

Grand Lodge of Maine, A.F. & A.M.

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www.MaineMason.org



Office of the Grand Master
Thomas E. Pulkkinen

August 8, 2016

To Lodge Masters, Wardens and Secretaries

Traveling throughout Maine Freemasonry over the past several years, I have been so encouraged and excited to see the number of new Masons – Masonic Rookies of all ages – becoming engaged in their Lodges, as officers, committeemen, mentors, and otherwise engaged in the important work of their Lodges.

Many Lodges have officer lines of Masons eager to grow, learn and contribute to the Craft. And in more and more Lodges, Past Masters have willingly relinquished their line officer positions to new Masons ascending the officer line, with the Past Masters serving instead as teachers, mentors and enthusiastic supporters.

This rejuvenation of our fraternity is made possible by the efforts of so many Masons to attract and engage new Lodge members, who represent a source of new energy.

Because new energy and Masonic renewal are essential in every Lodge, one focus of the Grand Lodge Membership Committee has been to freshen up the time-proven Fellowship Night program than can be offered in every Lodge, by itself or in concert with a nearby Lodge(s).

And to help many of our Lodges with limited financial resources, the Grand Lodge is offering financial assistance to hold fellowship events that impress our guests and leaves them with a positive impression of all Freemasonry has to offer.

The Fellowship Night program is explained in the attached materials that are also available on the Grand Lodge website (www.MaineMason.org). Every Lodge has been given a small supply of the new “Maine Freemasonry” brochures and more may be obtained from Grand Lodge. And Grand Lodge may be able to offer some local radio spots to support Lodge efforts to attract new members.

Let’s set a reasonable goal of conferring degrees on at least two candidates in every Lodge between now and next April, or at least one more than last year in each Lodge, whichever is greater. What an exciting infusion of potential energy that would give our Craft and our Lodges.

I urge you to review the Fellowship Night with your Lodge at your next meeting, and discuss it at the next meeting of Masonic leaders from around your District.

Together, we can take a positive step to renewing the vibrancy of our great fraternity, and its value to her members and their communities

Fraternally,

cc: Grand Lodge Officers and Permanent Members

Attracting and Engaging New Members... The Source of New Energy and Masonic Renewal

How often do we witness a single Brother uplift an entire Lodge with his positive life experiences, fresh ideas and enthusiasm? We often marvel how a single sparkplug can organize a nucleus of energized leaders who make great things happen.

Yes, one person can truly make a real difference in any organization and sometimes the person who rises to the challenge and rejuvenates the organization comes as a complete surprise to everyone. And when two, three or more such members become active in a Lodge, Freemasonry thrives again, enriching lives through thought provoking Masonic education, creative charitable work in the community and in support of Lodge members, and the building of strong bonds among Brethren and between Freemasonry and its spiritual underpinnings.

As we begin this new Masonic year, many Lodges report having complete progressive lines of Brethren holding offices for the first time in many, many years; no Past Masters in line positions. Other Lodges have core groups of such officers and are welcoming many new members to their Lodges. These Lodges are on the rebound, their future is bright.

Some of these up and coming Lodges are small, others are quite large. Their success should not be judged by the number of Lodge members or the number of new Masons, but by how they address Lodge needs, and the extent to which they understand – and practice in their daily lives – the great lessons of our Craft.

One small Maine Lodge had not worked a candidate in a few years. Presented with the opportunity to again confer Masonic degrees, the Lodge had more members at its rehearsals than it had been getting for stated communications. The rehearsals – the desire to confer the degree well, which it did – created energy, enthusiasm and an esprit de corps among Lodge members.

Welcoming new members requires Brethren to study their ritual and degree charges as a team; mentor and educate the new Masons; travel with them to other Lodges; help them pursue the Rookie Award. It means having Past Masters step up to help young officers learn their work. In short, it means having the Lodge practice Freemasonry!

There is no right number of members of a Lodge, 30-40-50 local, active Brothers can make a warm, exciting, productive Lodge that practices brotherhood and is active in its community. The key being, do you have enough engaged Brothers now, and will you have enough in 10 or 20 years from now?

History shows that Lodges should plan to replace each current member over the next 20 years, or stated another way, to attract new members each year equivalent to 5% of its membership (that is, a Lodge with 100 members should plan to welcome five new members each year). A Lodge with an older membership should work to attract and retain even more new members, just to maintain a stable group of active members.

Attracting new members is not a numbers game...it's pursuing the *Source of New Energy and Masonic Renewal* in your Lodge.

A proven approach to attracting quality men to the fraternity is holding well planned and executed Fellowship Nights. And that means following every simple and essential step of the following Fellowship Night plan.

Fellowship Nights

There are 16 simple and **essential** steps for assuring growth in the Masonic Fraternity by planning and executing Fellowship Nights and obtaining financial support from Grand Lodge. Each and every step must be executed for a successful event. Provide enough time to plan and hold the event – it takes 8 to 10 weeks to adequately prepare for a memorable and impressive Fellowship Night.

