special Invitation):** And some come because they have been specially invited and have agreed to attend for a particular reason such as a 25-year pin or a special program. But you don't want to wait until someone is due a 25-year pin to invite him to Lodge - and that is what I want to focus on now.

**(Some suggestions):** The way to activate your members is to find out what motivates them and you do this by communication -- and not by monthly trestleboards or e-mail, as necessary as they are, but by regular and routine individual person-to-person contacts.

Nothing beats face-to-face contact, but if that is not possible, then the telephone is the next best thing because it is interactive and personal. Using the phone helps to build relationships. And relationships, after all, are part of what Fraternity is all about.

One approach to consider is to divide the number of inactive members among the active members. For example, even if you only have 15 active members, you can give each one 10 names and ask them to call these 10 members every two weeks. Ask them to spend two minutes per call. Your Lodge will be able to maintain contact with 150 Brethren, but all you will be asking is that each active member make five calls per week, costing him about 10 minutes of his time.

But what do you say? Say hi. Introduce yourself. Mention what will be happening at the next meeting and express the hope that they will be there. Ask after their health and family and say something about yours.

You will be amazed that by the third or fourth call it will not be awkward or uncomfortable. You will be a known quantity. Your call will be welcomed. You will catch up on what is happening in each of your lives since the last time you spoke. You will learn if the Brother is sick or in difficulty and can have the Lodge send a card or other help.

In a few months' time, the inactive Brother will no longer feel remote from his Lodge, and he will be receptive to your invitation to come to a meeting. You will be able to get him to come to four meetings a year, and very likely you will be able to interest him in doing a small job for the Lodge as well. And, as a result, you will have reactivated the Brother and reintegrated him into his Lodge.

And what are these small jobs. Well, for example, ask one of the Brethren who is so busy at work that he has no time for the Lodge to help plan one program this year. Ask him to think about all of the people he deals with at work or socially and see if he can identify one person who could come to the Lodge and give a presentation about his business area or industry, about a problem or a process, or a new development that might be of general interest. Tell him that if he can identify a speaker early enough, the program can be put on this year, but if not, then the program will be scheduled by the Senior Warden for next year.

One speaker, one program, in that time frame, is not oppressive, even for a very busy Brother. But the benefit is that the inactive Brother with no time for Freemasonry now has a role in planning a meeting. He is thinking about Freemasonry and will be talking about the Lodge to some potential speakers. And no matter how busy, when his speaker comes, the odds are that he will be there too. And the benefit to the Lodge is that it will have better and more interesting programs, and it will have kept a temporarily less active Brother from becoming an inactive one.

Or why not use a number of the inactive Brethren to do some your educational programs. Work with the DEO or look in the table of contents of a good book on Freemasonry to come up with a list of topics. And then instead of simply calling upon a few established Masonic speakers (although that is not a bad idea and too often neglected) go to 12 Brethren -- after all there generally are 12 meetings in the Masonic year. Give each Brother a topic to speak on at one meeting and be specific as to which meeting. The Brother will not be overwhelmed at preparing a 5-10 minute talk on a particular subject for delivery in 2-3 months. And taking on the task will get him to think a bit about the Freemasonry and get him to explore the particular topic further, whether by reading the book or chapter you may have pointed out, or by finding other books, or doing research on the Internet. You undoubtedly will further spark his interest in Freemasonry and, as indicated earlier, you can be assured that that this Brother will show up at the meeting to deliver the talk.

Now if you also integrate this idea into your planning, you can tell all 12 Brethren about the full set of topics and who is going to speak on which and when. You may be

able to generate enough interest that many of these Brothers may decide to attend a number your meetings to hear these short talks.

Some Brethren don't want to speak or do research, so call them up and say look, we need a little help with refreshments and need to spread the cost around a bit. So could you possibly bring a half-gallon of ice cream to the July meeting and help out? They may never have thought of coming to the July meeting, but now they have a reason -- they are bringing the ice cream.

You may need to call a number of the Brethren until you get one to agree to bring the ice cream to the July meeting, but so what. The big thing is to call and keep in contact with your membership. Remember, it is not about the ice cream; you may not need help with the refreshments at all. But, while you are asking, if they say July is not possible, ask about August or September. What you want is to get their involvement, to get their participation, and have your inactive Brethren connect or reconnect with the Lodge.

Another idea is to call a Past Master or Past District Deputy Grand Master who has not come in some time and tell him you want him to be the number two on a Committee to introduce a distinguished visitor. It will a honor for him, and a reason to come to the meeting.

