



# WISCONSIN MASONIC HANDBOOK

## CHAPTER 5

### LODGE PROGRAMMING

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Despite all of the rules, regulations, instructions, and suggestions that we can lay down with respect to officer's duties, committee work, and effective lodge administration and operation, probably the most effective single facet in making and keeping our lodges dynamic is the extent to which programs are planned and executed. This statement applies not only to the planning of entertainment type programs but includes, as well, the term "programs" itself, the balancing of such activities as good ritualistic work, complete instruction to candidates on Freemasonry's tenets and purposes, continuing education for the membership, developing charitable activities, and all other activities related to a "well rounded lodge program."

The purpose of this section is to discuss the individual program as presented at a lodge meeting, which often will have influence on a continuing program of a specific nature.

Special attention must be given by the Wardens to the absolute necessity of program planning and arrangements well in advance of the time for installation. The chairman of the Program Committee must also be selected well in advance of the new year because he, with the Senior Warden, must begin constructing the program no later than during the fourth quarter of the current year.

Probably most lodge officers would place attendance at the top of the list of problems involving the successful operation of a Masonic lodge. When a lodge is troubled with attendance, it is the most nagging and harassing problem of all. The members who do not come to lodge are not entirely to blame - the sad fact is there may be little to make them want to come, or if they do come there may be little to make them want to come back.

For many years there have been lodge officers who have drifted into a sense of complacency by assuming that the conferring of degrees is the most important - and perhaps the only - business of the lodge.

Of course, the conferring of degrees in a dignified and impressive manner is

important it is the door through which a man enters the Masonic edifice. After the door has been opened, a man hopes that he will find warmth, respect and affection and many other things that make him glad he came through the door. There is so much more to Freemasonry than just the degrees - there has to be!

Every Mason is entitled to more than the initial impressive ritualistic experience. He wants to take his place in a Fraternity that has been of tremendous importance in our world for countless ages. He receives our impressive degrees and proudly awaits further Masonic knowledge, but the bitter facts of life are that here the story ends for some Masons. We want to try to prevent his adopting the philosophy so often expressed about main events - "you see one, you've seen them all"

Good attendance implies that a resulting successful lodge can be achieved by any set of lodge officers with the serious application of imagination and enthusiasm, but it is only the officers who can achieve this, no one else, including the Grand Master. Leadership and its resulting success cannot be legislated, but the members of a lodge have a right to expect their officers to make a **REAL EFFORT** to provide and display it.

## **B. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU CAN PLAN**

As you start to plan the calendar for the year, it is helpful to begin by compiling some background of facts concerning:

- National Holidays, Holy Days and Commemorative Days.
- Community, State and National Events.
- Historical Events and Committed Dates in Freemasonry - School of Instruction, Area Administrator meetings, Annual Communication, St. John's Day, Washington's Birthday and Table Lodge.
- Sports Events - Opening day of fishing, bird and deer season, opening day of baseball, football events, hockey, basketball, snowmobile races, (Note: These can be potential program activities also).
- Continuing Programs in your lodge: Ladies' Night, Valentine Dinner, Ladies at the Table, Sweetheart Night, PMP Night and Old Timers' Night, Rededication to Masonry Night, Past Masters' Night, Craft Team Dinner, Tri-lodge Family Picnic, Friends' Night, and similar programs.

- Average Number of Candidates per year - (last three years).
- Visitations Planned - Capturing the Traveling Gavel, etc.

### **C. SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAMS**

There are many program ideas and special days that each lodge can convert into Masonic instruction and information concealed beneath a covering of fun and amusement. The lodge must perform this work itself under the guidance and direction of the Worshipful Master. He may assign a program or a special day to one Brother to develop and implement. He may name a committee. It cannot be done by someone miles away from your city or town who is not familiar with the talents and abilities of your brethren. Therefore, we offer program ideas only as suggestions for your consideration. You should pick and choose carefully.

You are urged to include in your calendar at least one lodge program per month. In planning these programs you should bear the following in mind. The unique thing we have to give to our members is Freemasonry! They can buy better meals and see better shows than the lodge usually provides, but they are not likely to find the teachings of Freemasonry inculcated elsewhere.

The foundation laws of the Craft that are called Landmarks restrict the membership to men only. There are numerous related Masonic bodies where the ladies may become active. The Order of the Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, Rainbow for Girls and the Order of the Amaranth are only a few. Your lodge may also have auxiliary groups, clubs and friendship circles for the ladies. All members are encouraged to invite their ladies to family and social activities such as parties, dinners, dances, tours, civic events and charitable efforts of the lodge. Non-Masonic friends and families may also take part in many Masonic supported programs.

### **D. DETAILED SAMPLE PROGRAMS**

The following section explains in further detail specific programs, which have been tried and found successful. In order to expand this list, the Education Committee would be pleased to receive your suggestions on programs so that a supplement to this booklet can be prepared on an annual basis. Please send any such suggestions to the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education at Grand Lodge Office.

