

The Presiding Officer



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(A GIANT STEP FROM WEST TO EAST)

by S. Flory Diehl

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by order of Most Worshipful Grand Master

John R. Biggs, Jr.

PRESENTED

to the

WORSHIPFUL MASTER-ELECT

by

The Grand Lodge of AF & AM of Maryland

304 International Circle

Cockeysville, MD 21030

PREFACE

One bit of knowledge I have learned is that, if you write too much, most people will not read it. Therefore, I will try to be brief and I hope to the point.

Although most of the principles set forth in this booklet can be used by the incoming presiding officer of most Masonic organizations, it is specifically written for those about to become Worshipful Masters of their Lodges and more particularly to the Worshipful Masters-Elect in Southern Maryland. No claim to originality is made as many of the ideas and thoughts expressed in this booklet have been gleaned from various sources.

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GREETING

Heartiest congratulations are extended to you upon being elected to preside over your Lodge. Within a few weeks your brethren will bestow upon you the brightest honor and what well may be your brightest hour, by installing you Worshipful Master of your Lodge. Of course, with high honors come great responsibilities. It should be your ambition that your year will be deemed one of the best that your Lodge has ever experienced. Numerous and important duties will fall upon you as you lead and guide your Lodge during the coming year. However, if you realize that your primary function is to SERVE, if you have prepared yourself properly, and if you strive diligently, you will perform your duties with real distinction.

You well know from your study of Masonic Law that you as Worshipful Master of a Masonic Lodge will have powers, responsibilities, and privileges not accorded the presiding officers of other organizations. They preside but do not govern. You will do both, but you will get better cooperation if you ask and lead instead of ordering and directing. It will behoove you, therefore, to be very careful that your decisions are wise and just.

Now is the time to realize that your term in the East will be all-important but ever so short. At the end of your term, looking back, you will realize how quickly it passed. Do not be one of those who say "If I could be Worshipful Master again ..." There may be only one time. Make the most of it.

1. FRIENDLINESS OR HOSPITALITY

Few assets are more valuable to a Worshipful Master than friends. The art of making friends is encompassed in one phrase, "to have friends one must be a friend and sincerely friendly." The Senior Warden who goes into the East interested enough to know all regular attendants by name and personally introduce all Past Masters in attendance will enter his year of responsibility with a great asset.

(Do not ask your Past Masters to introduce themselves.)

Be genuinely interested in the welfare of each of your members. All Lodges need the spark of good fellowship and brotherly love. Where good fellowship exists, the attendance will increase. A Worshipful Master should never be too concerned with the cares of his office to neglect to foster fellowship among his brethren.

2. INCREASING ATTENDANCE

Various methods work with varying degrees of success, but well run, interesting, friendly meetings are more effective than anything else in getting the sidelines filled. Another effective way is for a member to call another member and offer to come by and pick him up on the way to the meeting. It is also helpful to send a card to the members on their Masonic birthday and invite them to attend the meeting in the month of their anniversary. Of course, they should be recognized in some way at the meeting.

Most of the times when we discuss the problem of non-attendance we are discussing it with the people who do attend. It might be an interesting experiment to invite those who don't attend to come out and tell the brethren why they don't attend. Just as important, ask them to tell you what would bring them out. Advertise the meeting and make sure you have some non-attendees who have agreed to come out and talk.

There is a Lodge in Florida which on the average has about 85% of the membership in attendance. Here is the way they accomplished it: The active members found out as much as they could about the inactive members - their hobbies, likes, dislikes, etc. The active member who had been assigned to an inactive member made it a point to get him to a meeting and at each opportunity would talk to him about the things he liked. As an inactive member became an active member he in turn would be assigned to another inactive member. In this way they accomplished one of the great goals of every organization. Why not try it?

It is easy to let attendance drop off, but it is a long hard task to rebuild it.

3. INTEREST

I have come to the conclusion after observing many presiding officers that about the most important requisite of a good Worshipful Master is interest. A Worshipful Master who is sincerely interested in his brethren and his Lodge is more likely to have a good year

than the most capable man who lacks real interest in his Lodge. I have seen both, and I have marveled at the results produced by genuine interest.

