

# 10 STEPS TO LODGE RENEWAL

## 1. Plan, Program, Prepare

### *Set lodge goals and agenda for the year*

- ✚ Hold a planning and goal-setting meeting with your officers. Give strong consideration to inviting the ladies to participate.
- ✚ Document specific activities and goals each month that your lodge wants to accomplish. Make a lodge calendar for review.

*Make sure your lodge is represented at the Grand Lodge Annual Communication!!*

## 2. Attract New Members

### *Identify men in your community who would meet the qualifications of membership.*

#### **Having trouble coming up with names? Try the following tools:**

- ✚ Target prospects and follow up with visits
- ✚ Telephone Book
- ✚ Look for relatives of present or past members
- ✚ Look through the local newspaper and look for people who recently celebrated or will be celebrating 25<sup>th</sup> year wedding anniversaries or even wedding announcements. Both of these events help identify potential “baby boomers” who may find themselves with more time on their hands. These men who now are looking for exactly what Masonry has to offer – a chance to “give back” to their communities, a sense of belonging, fraternal relations, etc. Don’t overlook men who have expressed an interest in the past, even those who may have taken their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree(s). Maybe that simply wasn’t the right time or perhaps there were other circumstances that interfered with their membership. *(Talk to these men about their potential interest in the fraternity, using your personal experiences and describe what Masonry has meant to you.)*

*Send a letter to your non-Masonic friends.*

*Hold a “Friendship Night” (or Brother Bring a Friend Night).*

*Take advantage of an Awards Program.*

*Utilize the resources of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.*

## 3. Spice up Lodge Meetings

### *Streamline the necessary business portion of the meeting.*

**Suggestion:** Print, don’t read, minutes and financial reports. Summarize communications (don’t read them verbatim).

**Refer to:** Wardens Handbooks and Tips for Running a Successful Meeting.

***Add informational and educational programs to every stated communication.***

***Experiment with meals/refreshments before and/or after meetings.***

- ☛ Experiment with timing of programs, i.e., have your program before dinner, followed by lodge meeting or have the program during the meeting, or afterwards – over coffee/refreshments.

***Don't always rely on the same brother to provide the program – pass the responsibility around.***

**Caution:** There is a fine line between encouraging brethren to give a program and making sure it is interesting. Make sure the programs remain interesting. (*Remember, a large part of Masonry revolves around self-improvement. However, don't force a brother to speak if he doesn't want to.*)

- ☛ The program doesn't have to be Masonic. Have a member come and talk about his profession. You'd be surprised how many brothers would find that very interesting. Consider using non-members to provide a program.
- ☛ Don't forget to include wives/families in some of the programs/activities.
- ☛ Contact the Grand Lodge office to request a speaker.

***Announce the Agenda of your meeting in advance through postcards, local newspapers, newsletter or telephone.***

- ☛ Create curiosity and interest in the meeting announcement. For instance, instead of writing "Brother Joe will discuss Masonic Opinions of Revolutionary Leaders," write this: "Did you ever wonder why Thomas Jefferson was never made a Mason? Was he anti-Masonic?"

***Take advantage of the Mentoring Program to educate current, even long-term members.***

***Have your officers and members visit another lodge for their regular or special meeting.***

#### **4. Family Involvement**

***Involve the ladies in your planning process. Find ways to involve the entire family in your events (especially Masonic widows).***

#### **5. Community Involvement/Visibility**

***Take part in parades, community festivals, celebrations, etc.***

- ☛ A lodge Open House could be held in conjunction with a community celebration or event.

***Organize a service function such as lining up snow removal for the elderly or disabled.***

- ☛ Think what good could come from a photo in the local newspaper of a group of Masons with snow blowers and shovels removing snow for an elderly or disabled member/resident.