## **1. RECOGNITION AND OCCASION PROGRAMS**

### **a. Anniversary Programs**

There are two types of anniversaries to be observed. The first is the actual birthday anniversary of a brother. This might provide for recognition by sending him a card from the lodge or from the Worshipful Master calling the event to the attention of the lodge at the nearest meeting date prior to the actual birthday. Some lodges make an effort to acknowledge all birthdays once a month.

The second type is the recognition of the Masonic anniversary of a brother. In this the Worshipful Master or lodge sends the brother a special card and an invitation to attend lodge on the nearest meeting date to the actual date of his being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. On the night of the meeting, the Worshipful Master usually makes arrangements to see that the brother is present and takes the opportunity to recognize the brother with a special welcome calling attention to the event.

### **b. Father and Son Night**

This is primarily an occasion for a social meeting either preceded by a dinner or followed by a lunch. The program should be the type to interest youth as well as the adult membership. However, emphasis here should center on the interests of the young men.

If you have a speaker, be certain that he is able to interest and entertain and thereby to hold the attention of the young people present. If possible, he should be a "name" person respected by the youth, and someone able to communicate. A sports personality might be an example here.

The balance of the program should be light and short so there may be a social period with the young people present.

### **c. Fifty-Year Certificate Presentation**

Fifty Year Certificate presentations are usually adopted as part of another program or at a Stated Communication. However, there are several suggestions which can be helpful in preparation for it, particularly if you request a Grand Lodge Officer, who is not acquainted with the recipient, to present the certificate and lapel pin. Presentation ceremonies can be found in Chapter 10 of this HANDBOOK.

A brief Masonic history and interesting information on the private life and line of

work may prove helpful. In case of multiple presentations, it is prudent to talk with the group before the program and to try to select one man to give the response (if age deems this advisable). Many times friends of the recipients may have some interesting remarks and this should be encouraged because it creates interest and adds to the program. Light refreshments could be served following the program, but this, of course, is optional.

#### **d. Installation Night**

When a lodge holds an open installation, it has the opportunity to show its families and friends something about Freemasonry. The Installation ceremonies, carefully presented, are impressive and illustrate the democratic philosophy of Freemasonry. This opportunity may also be used to have some well-informed brother give a short talk on some aspect of Freemasonry. This is an ideal time to use the public opening and closing which can be found in Chapter 10 of this HANDBOOK. This is preferable to asking your guests to wait while you open in the Master Mason degree, in private.

#### **e. Mason of the Year**

A Mason of the Year Program is one, which could be part of a regular lodge meeting or an informal dinner. However, it is important to include the family of the recipient whenever possible. This program should incorporate some prominent man to speak on a subject pertinent to the individual's life and achievements.

The lodge could present the Masonic Lodge Service Award or a plaque of commendation to the brother being so honored. Further information on the Masonic Lodge Service Award can be found in Chapter 3 of this HANDBOOK.

#### **f. New Members' Night**

This program could be presented in two different ways as part of a lodge meeting, or informally in conjunction with a dinner. As part of a lodge program, the new members could be introduced individually and a brief presentation given on their line of work, hobbies, etc.; or they could be asked to do this themselves. In any event, it is an excellent way for the new members and the brethren to become acquainted.

If a dinner is planned, you could invite the new members' families and introduce them to the lodge members following the above-mentioned format. Frequently, someone is selected to give a short talk - perhaps to explain to the new members and their families the goals and benefits of Freemasonry.

### **g. Past Masters' Night**

A Past Masters' Night program, because of its inherent attraction to the membership, should be of special significance and can have many variations depending on the size of the budget and the imagination of the planners. Several suggestions are herein mentioned for consideration.

Attendance at all functions seems to be our greatest cause for concern, and inviting the wives and families to attend such an event may help alleviate this. Many lodges invite the widows of Past Masters and seat these ladies in a place of honor. Whether or not they should be guests of the lodge is entirely up to the individual lodge, but it is an excellent way to perpetuate their interest in Freemasonry.

A printed program is an asset and it should list the officers, trustees, Past Masters, distinguished guests and an outline of the program. It is important to select someone with speaking ability to be your Master of Ceremonies.

The following is a suggested program:

- 1) Invocation.
- 2) Dinner
- 3) Words of Welcome by the Master
- 4) Introduction of officers, Past Masters, Past Masters' widows and distinguished guests
- 5) Roll Call of deceased Past Masters
- 6) Response for Past Masters (the oldest living Past Master is often very effective for this part of the program)
- 7) Main speaker or entertainment
- 8) Close

Other suggestions for inclusion in a Past Masters Night could be the presentation of the Past Masters Certificate to the newest Past Master, presenting the 50-year membership, or honoring some worthy member.

Some Masters adopt a theme for their year and provide commemorative souvenirs in line with their theme, such as bibles, trowels, coins, aprons, etc.

### **h. Patriotic Night**

Some of the patriotic days which lend themselves to special Masonic programs are: Armed Forces Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day and Presidents Day.