It is difficult for you to develop leadership qualities which you may not possess, but with a little effort on your part you can increase your interest. I know one Masonic organization which was on the skids for several years until it installed a presiding officer who cared enough to spend long hours in building a very successful year. He did not stop, where too many do, in talking about what should be done. He went into action and got things done.

While Worshipful Master of Seat Pleasant Lodge, I was initiated into another Masonic organization. The presiding officer of that organization showed enough interest in me to attend several Masonic functions including a funeral service which I conducted. I was impressed that he would take that much time out of his busy schedule to attend these functions, and I've always been grateful that he showed that much interest in me.

4. ENTHUSIASM

Everyone likes people who are optimistic and enthusiastic. Instill enthusiastic support and cooperation among the officers and members. To do this you must possess enthusiasm. Presiding officers too often lose their enthusiasm when things don't go just right. They tend to give up too easily. You must learn quickly to expect reverses of various kinds during your term as Worshipful

Master. You will most likely have committees, officers and other individuals who will let you down. I know Worshipful Masters who started their year with great expectations, but after a few disappointments they became discouraged, and giving up on practically all their plans, they just drifted through the remainder of their term with nothing to look forward to but getting through with an unpleasant year. If you are prepared for the buffeting and hard knocks along the way you will not let them dampen your enthusiasm and your determination.

Just remember the old saying that “the only person who is not criticized is the person who does nothing” - and persevere in achieving your goals.

5. LEADERSHIP

"The precious ingredient or quality that can make the difference between average results and outstanding results in motivating people" is leadership.

(Read this several times during your term of Office)

There comes a time during any undertaking when we should pause and survey our course. We should take a look at ourselves, our Lodge and our course - where we have been and where we are going. This may involve a little soul-searching. Let us ask ourselves these questions:

1. Am I providing the dynamic leadership which makes for success, or am I letting my Lodge drift aimlessly?

2. Do I have a positive and forward-looking attitude which will attract the support of others?

3. Am I willing to work?

4. Am I enthusiastic, and do I instill enthusiasm in others?

5. Do I use intelligence and imagination in setting up an active and interesting program?

6. Do I give "all I have" to the responsible job of Worshipful Master?

7. Am I well informed in Masonry and committed to its advancement?

8. Am I well informed in my own Lodge? Do I know which committees are doing a good job, and am I taking corrective steps where committees are not functioning properly?

9. Do I adopt realistic goals to be achieved and formulate plans for their accomplishment?

10. Do I ask my officers and members for their opinions to enlist their cooperation?

11. At this point in my year as Worshipful Master, do I have a sense of accomplishment or do I find it necessary to make excuses to myself and to others?

After answering the above questions in your own mind, do you feel that you have measured up to what your Lodge has a right to expect of you? You are the promoter, the director of everything that you wish to accomplish during your brief term. Your brethren will look to you to initiate activity. As their leader you must use your intelligence and imagination to put work on the Trestle Board for your brethren to perform. If the

Worshipful Master falters there will be confusion among the workmen.

A leader must have that extra quality of aggressiveness; he must remember that enthusiasm begets enthusiasm; and he must demonstrate an attitude of quiet assurance that instills confidence. Attitude often spells the difference between success and failure. If a Worshipful Master exhibits an attitude of defeat he is "licked before he starts." If he thinks in small terms or is willing to settle for merely "holding the line" - he can expect failure. A leader must be willing to set the pace for all who follow his lead; he must be willing to work harder and longer than anyone else; and he must convince his followers that they can succeed by following him.

The Grand Lodge can only advise and try to inspire and stimulate interest and activity and sometimes prod; but it is the Worshipful Master who has to provide the leadership in his Lodge, and it is in the local Lodges where Masonry will either prosper or falter. The degree of success is directly related to the leadership of the Worshipful Master and the interest and activity he can instill in his Lodge. Undoubtedly you will be disappointed at times when you try to stimulate activity and get little or no response - just as the Grand Master is sometimes disappointed with the response he gets. But it is important that you don't become discouraged and give up. Only by realizing the full responsibility of your job and persevering can you succeed.

In preparing yourself to be a good Worshipful Master try these questions on for size:

1. Can you express your own ideas without causing others to feel you are overbearing and narrow-minded?

2. Do you think for yourself and not let the opinions of others unduly influence you?

3. Do you welcome suggestions but weigh them carefully before acting upon them?

4. Do you give credit where credit is due?

5. Are you calm when your mistakes are pointed out?

6. Can you meet opposition without becoming confused and saying things you wish afterwards you had not said?

7. When you say or do something which you realize you shouldn't have, do you become determined to avoid such acts in the future rather than making excuses to yourself or trying to shift the blame to someone else?