1. Gain consensus among Brethren that the Lodge should / need to attract new candidates to their Lodge to survive, prosper and spread the good works of Freemasonry.
2. Determine whether it would be beneficial for multiple Lodges (from within one District or adjoining Districts) to participate in the Fellowship Night.
3. Select a **Lodge Membership Leader** for each lodge. He must be a man who understands the importance of attracting good men to the Craft and of setting candidate targets consistent with the needs of the Lodge. And, he must be a man who gets things done.
4. Identify prospective invitees.
 - a. As a group, have Lodge members identify quality candidates for Freemasonry from the communities served by the Lodge. Consider, for example, community leaders, teachers and school leaders, public safety officials, businessmen, members of community and faith groups as well as other fraternal organizations.
 - b. Help Brethren identify **two** friends / relatives / coworkers they feel would make good Masons and with whom they would like to share Freemasonry. Suggest that they consider as prospects, their sons, brothers, sons-in law, cousins; the men with whom they fish, golf, bowl or exercise. Just two names, because the Brethren will have the responsibility to get these guests to the meeting; and two guests (plus – optionally – their partners) is about all anyone can handle.
5. Have officers and other members provide the names, addresses and contact information of the prospective invitees on a guest sheet (see attached sample) and make certain the completed form gets submitted to the Lodge Membership Leader. Determine whether invitee names are on the lists of multiple participating Lodges.
6. Keep the Fellowship Night program simple with a tight focus. The message should be Blue Lodge Freemasonry....what it is....what it does....and why. It is important to realize that most of our guests probably know nothing about the Craft or its structure, or its appendant bodies. Attempts to talk about too much makes for a confusing meeting with a garbled message. Part of the great beauty of Freemasonry is its simple, timeless truths. It's alright to mention the Shrine etc. because they may be familiar with Shrinedom and its hospitals, but there will be plenty of time to talk about our appendant bodies later.
7. The Lodge Membership Leader should contact potential speakers and see who is available to give an inspirational presentation and on what dates.
8. Choose a Fellowship Night date and notify all Lodge members and each participating Lodge. Membership attendance is important; don't invite guests into an empty Lodge

room. If prospective members are urged to bring their ladies, then so should Lodge members.

9. Each Lodge Membership Leader (or one designated individual) should send invitations (see attached example) to selected guests. All invitations for a Fellowship Night should be mailed at the same time – about four weeks prior to the scheduled Fellowship Night.
10. Some **5 – 7 days after the invitations are mailed** each Brother should contact his invited guests. Each caller should have a short personal message to share about his Masonic interests and what the Lodge does, and should inform them, “I really enjoy the fraternity and believe you would to, that’s why I invited you attend a special evening to hear more about my Lodge and Freemasonry. May I stop by to pick you up (and your partner) at 6:00 p.m.” Notify the Lodge Membership Leader who is expected to attend so plans can be made for food, nametags etc.

Then, do it! We are inviting these guests to an evening of friendship. It’s pretty unrealistic to expect a man to show up alone at a strange place. And, it’s not a very friendly thing to do either. Remember, the guest doesn’t know where the invitation came from until his friend (our Brother) calls and tells him.

11. Then 3 – 4 days before the Fellowship Night, the brother should call his invited guests again to remind them of the event and that he’ll be by to pick them up.
12. Fellowship Nights work well with a 6:30 supper followed by a 7:30 meeting with everyone on their way home by 9:00 p.m.
13. Have a 5–star meal to leave a great impression.
14. Pass out the “Maine Freemasonry Enriching Lives...” brochure and the Lodge membership application to each potential guest with a note on where completed applications may be sent if they are interested in becoming a Freemason.
15. Following the Fellowship Night, the Lodge should send a follow-up note to the attendees thanking them for attending. They also should be called to thank them for attending. Ask them whether they gained a favorable impression of the fraternity during the Fellowship Night and whether they might be positively inclined to become a Freemason. And ask whether they would like an opportunity to learn more about the fraternity and your Lodge.
16. Guidelines for Grand Lodge financial support are as follows:
 - a. *A **minimum of three** potential members must attend the Fellowship Night for a Lodge or group of Lodges to qualify for Grand Lodge financial support.*
 - b. The only meals that Grand Lodge will pay for are those of the potential Brother (and his partner). All Brethren must pay for their own meals and those of their partners.
 - c. Grand Lodge financial assistance will be \$15.00 per potential candidate, or \$25.00 for each potential candidate and his guest, who actually attend the Fellowship Night.
 - d. After the Fellowship Night, the hosting lodge must submit a report to the Grand Lodge Membership Committee Chairman indicating how many invitations were sent out, **how**

many Lodge members and potential candidates actually attended, and how many applications were received (or in the works).

- e. The Grand Lodge Membership Committee Chairman will approve and submit the above report to Grand Lodge for timely payment of the authorized financial support of the event.