Because there is to a certain degree similarities of these programs, we will present one as a template for them all.

### **i. Flag Day Program**

A Flag Day program can give full play to the imagination, while at the same time reminding our brothers of their sworn duty to our country. The flag of the United States of America is important to Freemasonry; it is a symbol of our nation, its history, glory and fundamental principles. Many Masonic principles are part of the American way of life. Freemasons, being familiar with the use of symbols, will get more out of looking at the Flag than non-Masons. Flags as symbols have been used in many forms from time immemorial, and the history and glory of our Flag as a focal point of a specific program could be a most thrilling and exhilarating experience. This is the kind of program that can be well adapted to a meeting for Masons only, as well as for both Freemasons and the public.

A typical program might be constituted as follows:

- 1) Welcome by the Worshipful Master.
- 2) Invocation by the Chaplain.
- 3) Presentation of the Flag - A Commandary Guard of Honor would be most fitting.
- 4) National Anthem - sung by all.
- 5) Reading of the first ten Amendments of the Constitution of the United States, by the Worshipful Master.
- 6) Address: "The Flag of the United States" by Virgil E. Carrithers, read by the Senior Warden. The address can be found in Chapter 10 of this HANDBOOK.

- 7) Reading: "The Flag Goes By," by Henry H. Bennett, read by the Junior Warden or another brother well qualified to do such a reading. The poem can be found in Chapter 10 of this HANDBOOK.
- 8) Retirement of the Flag.
- 9) Benediction - by the Chaplain.

An excellent booklet titled, "Star Spangled Banner," published by the Supreme Council 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of the Southern Jurisdiction, is devoted exclusively to articles and information about the American Flag and is available to any Mason. This booklet is a reprint of the June 1988 issue of their "New Age Magazine." You may wish to order a number of copies and pass them to the brothers at the close of the meeting as they are priced at a bargain. Place your order with: The Supreme Council, 33°, 1733 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009-3199, PHONE (202) 232-3579, FAX (202) 387-1843.

#### **j. Youth Recognition Night**

Those lodges, which have De Molay Chapters, Jobs Daughters Bethels or Rainbow Assemblies meeting in their building, have an unparalleled opportunity for an interesting and delightful program. Lodges located within a reasonable traveling distance from one can also use this or more of those Masonic sponsored youth groups.

Set aside a special night each year to honor them. Invite all their members to a special communication called for this purpose; if asked, they will be pleased to participate in the program. Assign them a specific time frame to fill and leave the choice of program up to them, but suggest that your brethren would like to know about their group.

Arrange for entertainment that would appeal to all age groups. This could be a celebrity such as a sports figure, a musical performance, a good movie, DVD or videocassette. Many good movies are available at your local library. They may even lend you the projector. Obviously, there are many other possibilities, but keep it relatively short and lively. The entire atmosphere should be kept informal. Make the young people feel at ease.

You should devote a portion of the program to explaining something about Freemasonry to the visitors. Young people are very inquisitive and interested in the Fraternity, which provides them with leadership and advisors. This portion,

although vital, should be kept very brief. Don't try to tell them everything about Freemasonry in one sitting.

Bring the evening to a fitting and pleasant close by retiring to the dining room for refreshments. Young people especially enjoy pizzas or submarine sandwiches with soft drinks as well as cake and ice cream.

## **2. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **a. Wisconsin Masonic Benevolences Night**

Wisconsin Masonic Home, Masonic Village on the Square and Mason Woods are our greatest charities.

All Masons and their families need to know much more about each of these great charities. Your District Deputy will be pleased to arrange for a qualified speaker on this most important subject when ever possible.

This type of program can be adapted to a meeting for Masons and their ladies, preceded by a dinner. A sample program could be:

- 1) Welcome by the Worshipful Master.
- 2) Invocation by the Chaplain.
- 3) Introduction of Masonic guest speaker.
- 4) Program (should be kept to 15-20 minutes)
- 5) Introduction of guests and dignitaries.
- 6) Benediction.

### **b. Masonic Round Table Discussion**

Don't overlook that a dinner, however simple, will automatically bring out more members than the same program without a meal. Following dinner, a "planned panel" type of assembly could be conducted right at the table. The Worshipful Master or some appointed member would act as moderator and some of the officers and Past Masters as panel members.

The questions might be solicited in advance to be answered by the panel with the door wide open with respect to the type of question, as long as it is Masonic -

history, ritual, By-Laws, traditions, teachings, landmarks, etc.

To set the ball rolling, several questions could be "planted" in the audience. An exceptionally good source for such questions is the pamphlet, "One Hundred and One Questions About Masonry." This is a Masonic Service Association publication and is available from the Grand Lodge Office for a modest fee.

We recommend also, that a copy of the Wisconsin Masonic Code with the latest supplement and a copy of the latest Grand Lodge Proceedings be available for reference.

### **c. Re-obligation Night**

This can be a most significant program and it is one in which some Grand Masters have had a special interest and a desire that all lodges participate at approximately the same time.