8. Do you make and retain friends easily?

9. Do you consider your term as Worshipful Master to be an opportunity for service to your Brethren with no thought of self-glorification?

10. Do you keep a tongue of good report? Do you encourage your officers and members to come to you with their gripes and complaints where they can be talked out and resolved rather than going to every one else which only adds to the discord?

11. Is your Lodge well organized? Do your Wardens confer most of the degrees leaving you the necessary time for planning, organizing, and administering?

12. Do you keep your officers informed of your plans or, better still, develop your plans with the officers?

13. Do you visit other Lodges with your officers? In addition to building friendships and encouraging visits to your Lodge, you will acquire new ideas and in some cases learn what not to do.

If you are not satisfied that you measure up in every respect to what your Lodge has a right, to expect of a good leader, determine now to improve yourself in those areas that need strengthening.

Constructive criticism is an invaluable source of information for the Worshipful Master who accepts it. Too often we spend more time justifying, excusing or rationalizing an error than in trying to understand and benefit from constructive criticism of it. When we are non-defensive, we become aware that constructive criticism is in fact a real compliment. The person offering it is usually uncomfortable in doing so, but if he is willing to endure the discomfort in order to help us, we should listen and appreciate his suggestions. He runs the risk of arousing our disfavor, but he cares enough for our welfare to take the chance.

6. PLANNING YOUR MEETINGS

Here are some ideas and suggestions for planning your meetings for your year as Worshipful Master. It is needless to remind you of the need to plan ahead. The success a presiding officer achieves can often be gauged by his plans. A Worshipful Master who enters his year

without any plans cannot hope to accomplish much. I know one very efficient brother who had his year planned five months before his installation. However, schedules should not be so rigid that they cannot be changed, should circumstances warrant. It often helps to set specified, announced goals for the year. Examples of such goals might be:

1. Officers report at least 30 minutes before opening time.
2. Start on time.
3. Have something special at every meeting when there is no degree work.
4. Confer impressive degrees.
5. Build attendance.
6. Build a reputation as a friendly Lodge.
7. Close at a reasonable hour.
8. Foster good fellowship during the refreshment period.

Team work is essential. You might call a planning session where you get your Officers, Past Masters, and active members together to discuss plans for the coming year. Discuss the goals and ask for suggested new ones as well as ideas on improving your meetings, etc.

In planning your meetings, try something new. What works for one Lodge may (or may not) work well for another Lodge. One of the most illogical statements heard in our Fraternity today is the often repeated statement: "We've always done it that way." There may be a good reason why we've always done some things the way we have, but wouldn't it be more logical to say: "We

do it that way because we have not found a better way." There must be a better way for many of the things which we have always done that way. This does not mean that we should go off half cocked with all kinds of questionable schemes which may harm our Fraternity more than they help. But, on the other hand, if you think of something that you believe will improve your meetings, attendance, etc., then try it.

Before trying something new, however, it is best to give it careful consideration and talk it over with experienced Brethren such as Past Masters. They may know of its, having been tried before and can tell you what kind of results to expect if you do try it. Here are a few suggestions to use in planning your meetings:

1. Have a Masonic Quiz and give prizes to the winners.

2. Have a meeting where members tell about unusual Lodge experiences.

3. Have six or eight members, each with an idea, give four-minute talks on what the Lodge needs or how to improve the meetings-what it requires to be better, more alive, more interesting. Such a discussion should bring out many ideas. Throw the meeting open to the membership as soon as the arranged speakers have finished; often the unprepared speech will be the most illuminating of the evening.

4. Honor some brother who has worked in the Masonic vineyard "without hope of fee or reward" with a program - you may even want to pattern it after "This is Your Life."

5. Senior Wardens' Night - Invite the Senior Wardens of other Lodges. Let your S.W. plan the program and open and close the meeting.