*The possibilities are unlimited. Use your imagination.*

*Adopt or join with another Community Service Organization for a worthwhile project. Examples: Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, C of C.*

*Adopt a highway for clean-up.*

## **6. Initiate a major fundraiser, either for your lodge or a worthy cause in the community**

*An example might be to help raise money for a new fire truck or ambulance for the department.*

- ✚ Don't feel you have to reinvent the wheel here – keep your eyes open to something that might already be going on in the community and jump on the bandwagon. (*This would be good if your lodge is a bit short on active members right now.*)

### *Other fundraisers*

- ✚ Hold a monthly soup/sandwich feed – open to the public.
- ✚ Have a pancake breakfast for the public.
- ✚ Have a repository for redeemable cans. Publicize this.

## **7. Membership retention/Utilization**

*Get new members involved right away.*

- ✚ Get them involved with meetings and other lodge happenings mentioned above.

*Contact Brethren who haven't attended lodge lately.*

- ✚ Let them know they have been missed. Assign them a duty for the next meeting and offer to pick them up. Organize “pick-up service” for those brethren who may be uncomfortable driving. This is especially useful for night driving or poor weather conditions.

*Organize a “Telephone Tree” to make contact with all brothers easier.*

- ✚ Have several brothers be responsible for contacting the entire membership. This can be very useful for special meetings and funerals, etc.

*Survey your membership, particularly the younger members, for what type of activities they would be interested in.*

- ✚ Think outside the box – it doesn't have to be Masonic related. How about a “cards night,” watching sports on a big screen television, etc. Let them give you their ideas and listen to them. Make them feel a part of the process and the Lodge.

*Hold a “Rusty Nail” Degree or a “Re-obligation Night.”*

- ✚ Publicize the event. Invite members of nearby lodges. In case of a major Rededication Ceremony, the Grand Lodge may like to participate. This can help remind your members why they became Masons and why they maintain their membership.

## 8. Publicize your Lodge (Internally and Externally)

### *Appoint a member to be in charge of Public Relations*

#### **Internal Publicity**

- ✚ Obtain e-mail addresses of Lodge members.

This will provide one more way to communicate with the membership.

- ✚ Initiate or improve your Lodge newsletter.

If your Lodge already has a newsletter, consider spicing it up. Do something radically different in the next issue to generate interest. This could be something as easy as rearranging the contents to adding a new feature to putting in something controversial or using a sensational headline. Have fun with it. One of the negative opinions the uninitiated have of Masonry is that we are a bunch of Stuffed Shirts. Appoint a member to be in charge of Public Relations.

#### **External Publicity**

- ✚ Submit press releases to local newspapers

Local newspapers are always looking for things to fill space. It is very important that the articles are well written and complete. Don't expect the newspaper to edit and/or correct mistakes. Assistance on what to submit and how to write an article is available from the Grand Lodge Public Relations Committee.

## 9. Lodge Appearance

*Don't forget one of the Lodge's best resources of publicity and community involvement is the Lodge building itself. The appearance of your lodge building says a lot to the uninitiated. Are you sending the right message?*

- ✚ Hold a clean-up, painting party. Make a fun day/night out of it.

- ✚ Make sure the sign on your building is clean and in good shape. Place highway signs at each entrance to your community. Be sure the sign states the day/time of your regular meetings. This could be (but wouldn't have to be) designed around a major addition to capital improvement to your lodge.

## 10. Last, But Certainly Not Least – Ritual

*Make sure your Lodge can and does provide top-notch ritual in your degrees and meetings.*

### *Hold a Ritual School of Instruction*

- ✚ Contact the Grand Custodian or the Deputy Custodian in your area to arrange a time and place for a School of Instruction.

*Identify members in your Lodge who are potential candidates to become a Masonic Instructor.*

Finally Brethren, please understand that you and your Lodge are not in this alone. This is a **TEAM** effort! If you have any questions or would like guidance or assistance in any of the steps along the way to Lodge Renewal, contact the Masonic Education Committee. The names and addresses of the current members are listed in the Grand Lodge Officers Directory. If in doubt, contact the Grand Lodge Office, who will refer you to the proper people to assist you.

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