The month of January has been proclaimed, in the past, as the time during which a re-obligation program would be conducted in each lodge. This is a fine opportunity for several lodges to hold a joint meeting with some of the officers of each lodge participating in the program.

A sample re-obligation program can be found in Chapter 10 of this HANDBOOK. Except where the Ritual is quoted, word perfection is not to be insisted upon, and perhaps the officers, in giving this program, would prefer to merely say the meaning and then put it in their own words. However, where the Ritual is quoted, the quotation should be exact. Proficiency men and the Cipher Key should provide the desired exactness.

### **d. Table Lodge**

Essentially, a Table Lodge is a Masonic banquet with toasts, and yet it is much more than that. It is a special lodge ceremony in itself, very ancient, with a ritual, formalities, and a special terminology, which is of some interest. Table Lodges may be traced back over two centuries in English Masonry and may have been practiced in Scotland during the reign of King James I, about 1430.

At the present time in England, these ceremonies are called "The After Proceedings," and are conducted after the business of the evening is disposed of. Traditionally, Table Lodges are held on one of the Saints John Days, December 27 or June 24, but they may be held at other times, as the lodge desires.

According to custom, Table Lodges were always held in the Entered Apprentice

Degree. The French Masons had a very formal system of rules for Table Lodges, long and elaborate. These rules have been abbreviated taking care to retain all the significance of former times.

The only true traditional holidays of Ancient Craft Masonry are the Feasts of the Holy Saints Johns, to whom all lodges are now dedicated. The origin of these feasts is veiled in antiquity, but all Masons regularly celebrated them as late as the American Revolution. Masonic history informs us that George Washington regularly attended these feasts during the time he was leading the Continental Army.

It is impossible to determine when and where the first Table Lodge was held. We do know that our Ancient Brethren were great trenchermen. The method of giving toasts, no longer practiced but once very common, seems to have originated among Freemasons at Table Lodges. The very title of the presiding officer, "Toast Master," is quite significant, and some evidence of the Masonic origin of the practice. The combination of exuberance and good fellowship with high-minded discussions of the important Masonic topics is quite characteristic of the old style Table Lodge.

A Table Lodge is often called, "The Ceremony of the Seven Toasts," and is an opportunity for genuine fellowship while enjoying the Festive Board.

The guidelines and ritual for a Table Lodge can be found in this HANDBOOK in Chapter 10.

#### **e. Square and Compasses Week**

Square & Compasses Week, usually the last week in February, is an excellent opportunity for the lodge to have an Open House. The object of this special week is to increase public awareness of our Fraternity, to correct misconceptions and to create a favorable image within the community. It is a good opportunity for the lodge to put its best foot forward to inform the community about the positive aspects of the Masonic Fraternity.

During this week, every brother is encouraged to proudly wear the Square and Compasses lapel pin. It's by wearing his lapel pin and only that emblem; each Mason has the opportunity to be a part of the statewide program, even if he cannot be a part of the lodge activities that week.

#### **f. Educational Talk Programs**

The following are suggested programs:

1) The "apron speech" makes an excellent topic for a short talk. Check the index in the Three-Minute Mason Program to start you out. Include an apron presentation, which can be found in Chapter 10 of this HANDBOOK or in the Multiple-Letter Cipher. Why not request attending members to bring their original leathern apron?

2) The joys of good food and fellowship have drawn men through out the ages. "The Knife and Fork Degree" by Elbert Bede in his book "3-5-7 Minute Talks on Freemasonry" can help you make for an interesting meeting. The book can be purchased from Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, P.O. Box 9759/3011 Old Dumbarton Road, Richmond, VA 232280759, telephone no. (804) 262-6551, or J.P. Luther Co., 173 South Pearl Street, P.O. Box 344, Berlin, WI 54923, telephone no.1800-522-2352.

3) Masonic Code Night - Invite a member of the Grand Lodge Committee on Jurisprudence to discuss the history of Masonic law and set aside about 15 to 20 minutes for the brethren to ask questions pertaining to Masonic law. "The Courts and Freemasonry" written by Alphonse Cerza available through Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Company. This book has, "case histories that have or could affect Freemasonry." Another variation to this type of program could be a question and answer format selected from two teams. Questions could be selected from the Masonic Code Correspondence Course. Quiz each team and think up a reward for the winners.

4) Masonic Values - Freemasons are to be building a temple of kindness and good will in the midst of a world where neither kindness nor good will have an easy time of it. This makes an excellent topic for a short Masonic educational talk. Any Mason can exercise his own imagination in developing this topic as well as other values such as friendship and sympathy.

5) York Rite/Royal Arch Mason Night the story of the origin of the Mark Master Degree is an interesting one for all Masons. The reasons why Masons each had a mark to distinguish their work is also an interesting story.

6) The Book "Anderson's Constitutions" - A copy of "Anderson's Constitutions" can be passed around the lodge room for individual perusal. Information about this may be obtained from any Masonic encyclopedia.