We spoke about getting a Brother to get a speaker or speak himself on a subject that he is expert on, to do research for a 5-10 minute education program, or to bring the ice cream, but you also can troll for help among your members with respect to more substantive projects. You may want to increase the scholarship fund or give out scholarships. You may want to do a Masonic Home or Child ID program. You may want to get four of the Brethren to visit another Lodge or a youth group meeting. You may have an idea or want an idea for a new project the Lodge might tackle.

Instead of doing these things yourself, as too many Worshipful Masters now do, and instead of, or in addition to, going to your officers and regulars, making these calls is a perfect way to try to engage your inactive or less active Brethren. You can give them a project that they can get involved with. You can give them something to do that is meaningful and helpful to the Lodge. You will be giving them a reason to become active again in Freemasonry.

One result of regular contact with your members is that you may be able to get each inactive member to attend just one meeting next year. And for some Lodges that could make a significant difference. And, if you get the Brother to attend, you have a chance to get him to play a larger role in the Lodge and perhaps even be a candidate for one of your officer positions. What a great way to accomplish something more in your Lodge, what a great technique to involve your members, and what a great way to spread the work beyond those few in your Lodge who are already oversubscribed and overburdened. It could mean the difference between having a strong and active Lodge and one that remains in continual decline.

The second and last point is that you want to get some tangible participation in the Lodge from all of the Brethren, even those who cannot get to Lodge or who live out of town.

So with respect to your older Brethren who have stopped being active because they don't get out much any more, why not ask them if they would call one or two of the widows every day just to check that they are all right and to report back to the Lodge. You will be giving them an important function so that they remain connected to the Lodge and you have upgraded your outreach to your widows.

And keeping in touch with your out-of-town Brethren has never been easier. In addition to the traditional letter, there is e-mail. And with many of our cell phone plans out of town calls are virtually free. So call these Brethren. Ask them to send you articles or anecdotes either about Freemasonry in their local area or about some non-Masonic topic that they find interesting and could be shared with the Lodge. This may stimulate them to think more actively about Freemasonry and their Lodge. If they get positive feedback about any articles they send in, they will be motivated to continue. They will appreciate that you are interested in their interests. They might get more involved in Masonic activities where they currently live, and they certainly will be more involved with their home Lodge. Once again you will have reconnected with a member who might otherwise remain perpetually out of touch.

After you have established a relationship with them you can also tell them, for example, that you are trying to better help with our Masonic Home charity, so could they please send you a check for \$2.00 made out to the Masonic Home of Virginia so you can present it at an upcoming MAHOVA function. There are very few of the Brethren who cannot afford the \$2.00 and, if they are going to write the check, they might make it out for more than \$2.00. But think how good it will be to get each Brother to do just a little something on behalf of the Lodge. And think how great it would be if our participation in some of our charitable activities were much closer to the 100% mark than it is today.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Becoming Worshipful Master is a great honor and a great responsibility, but it also should be personally rewarding and very enjoyable. There is no need to feel overwhelmed by all of the things you need to do, particularly if you begin to plan your year early enough.

This guide contains much of what you need to succeed, but you also should have faith in yourself. During your time in Lodge and as you progress through the line, you will have come to certain conclusions as to what worked in your Lodge and what fell flat. You will have views as to what generated enthusiasm and what failed to motivate your Lodge Brethren. You will have seen examples of strong leadership and good programs, and you will have experienced things that you did not appreciate. These are lessons you already have absorbed, and they will guide you in developing your own personal style of leadership and your own programs for the Lodge.

The most important lesson you should have learned, and one that is a constant thread throughout this guide, is the need to make Freemasonry alive and relevant to the Brethren. In everything you do you want to encourage rather than discourage active participation by as many of the Brethren as possible. You want to increase the opportunities for fellowship and for Masonic education. You want to encourage ritual done well and you want foster activities that are interesting to the Brethren and useful to the Lodge and the community.

The obligations we have taken around the altar were no idle words--but the key to what it means to be a Mason. As Worshipful Master, you want to stimulate camaraderie not factions. You want to insist upon Masonic courtesy and foster a genuine concern for and among the Brethren. In any organization there are differences of opinion, but petty piques and quarrels have no place in Freemasonry. The interests of the moment are less important than our obligations to each other. Your year will be a success if, by your actions and as a result of your programs, you have a united Lodge with happy and engaged Brethren. Every action you take as Worshipful Master should be measured by whether it is in the best interests of the Lodge, whether it promotes unity and harmony among the Brethren, and whether it is congruent with the high moral principles of Freemasonry.

It only remains to wish you success in leading your Lodge and moving Freemasonry forward.