



Ideas That Work



Please Forward to Other Leaders in Your Lodge

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August...A great month to bleed!

We have talked about this for several months and now the time is finally here! August has been designated by the Grand Master as a Statewide Blood Drive month.

This will be the first time a coordinated Statewide drive has been attempted. What better way to expose the general public to Masonry and save lives at the same time!

Lodges and Web sites

(This month, we'll talk about what comes next now that your site is up and running.)

Your web site is now up and running, and you're thinking that all is right with the World Wide Web. Well, not so fast. Web sites are funny things. They go stale almost immediately and when they do, people quit looking. So what next? Next is maintaining your site and this really breaks down into 3 categories: 1. Updating content, 2. Maintaining links, 3. Making backups

Updating Content

The first thing to recognize is that building your web site was the easy part. Keeping fresh and keeping people reading is the tough part. Content in King on the web and without constantly changing content traffic to your site will dwindle. Studies have shown that you have about 15 seconds to capture someone's attention on the web before they click and go elsewhere. That's not much time! Plus, if they visit your site 2 or 3 times and nothing has changed, they generally lose interest. So decide now on a regular schedule of freshening your web site with new pictures, text, a contest, anything

to make it different. How often should this be done? That's all based on the kind of web site it is and the purpose of the web site. Watch your usage statistics (available through your control panel) and you can tell when traffic is dropping off. This can give you a rough estimate of how often you are going to need to update the site.

Maintaining Links

Nothing, and I mean nothing, is more irritating to someone visiting your web site than clicking on a link and having it either go to the wrong page or no page at all (the dreaded 404 Error). The links on your pages to other pages in your web site can get "broken" when you add new pages or change the look of your web site. Make sure after every revision of your web site you test each and every link and make sure it still works and is going to the right place.

This is also true if you are linking out to other web sites. Check them often and make sure that site is still up and running. Web sites come and go at an amazing pace on the Web, so never assume a site you linked to last month is still there.

Backups

You've probably heard all this before but it bears repeating again. Make sure you make backups of all your web site pages and information and keep it in a safe place. There's an old joke that goes, when do people make their first backup? Right after they lose everything! Unfortunately there is a lot of truth in this old joke. Hard drives, CD's and other storage is so cheap now that there is absolutely no excuse for not having backups. You can even get software to

automatically back up your computer so you can use the "I don't want to be a computer geek" excuse. Remember, sooner or later, you are going to need those back ups. Don't wait to think about it until you have a loss!

Grand Master Initiatives

The Grand Master has set a very aggressive schedule of events for himself, the Grand Lodge and the subordinate Lodges for 2009. The GM has done so because experience tells us that an active Lodge is a healthy Lodge! The more things you offer, the wider the variety of things you offer, the better off you Lodge will be.

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

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

of us to go back to our Blue Lodges and share what we've been doing in the appendant bodies and renew old friendships.

3. **October - Ladies Festival Weekend** – In appreciation for all that your wife and significant other means to you, a Ladies Festival Weekend will be held October 9-11, in Omaha. The weekend will include site seeing, shopping in the Old Market and finishing with an elegant dinner and a new Ladies at the Table ceremony, followed by a concert by the UNL symphony orchestra featuring music by composers who were Masons.

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

August Ideas!

Here are some things you can try in you Lodge!

Masonic News Report – Have one or more of your Internet savvy members deliver a short 5 to 10 minute report on news from around the world of Masonry. There

are many good sources of news items of interest on the Internet. It's fun and interesting to hear about our Brothers around the World.

Back to School Drive – With the coming of August, we are closing in on the start of

another school year. Many families and schools could use help in providing the basics for the children. Backpacks, crayons, paper, pencils, pens, etc. Contact your local school and ask about donating needed items. Makes a great public relations story for the local paper as well. It's win – win! The

children get the stuff they need and Masonry gets some positive exposure!

Another School Idea – Those first few days of school can be scary for youngsters, contact you local school and volunteer to be crossing guards, read stories in the library, or any other help that the school is short on.

Leadership and Enrollment Training

Starting in August and running through September, the Grand Lodge officers will be crossing the State presenting the Leadership and Enrollment training programs. These programs are intend to train Lodges in Leadership development and in membership development. Each program will be presented in a Lodge no further than 90 miles from the farthest Mason. So everyone should be able to find a presentation to attend.

If you are about to be a Leader in your Lodge this training is some of the best help you can get. If you are currently JW or SW and are thinking of the East, don't miss these important programs! More information will be forthcoming from the Grand Lodge, so starting planning now to attend. All training's are on the weekend.

Masonic Relief

The Masonic Relief fund continues to need your help! These tough economic times are taking their toll on our Brother Masons. One way you can help is to go to the Grand Lodge web site, click on the store banner and either purchase product or just make a donation outright to Masonic Relief. All you need is a credit card and the willingness to donate. We've also put up some new items from the 250th anniversary.

Please send me your ideas for Masonic branded products you'd like to see in the Masonic Relief Store. remember, 100% of the profits go to Masonic Relief. This makes it a great project for your Lodge as well. Send you ideas to me at tomshop1@me.com. And I'll do my best to get stuff in stock!

Keep Sending In Those Activity Ideas

We know there are many, many more activities lodges have performed that have been successful. Don't be shy. Share them with us. Your lodge activity ideas may end up helping another lodge.

What may seem commonplace to you, because your lodge has held an event for many years, may be new to someone else. If it's working for your lodge, please send it to us. Write a short summary and send it to: michelle@gln.org or mail it to the Grand Lodge Office at: 1240 No. 10th St., Lincoln,

NE 68501-1852. If additional information is needed, we'll call.

This newsletter will be sent to you as often as we have ideas. It will take you only a few minutes, but it could help our fraternity across the state. Thanks for your help.