7) Early Craft Customs - An interesting talk can be written around the theme of early craft customs. Darrah in his book, "History and Evolution of Freemasonry" has a chapter, which contains material for such a talk.

8) Ritual Interpretation Night - Thomas Smith Webb was responsible in large measure for the present system of work and lectures in America. Information for a short talk may be found in any Masonic encyclopedia or book on the history and evolution of Freemasonry.

9) Ritualist William Preston - William Preston, an eminent Masonic scholar, has given us a Masonic philosophy. The key word for Preston is, "knowledge." His philosophy is encompassed in our American lectures. This young Worshipful Master took it upon himself to write lectures of Craft Masonry, which were subsequently accepted and handed down to us. Material for such a talk is available in Masonic Encyclopedias, or in Chapter One of Roscoe Pound's "Masonic Addresses and Writings." A rich source of information can be found in the three-volume set titled, "The Collected Prestonian Lectures", covering a span of time from 1925-1987.

10) Albert Pike's Famous Lecture - Give a brother a copy of Volume V, "The Little Masonic Library", available from Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., and ask him to read this famous lecture beginning on page 13. This lecture is just as pertinent today as it was in 1858. All will welcome a fifteen-minute talk on this famous lecture.

11) The 47th Problem of Euclid - The 47th Problem of Euclid is discussed in "Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia" and makes an interesting topic for a ten-minute talk. It is also the subject of the October 1930 Short Talk Bulletin, available from the Masonic Service Association.

12) Another excellent source for short Masonic talks is Joseph Fort Newton's book, "The Builders", available through the Grand Lodge Office. The first chapter is entitled, "The Foundations" and makes an excellent resource for a short inspirational and educational message.'

13) "From Whence Came We?" - This is the title of the first Chapter in Carl Claudy's "Masonic Harvest". It makes for an excellent short talk.

14) The Hiramic Legend has been introduced to teach a lesson. The truth about Hiram Abif is of interest to every Mason. The current state of knowledge may be found in any Masonic Encyclopedia. "King Solomon's Temple in the Masonic Traditions" by Alexander Horne, Chapter XIV, pp 280-345 has an excellent expository.

15) Every Mason is entitled to know more about his heritage. No story is more moving than that of the role Freemasons played in healing the wounds of our Civil War. This story is told in Allen Roberts book, "House Undivided", available

from Anchor Communications, 110 Quince Ave., Drawer 70, Highland Springs, VA 23075-0070.

16) Jachin and Boaz - The two pillars makes an excellent topic for a short educational talk. Check "Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia" for information that can be of interest to every Mason.

17) A discussion of the "Landmarks of Freemasonry" is always of interest to the brethren. Material for such a talk may be found in any Masonic Encyclopedia but a good discourse appears in pp. 141- 158 of Volume I, "The Little Masonic Library". The "Landmarks" may also be found in the Appendix, Part 9 of the Masonic Code of Wisconsin.

18) Masonic lodges met for more than one hundred years in taverns. The reasons for this and a description of the taverns, which were the meeting places of the four lodges, which originally united to form the Grand Lodge of England, may be found in Darrah's book, "History and Evolution of Freemasonry".

19) Masonry, What it Means to Me? Find a brother who is willing to share an inspiring message on Freemasonry. For example: On September 22, 1951 Brother Frank Bertell delivered a three minute talk which began, "I hold in my hand a little scrap of paper, 2 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches in size. It is of no intrinsic worth, not a bond, not a check or receipt for valuables, yet is my most priceless possession. It is my membership card in a Masonic Lodge . . ." Ask a brother to expound upon all that this card represents and entitles him to. The full text of Brother Bertell's speech appears on page 3, of Wes Cook's book, "Did You Know?" published by the Missouri Lodge of Research and is available from Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co. Or, perhaps a frank discussion of what Freemasonry brings about in a Mason and what it brings about in the world would make for an excellent discussion. The sixth and seventh letters of Johann Fichte found on pp. 154-162 of Roscoe Pound's "Masonic Addresses and Writings" may also serve as additional information.

20) What aroused my interest in Freemasonry - Many brothers sought the Craft because of their esteem of several brothers and what they stood for. Ask one of your lodge brothers to share his reasons. You should have an inspirational message for all to hear.

21) "The Masonry you Make" - All brothers will profit from the short story, "The Masonry You Make" appearing on p. 95 of Volume V, "The Little Masonic Library".

22) Masonic Brotherhood and the United States - The brothers and ladies alike  
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will rise to the challenge presented by a speaker on the topic of Masonic Brotherhood and the United States. Material on such a talk may be found on page 143 of Volume V, "The Little Masonic Library".

23) Every Mason will appreciate a discussion on "Why Symbolism." Material for such a talk may be found on page 136 of Volume V, "The Little Masonic Library".

24) The role, which Freemasons played in the planning and erection of the Statue of Liberty, makes an interesting Masonic talk. This is discussed on page 180 of Wes Cook's, "Did you Know?"