6. Worshipful Masters' Night – Invite the Worshipful Masters of neighboring Lodges to attend and confer a Degree having the Worshipful Masters assume a chair

7. Past Masters' Night - Send each Past Master a separate invitation. Ask each of them to tell some of the interesting things that happened while he was Worshipful Master or while he was in line. (If you have any long winded Past Masters, it may be wise to set a time limit.) If you can get enough of them to do it they might confer a Degree. Give them certificates of award for their service to the Lodge.

8. Masonic Celebrity Night - Ask everyone to bring information on a famous Mason such as Washington, Franklin, Paul Revere, Kipling, Masonic presidents, Masonic astronauts. This means specifying in advance a particular Mason or group of Masons that will be discussed.

9. DeMolay or Job's Daughters Night - Have a very short meeting after which the DeMolay or Job's Daughters confer a Degree. (Do not keep them waiting outside unduly long.)

10. Have a York Rite Night, a Scottish Rite Night, or a Tall Cedars Night. Have a short interesting program, or give officers and members of guest organizations an opportunity to talk.

11. If you don't already do it, start annual visitations between your Lodge and another Lodge. If you are close enough to another Grand Jurisdiction, it

usually creates interest to make your visitations with a Lodge in another Grand Jurisdiction. You could invite the Lodge to bring one of their Candidates and confer a degree in your Lodge or offer to visit their Lodge and confer a degree Maryland style on your Candidate. If you invite another Maryland Lodge it probably would be better to plan something other than degree work. Remember to obtain proper dispensations from both Grand Jurisdictions.

12. Invite a Degree Team such as the Knights of Mecca, Tall Cedars, Shield & Square Team or other Grand Lodge approved teams (remember dispensations).

7. BEFORE THE MEETING

Check with the Secretary to see that you know everything that will come before the Lodge and that both of you know the order of business you will follow.

Assign a person or persons who set up the Lodge to see that everything is in place. It is embarrassing and an unnecessary waste of time, for example, to find that the ballot box is still in the closet when it comes time to ballot, EA slides not ready for the lecture, or the Working Tools missing, etc.

When conferring degrees, assign a member to properly prepare the candidate(s) well in advance of the conferral.

Shake hands and warmly greet your members and visitors.

Check to see that all officers are present and if not have someone ready to substitute.

Appoint an examining committee to be ready in case visitors arrive. Too often a visitor arrives as a stranger and departs a stranger with no desire to return. Assign a member of the Lodge to host each visiting Brother and instruct him to sit with the visitor, introduce him to others at appropriate times, see that he is well taken care of during the refreshment period, and in general, make him feel welcome. If this is done the visiting Brother will carry away with him a fond memory and a warm spot in his heart for the Brethren of your Lodge.

8. PRESIDING

When possible, conduct the “business” of the Lodge in the lowest appropriate degree. This affords your Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts the opportunity to become familiar with the working of the Lodge.

Start on time. This is much more important than many presiding officers apparently realize. You wouldn't think of wasting a member's money, and yet many Worshipful Masters waste a member's time. Wasted money can be replaced, but wasted time can never be regained. Open your Lodge at the time you tell your members in the Lodge Bulletin that you are going to open it. Your members will learn quickly whether you mean it when you say you are going to open at 7:30pm.

Be courteous but firm - not dictatorial. Use the gavel of authority sparingly and it will be more effective when it becomes necessary to use it.

Keep things moving - don't let the meeting drag. Remember that you are setting the pace, and while you are in the "hot" seat it may not get dull for you, but for the members on the sidelines it can become mighty boring if the pace is too slow.

Give everyone a chance to talk, but control the length of debate if it gets too long. At a Lodge meeting I attended, insurance was being discussed and the question was raised whether or not it could be obtained two or three dollars cheaper with some other company. At least ten minutes were spent discussing this possibility. There were 43 members present. This means that over seven hours of fraternal time was spent discussing the possibility of saving two or three dollars. It is sometimes best to end debate and appoint a committee to get further information for action at a later date.

Never try to kill time because you don't want to close too early. When you kill time you kill attendance at future meetings.

Try to avoid cliques or even the appearance of cliques.

Encourage your members to participate even to letting them make and second motions. The same officers too often make and second routine motions. The officers

should be ready to help keep things moving, but they should at least give the members a chance to participate. This will give them the feeling that they are part of the meeting rather than mere spectators. Ask your officers to cooperate in this endeavor.