25) Paul Revere Night - Paul Revere, a much-neglected Freemason, was outstanding in many fields in addition to the ride for which he is most famous. Find a speaker who will research his life and works. Some sources of information: "Masonic Americana", Volume I and II published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, USA, and Edith Steblecki's book, "Paul Revere and Freemasonry". Check back issues of the Knights Templar magazine and you will find some interesting material.

26) Benjamin Franklin Night - A talk on Franklin's Masonic history and his witty writings offers unlimited possibilities.

27) Famous Freemasons - Pick and choose from a wide variety of personalities listed in the "Masonic Americana" Volume I and II still available from the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar, 5097 North Elston Ave., Suite 101, Chicago, IL., 60630-2460, or "10,000 Famous Freemasons" by William Denslow available through Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., or J. P. Luther Co.

28) The William Morgan Incident - The story of William Morgan is one, which should be aired in every lodge. An account can be found in any Masonic Encyclopedia. Other sources are, "The Little Masonic Library" Volume II page 170 and "A History of the Supreme Council, 33° A.A.S.R.", N.M.J., USA, Chapter 17, pp 102-109.

29) Brother George Washington - A banquet, a speaker to review some unusual incident from Washington's career, slides showing the George Washington National Masonic Memorial, Mount Vernon and Alexandria, Virginia. Slides are available on loan from the Memorial and slide set on this Memorial is available through your District Counselor. Material also can be found for a short talk in any Masonic Encyclopedia. The book entitled, "George Washington" by Allen Roberts available from Anchor Communications, 110 Ounice Ave., Drawer 70, Highland Springs, VA. 23075-0070, can serve as an excellent source of

information for your talk on Brother Washington. There is also a portfolio of materials entitled, "George Washington, Master Mason" available from the Masonic Service Association. The portfolio has facts for speakers, a sample speech, 21 pictures of Brother Washington and materials for celebrating any of Washington's four birthdays - three Masonic, one natal (Pamphlet #170).

30) Johann C. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart - There are many famous artists and musicians who were Masons - Mozart was one of these. He wrote several pieces specifically for Masonic occasions. His Masonic history can be found in any Masonic Encyclopedia. A summary of this history together with an airing of one of his Masonic works would make an excellent presentation in lodge.

31) An "Atheist or an Agnostic" is the title of another of Claudy's short stories found in "Old Tiler Talks."

32) St. John the Baptist Day (June 24th) - This should be a special lodge program. Invite the family. Research "Mackey's Encyclopedia" for a history of St. John the Baptist or invite a minister who is a member of the Fraternity and familiar with Masonic history to speak about this portion of Masonry. The same can be done in December for St. John the Evangelist Day (December 27th).

33) A discussion of the meanings of the words in the Twelfth Chapter of Ecclesiastes can lead to a better level of understanding and meaning as to why these verses are part of the Ritual in the Master Mason Degree. The Masonic Service Association has a "Short Talk Bulletin" entitled, "The Three Scripture Readings", *dated* December 1931 that can prove helpful.

### **3. RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS**

#### **a. Brotherhood Night**

This is an opportunity to put into practice our Masonic heritage by demonstrating to the public our belief in the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God. Some of the possible approaches to an outstanding program would be to invite the members of the other fraternal organizations in your community to join the lodge in a Brotherhood Program. The program could be preceded by a dinner and the program could be a speaker from the other fraternal organizations. Another suggestion would be to have a panel of religious leaders of the community present a forum or a dialogue on their approach to Brotherhood. Additional program suggestions are available from your city or county National Brotherhood Week chairman. Approaches to this subject are unlimited and should be adapted to suit the community.

Brotherhood Week is the week of George Washington's birthday and this program could be a focal point for such an observance.

### **b. Christmas Program**

A Christmas Program for a lodge may be either of a spiritual or non-spiritual nature, sometimes a combination of both. It may take the form of a formal program, vesper or candlelight service, a pageant, or a social gathering. Frequently, these programs are open to the public and place special emphasis on a family type party. These should not conflict with church services.

Many lodges plan a Christmas party for the children of the members or specially invited young guests. When the children are invited and there is a formal program, it should be kept short and the occasion should be primarily a social event adapted to the interests of children. Refreshments should be in keeping with the occasion and the tastes of this present.

### **c. Vesper Service**

A program that should be considered and planned each year is a Vesper Service. It could be held to observe the celebration of St. John the Evangelist in December or St. John the Baptist in June.

Having this program at the church of the Worshipful Master provides an opportunity for the men to visit the various churches from year to year. It is hoped in some instance it also might accentuate the fact that men most active in Freemasonry are also carrying their load and more in church work. Most ministers would welcome the opportunity to conduct such a service, late Sunday afternoon, for example, with perhaps some participation on the part of the lodge officers. This is another occasion for inviting the public. Having a buffet supper with a social hour following, affords time for questions of the guests to be answered informally and perhaps could promote a better understanding of men's reasons for becoming Freemasons. Bear in mind, that the Code prohibits wearing Masonic clothing at a service in a church.