8a. SECRETARIES

One of a Worshipful Master's greatest assets is a competent and loyal Secretary. A good Secretary is always helpful to the Worshipful Master and does not try to "run the Lodge." Most Secretaries have been in office for years and can lend valuable assistance to the Worshipful Master. If a Worshipful Master is weak the Secretary may tend to run the Lodge. Thus, it may be necessary at times for a new Worshipful Master to assert his authority and remind the Secretary (always in private) that he, the Worshipful Master, was elected to run the Lodge.

There are many ways a Secretary can be helpful to the Worshipful Master. When the Secretary receives correspondence, he should notify the Worshipful Master as soon as practicable. The meeting night may be too late on some types of correspondence. The Worshipful Master and Secretary should coordinate their efforts and keep each other informed.

9. AFTER THE MEETING

Thank visitors again for coming and invite them to return, and do the same to members whom you have not

seen for awhile. Help make the fellowship hour enjoyable. Always have refreshments even if you cannot afford anything but the very lightest of refreshments. It gives the brethren an excuse for a fellowship period which is more important than many Worshipful Masters realize. In some Lodges over half of the sideline members come to Lodge because it affords them an opportunity for fellowship with their Brethren.

When I attend a Masonic meeting where the members just go home after the meeting I feel that there is something lacking - as if I have been cheated. This is one reason why it is important to close the formal part of the meeting early to give ample opportunity for the Brothers to enjoy the informal part which, as far as many of them are concerned, is just as important as the formal part.

10. SET THE CRAFT AT LABOR

In my opinion there are two principal reasons why members attend Lodge:

1. Fellowship - Meeting and socializing with their friends, and
2. To participate in work assigned to them.

Most people like to have a part in whatever work is being done. They like to think they're contributing something. It has been said that no man is truly happy unless he is doing constructive work. Masonry affords many opportunities for the Worshipful Master to set the Craft at Labor. Convince a brother that he is helping;

show appreciation for his efforts, and he becomes enthusiastic.

Do not assign tasks indiscriminately, but put the members to work doing the kinds of work they like best. Some work best on committees. Others like to help out in other ways such as on the Fellowcraft Team or showing the slides. It's hard to get members back who have not attended for years, but one of the best ways to keep a new member coming is to give him a job to do.

This business of giving a job to the busiest person if you want it done can easily be overdone. If he gets to the point where he can not do any more, then he has to say no and once he learns how to say no you will not get as much work out of him thereafter. Spread the work among as many members as you can.

The enthusiastic Worshipful Master usually heads an enthusiastic Lodge. No one can inculcate enthusiasm in others if he does not possess it himself. The Worshipful Master who puts many members to work at something will have enthusiastic meetings. The more members actively working on Committees the more interested members you will have and the better results you will obtain. Many members will take new interest when they have definite tasks to perform, and often they will accomplish amazing results. Try to utilize the talents of every member of your Lodge in some activity.

The only pay a committee member can receive is a "Worshipful Master's Wages." Pay them often and pay

them generously. Proper recognition for good work will not only stimulate them but should spur laggard committees to action.

10a. COMMITTEES

This is an area where it is extremely important to plan ahead. Do not appoint a committee without talking to the proposed committee members and making sure they are interested in accomplishing the goals set before the committee. There is considerable merit in asking for volunteers for some types of committees. I can think of committees where I have an interest, and on which I would enjoy working, and other committees where I have no interest, and it would be difficult for me to put forth any appreciable effort on the project. It is very important to have the right people on the right committee. If you do not get volunteers, at least talk to them and find out if they are willing to work on a particular committee. I find it best to get potential committee chairmen together, present the projects, and ask them which projects they are willing to take.

The Worshipful Master should make it clear to the Chairman what he expects of the committee. He is an ex-officio member of all committees and he should let the chairman know if he wants to sit in on committee meetings. Certain committees should be required to report periodically such as monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually. In this way the Worshipful Master keeps abreast of the progress of the committee. In some cases it

may be helpful to ask for certain committee progress reports at Lodge meetings.

The Chairmen should be informed at the beginning of the year that they are to submit a written report of their accomplishments at the end of the year such as on the night of the installation of officers or other appropriate meetings and that, if the report is accepted, it will be made a part of the minutes.