## **4. SOCIAL PROGRAMS**

### **a. All Masonic Night**

A program for an "All Masonic Night" could be held jointly with all or some of the appendant bodies meeting in your lodge building. It would serve as an occasion for the several bodies to become better acquainted. Perhaps several short talks could be given on Masonic subjects, or possibly on the Masonic bodies comprising those in attendance. A dinner could be served, followed by the introduction of officers to the various bodies. However, the committee should try to maintain a reasonable amount of time for introductions, and then follow with the brief talks on pre-selected subjects of interest to everyone involved. Films or slides could also be used.

### **b. Sports Night**

Sports Night in a lodge offers opportunities to appeal to almost every man. There are films of many types: Those prepared by the manufacturers of sports equipment, movies of professional football games, films of hunting and fishing distributed by conservation groups or state agencies and home movies prepared by local individuals.

It is effective, but sometimes expensive, to have an outstanding athlete as a speaker and to invite the local high school athletes as guests. If you are unable to obtain a sports figure, the local high school athletic director could serve as well. A current practice is to have videos taken of local high school football and basketball games. Because of the local color, these are frequently interesting to a crowd.

Some lodges have had bowling and golf tournaments in the afternoon followed by a dinner and entertainment. Sports Night is an opportunity to invite nonmembers, especially young men, to enjoy the bond, which men have with athletics. Although it needs to be well planned, it is one of the less difficult programs to assemble.

### **c. Sweetheart Night**

Many lodges have found that this provides an excellent opportunity to include the ladies of Masons including the widows of deceased Masons in a social event. Frequently, a short entertaining program, cards or dancing, follows a dinner or buffet supper. A pleasant location, attractive tables and flowers provide added touches to please the ladies.

### **d. Friends' Night**

WHAT IS IT? An education program developed for the purpose of enlightening non-Masons about Freemasonry's unique evolution, its great philanthropies, and

its many benefits to the members of their communities. The program should be of suitable duration; that is, it should begin promptly at a convenient hour, progress smoothly without pause or interruption and close at a proper hour. Individual Masters know best the preferences of their particular communities in entertainment, but this is an excellent opportunity to obtain a speaker well versed in Freemasonry who will incorporate in his talk the answers to man's unanswered questions which puzzle the public, such as: What is the "Lodge" and why are Masons so devoted to it? What is the "object" of Freemasonry? How does Masonry get its members and what are the requirements? How do Masons contribute to Charity?

**WHAT IT IS NOT!** A Friends' Night program is not a membership drive. At no time should any guest be solicited for membership. Petitions must not be in evidence at any time during the evening.

**WHO TO INVITE?** The Master should encourage their lodge membership to invite the finest individuals and their wives in their community. The guests should not be limited solely to prospective members.

**WHEN?** Schedule your Friends' Night at your convenience. However, on the day of the event, plan to arrive early and be completely setup before the guests arrive.

**WHERE?** At your lodge building.

**PROTOCOL?** The Worshipful Master should assist in greeting and meeting the guests as they arrive. Masonic hospitality must be displayed at its finest.

**CHECKLIST?** Use the "Checklist" which can be found in the Chapter 26 or 27 of this HANDBOOK. This Checklist may be used for other lodge dinners.

A sample program follows:

#### FRIENDS' NIGHT

- 6:30 p.m. Dinner (optional)
- 7:30 p.m. The Worshipful Master of the lodge extends greetings and makes opening remarks. Use the Public Opening Ceremony, with a prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Introduce the lodge officers; introduce heads of other Masonic bodies and their guests. Smaller lodges may wish each Mason to introduce himself and his guest.
- 7:40 p.m. The Worshipful Master introduces the slide/cassette, video or

film.

- 8:20 p.m. Guest speaker gives a short presentation followed by a question and answer period if time allows and speaker wishes.
- 8:50 p.m. The Worshipful Master thanks everyone for coming. Use the Public Closing Ceremony, which includes a prayer.
- 8:55 p.m. The Worshipful Master invites everyone for refreshments (if no dinner beforehand). If your lodge or appendant body has an upcoming event where the public is invited, invite them. Have pamphlets available for your guests describing Freemasonry (available from the Grand Lodge Office at no cost).

### **e. Lodge Picnic/Golf Tourney**

There are many variables to a picnic but some of the main ingredients are fun, social fellowship with families and relaxation. Some planning is needed but don't make it a chore. Many lodges have banded together to enjoy a day of golf and dinner afterwards. Local golf shops will often donate prizes or an additional \$1 per person will permit the purchase of prizes to be awarded that evening. Honor a local brother by naming it after him e.g. "The Sam Collins Golf Tournament - all Masons are invited" - makes good copy for your local community newspaper.