Some suggestions for Committees follow:

1. Attendance - An important Committee
2. Auditing and Budget - If it includes the Worshipful Master-elect and the Senior Warden-elect, the Worshipful Master will be aware of the financial condition of his Lodge when he gets in the East.
3. Blood Donor
4. By-Laws
5. Church Services
6. Communications
7. Mentoring - The Chairman of the committee should assign a mentor to each Candidate. The counselor's function is outlined in a separate section.
8. Dues, Suspensions, and Remissions
9. Education
10. Entertainment - A variation from the usual would be to appoint a separate committee for each evening planned, with friendly rivalry between Committees to see who can get the largest attendance.
11. Finance - could be made up of the Trustees
12. Fraternal Relations - with other Lodges, other Masonic organizations, DeMolay, Jobs Daughters, etc.

13. Greeters - Although we should all act in this capacity, sometimes it helps to have a special Committee to greet the members and the visitors.

14. Lodge History

15. Masonic Information

16. Paraphernalia

17. Publication and Promotion - Promote your Lodge. Publish things of interest

18. Refreshment

19. Sick.

20. Sojourners - To search out sojourners and encourage them to attend Lodge.

21. Telephone Tree

22. Visitor

23. Visitation - Assist the Worshipful Master in planning Visitations to other Lodges and Masonic organizations.

24. Welfare.

A Worshipful Master who is able to get his members working will accomplish much, but if the Committees don't function properly, don't become discouraged and let things go undone. Spur a laggard Committee into action or replace it. It is easy to discover too late that a Committee has not done its job. In some cases it may become necessary to perform the function yourself in order to get it done. Don't give up! You may be Worshipful Master only once. In the years ahead you will want to realize it was a job well done rather than have to make excuses to yourself and others for a poor year.

As Worshipful Master, you should make a report to your Lodge for your year. The report should be a summary of your year noting the highlights, progress, etc. This report could be made on Election Night or other appropriate occasion (never an installation night). The report, if accepted, should be made a part of the minutes.

11. APPOINT A MENTOR FOR EACH CANDIDATE

Each candidate should have someone assigned to him who will keep him informed of all that he needs to know as he progresses through his degrees. This person could be called a Mentor, but whatever he is called he should be chosen carefully as he needs to take an interest in the applicant and assist him in becoming a well-informed and interested Mason. If feasible, appoint the person who sponsored the new applicant, but be sure he is congenial and knowledgeable in Lodge matters and is willing to take on the assignment.

Duties of the Mentor:

a. Find out who the Candidate's friends are, who are Masons, and urge them to be present when he receives his degrees.

b. As he progresses through his degrees, educate and inform him in Lodge matters.

c. Interest him in his Lodge. Give him the names of the committee Chairmen and encourage him to volunteer to serve on a committee or two of his choosing.

d. Convince him that his Lodge needs him to be present and help out when the degrees are conferred, etc.

e. Make sure he attends every meeting and activity of the Lodge for at least three months. If necessary offer to come by and pick him up.

f. Greet him cordially on every occasion and make him feel at home.

12. CONFERRING THE DEGREES

First impressions are often lasting impressions. Maintain the proper dignity at all times. Do not allow horseplay or deviation from the prescribed ritual. The Candidate's first contact is with the Lodge Officers, and they should conduct themselves in a manner that will give him a good impression of the Fraternity.

It is good to be letter perfect in conferring degrees, but it is even more important to be impressive, and to convey the proper message to the candidate. If one or two officers do sloppy work it reflects on the Worshipful Master and the entire Lodge. Let your officers know that mediocrity is not acceptable, and by your own performance set a high standard. Instill in your officers a competitive spirit for excellence. Degree work well done will impress your candidates and be conducive to good attendance.

13. OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

You should use extreme care in selecting someone to appoint as a Line Officer, for it is most likely that you are selecting a future Worshipful Master of your Lodge. It is usually advisable to consult with your current

officers and Past Masters before making such appointments.

The appointee should understand that his appointment is only for as long as he measures up to what is expected of him. He should understand that he can be replaced by either the Worshipful Master who appointed him or by any incoming Worshipful Master as long as he is in the Line.

One mistake Worshipful Masters too often make is to leave deadwood in the Line. It takes courage on a Worshipful Master's part but it is his duty to replace any appointed officer who does not conform to prescribed standards.

14. THE LODGE BULLETIN

Above all be positive and not negative - be optimistic and not pessimistic. Don't use the bulletin to whine, to berate members for not attending or to complain because too few members were at the meeting. If you let it be known that the meetings are so uninteresting that practically no one attends, you are certainly not going to get more attendance. Rather, play up the good points. Tell them what a successful meeting you had so they will want to come and not miss out on interesting meetings.

15. SCHOOLS FOR CANDIDATES

The importance of having the right kind of instructor cannot be overemphasized. In the instructor-candidate relationship there is much more than just teaching and learning catechism. The kind of impression the instructor makes upon the candidate can easily make the difference in whether the candidate becomes a good and faithful Brother among us or falls by the wayside.

It is desirable to set at least one evening aside after each degree to teach the candidates other things they need to know such as the explanation of certain terms, what they can and cannot do in Lodge, etc. Encourage creative and constructive discussion on catechism and other things Masonic.

16. PAST WORSHIPFUL MASTERS

In College it takes four years to earn a Bachelor's Degree and 5 - 6 years to earn a Master's Degree. In our Lodges it usually takes 6 - 7 years to earn the PM's Degree. Even among non-masons when a person is well skilled at something he is sometimes said to be a Past Master at it. In College when a person receives his degree he is then prepared to go into the world and make a worthwhile contribution. And so, in our Lodges when we achieve the Past Master's Degree, when we have served through the stations and become a Past Master, then we are prepared to render real service to our Lodges and to our Fraternity.

A Past Master was once asked why he devoted so much time to Freemasonry instead of spending this time in his business - making more money. His answer was, "I'd rather count my friends than count my money." I'm sure he will be remembered much longer for his contribution to Freemasonry than he would have for the additional worldly wealth that he might have accumulated.

You can't, of course, let the Past Masters run your Lodge, but do try to be understanding and indulgent of their complaints and criticisms. Welcome criticism and suggestions from the Past Masters; seek their advice, but always do what you think best for the Lodge.

17. PUBLICITY - FOR THE GOOD OF MASONRY

The public will remain at a perpetual distance so long as we continue to keep them in the dark concerning our Lodge activities.

In the past about the only time the public saw Masonry in action was at funerals. It is extremely important as far as the bereaved family and the public are concerned that we conduct funeral services in the proper manner.

We should be very concerned with our Masonic image. If it is good, there will be no scarcity of good men knocking on our West Gate.

When we appear in public such as at church services, parades, etc, we should appear in groups large enough to be impressive. Make every effort to participate in public functions (with necessary dispensations).

Prospective members' attention will be drawn more quickly to an active Lodge, and given a choice, as they are under concurrent jurisdiction, they will usually petition an active congenial Lodge.

18. SUPPORT OUR YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

We have a saying in Masonry that, "Masonry takes a good man and makes him better." This is only true if someone assists him and guides him. Buying a piano won't automatically make one a pianist.

If Masonry is good for adults, think how much more it means to our youth organizations. While in their formative and impressionable years, it is extremely important that our youth get support and guidance in the right direction.

Nearly every DeMolay should petition for membership in a Masonic Lodge when he reaches 21 years of age. The question we should ask ourselves is, "Why don't more DeMolays become Masons?"

Apparently we do not impress them in the way we should. Let's not discourage them with our lack of interest, but rather let us redouble our efforts in promoting and supporting our youth organizations.

19. CONCLUSION

A man's value to the world is in direct proportion to the unselfish service he renders.

In the heart of every true Mason there is something, call it instinct, principle or what you may, that doesn't permit him to be so well satisfied with those things he does for himself, as with those things he does for others.

That is why all members of the Craft now living, or those who shall live, owe a debt of gratitude to those who devote their lives to the teachings of Freemasonry.

"Freemasonry teaches love and kindness in the home, honesty and fairness in business or occupation, courtesy in social contacts, help for the weak and unfortunate, resistance to wickedness, trust and confidence in good men, forgiveness toward the penitent, love toward one another, and above all, reverence for the Supreme Being."

May we spend so much time developing and promoting worthwhile activities and programs that we won't have the time or the need to complain about what is wrong with our Fraternity.

You will have the rest of your life to look back on your year as Worshipful Master. You will want to remember it with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment - as a product of your very best efforts.