### **f. Ladies at the Table Dinner**

#### 1) Introduction

The average Mason spends time away from his wife and family for Masonic functions and dinners. On many occasions the Mason's Lady is left at home with the children. Some of the more modern Masonic Lodges realize the Masonic Ladies play a very important role in the Masonic way of life. Those lodges are slowly beginning to provide functions for their Masonic families, more especially the Mason's Lady. One such event is the "Ladies at the Table." Please understand, **THIS IS NOT A MASONIC FUNCTION, OR RITUAL OF ANY TYPE, NOR IS IT INTENDED TO BE**, but it does come under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin.

#### 2) History of "Ladies at the Table Dinner"

"Ladies at the Table" is a new name given to this type of dinner, which came from "ADOPTIVE MASONRY" in Paris, France during 1760.

According to Mackey's Encyclopedia, page 30, paragraph 2 and Cavel's History,  
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page 34, so states, "The Rite of Adoption has established a technical vocabulary, to be used only at the table. Thus the lodge room is called 'Eden,' the doors 'Barriers,' the minutes a 'Ladder,' a wine glass is styled a 'Lamp,' and its contents 'Oil'; water being 'White Oil' and wine 'Red Oil' To fill your glass is to 'Trim your lamp,' to drink is to 'Extinguish your lamp,' with many other eccentric expressions."

Here in the United States it is not our intention that this dinner function be Masonic, but is for the lodges' ladies and friends. Therefore, only the eccentric expressions are used and there shall be no Masonic jewels or aprons displayed before the dinner, during, or after, except after showing due cause and obtaining explicit permission, from the Grand Master.

### 3) Objectives of the "Ladies at the Table Dinner:"

- a) To provide interest, understanding and care for the lodge widows.
- b) To establish a line of communications between the lodge and the lodge widows, as they have not been forgotten.
- c) To honor the Masons' ladies, daughters, mothers, sisters and the other fine women about the world, nation, state and community.
- d) To give prospective Masons and their ladies a chance to meet members of the lodge and their ladies, to ask questions and thereby gain a better understanding of Freemasonry.
- e) To give members of the community and their ladies the opportunity to understand what the Masonic Fraternity does in a community.
- f) To provide the opportunity to have visitors in the lodge so they might pass on to others what they have seen and heard.

### **g. OTHER INTERESTING IDEAS FOR PROGRAMS**

Anniversary of Lodge  
Annual Meeting and Election  
Appointed Officer Night  
Appreciation Night  
Astrology Talk  
Astronomy Demonstration Banquet

Barber Shop Sing  
British Masonry  
Camper's Night  
Candidate Course/or Report  
Candle Night  
Checker/Chess Tournament  
Clergy Night  
Collectors Night  
Committee Appreciation Night  
Community Service Night  
Community Service Project  
Concert Night  
Dance  
Degree Conferral; Degree Rehearsal  
DeMolay Advisor Night  
DeMolay Degree Exemplified  
Desert Smorgasbord Dinner  
Father Son/Daughter Dinner  
Family Dinner Theater  
Dramatic Production  
Eastern Star Night  
Explorer Night  
Family Night  
Favorite Pet Night  
Fellowship Night  
First Lady Night  
Fish Fry  
Fisherman's Night  
Flag Night  
Furniture (lodge) Symbolism  
Gadget Night  
Game Night  
Gardening Talk  
German Night  
Golf Night  
Graduate's Night  
Grand Master's Reception  
Green Thumb Night  
Health Institution Night  
Hobby Night  
Holiday (History of)  
Holiday Parties  
Home Movies by Member

Humorous Speaker  
Ice Cream Social  
Interior Decorating Demonstration  
Jewelry Display  
Job's Daughters Night  
Leadership Manual Highlights  
Local Industry Night  
Loud Shirt (Tie) Night  
Masonic Book Review  
Masonic Memorabilia Night  
Memorial Day Breakfast  
Mother's Day Recognition  
Nature Night  
Neighbor Night  
Operative Masonry  
Our Town Night  
Out of State Visitation  
Ox Roast  
Pancake Breakfast  
Physical Fitness  
Pilgrimage Month  
Play (Drama)  
Playing Card Tournament  
Presentation of New Members Professions Night  
Quarter Century Night  
Question Box  
Quiz Program  
Rainbow Night  
Recreation Speaker  
Reunion  
Ritual Interpretation Night  
Roll Call  
Safety Forces Night  
School of Instruction  
Scottish Rite Night  
Service Club Night  
Short Talk Bulletins  
Social Activities Sponsors Night  
Sports Night  
Study Club  
Talent Night  
Thanksgiving  
Theatre Night

Toastmaster's Night  
Tour  
Traditional Lodge Event  
Transportation Night  
Travel Bureau  
Travel Talk  
Twenty- first Century Variety Show  
We're Proud of You Night  
Widow's Night

Two books that would be very helpful to plan programs from the Lodge Toolbox are available through the Grand Lodge Office are “150+ Ways to Involve Your Lodge with the Family and in the Community” and “101+ Ways to Improve Interest and Attendance in Your Masonic Lodges”.