



Grand Lodge of Illinois

Leadership Chips from the Quarry

Volume I, Issue 4

Lodge Leadership—Member Education

The Member Education Program should have two main elements which should work with one another. One aspect should work with new members who are completing the three degrees; the other should be for the general membership.

The new member program should follow the intender program already designed to facilitate the assimilation of new members into the lodge, while giving them the necessary knowledge to function as leaders. It is important to realize that current members want to ensure that the new men will be beneficial to the lodge. We therefore need a commitment on the part of the entire lodge for the program to be successful.

Our success in this field determines the whole future of our Institution, for the candidates we raise today will be the leaders of tomorrow. If we are successful, our candidates will become devoted Masons. If we fail, they will soon be dropped for non-payment of dues. Your responsibility for the education of the candidate begins as soon as he petitions to receive the degrees. Prior to

his initiation, you must see that he is properly introduced to the true nature of our Fraternity, and prepares his mind for the solemn ceremony of initiation. This should have started when you began talking to the candidate before he petitioned. But if not, start immediately.

Your next duty is to see that the candidate is initiated, passed and raised in a dignified, timely and impressive manner, in strict accordance with the official ritual. The ritual is the basis of all Masonic instruction. By it, the candidate learns the fundamental principles and teachings of our ancient Craft. In conferring the degrees, you must be careful to convince the candidate of your sincerity, and make him feel that you believe the solemn truths which you are imparting to him.

To supplement the ritualistic education of the candidate, we also have the candidate intender program. This program is based on four candidate booklets, one of which is presented to the candidate prior to his initiation, the others after his re-

ception of each degree. These booklets should be read and studied with a qualified instructor, who makes sure that they are understood, and, when necessary, explains them to the candidate.

The Master, has the duty to see that effective use is made of this program. These instructors may be the same brethren who coach the candidate in his ritualistic lessons, or another member of the lodge. The program is designed to be flexible, to meet the needs of any lodge. Each Master, however, is personally responsible for its effective use in his lodge. As a suggestion, some of your Past Masters should make excellent candidate instructors.

The program calls for the appointment of an Intender for each new member. This Intender may well be one of those who signed the candidate's application, a blood relative, a close personal friend, a near neighbor, or a fellow-employee or business associate. If none of these are available, you can always detail one of your junior officers for this job. The

duties of an Intender are very simple. He has to show a personal interest in the new member, by reminding him of all meetings and urging him to attend, making him feel wanted and at home in lodge, seeing that he is introduced to the brethren, help him get acquainted with the usage's and customs of the lodge, encourage him to visit neighboring lodges, furnishing transportation when necessary, and take him along when attending Schools of Instruction, and similar important functions. In this way, the new member will be aided in forming good Masonic habits during his first vital years of membership. If faithfully used, this program will benefit your lodge in two ways, by making better Masons out of your new members and by putting some of your older members to work. It should certainly help attendance. As Master, it is your duty to find suitable Intenders, and to convince these brethren of the value and importance of their job. As you can see, the job does not end when the candidate is raised, but continues for some time afterward.

The second program to consider is the education of the existing membership. The program should achieve certain goals including: cultivating friendship and brotherhood, instilling unity, and developing leadership and personal skills that will better enhance each member's fraternal experience.

The purpose of an education program is to educate men, old and young, to the fraternal experience. Some example might include:

1. Educate members of the duties of the officers, the chairmen, and the committees.
2. Give brothers a working knowledge of the Grand Lodge Constitution, By-Laws, or local Lodge By-Laws.
3. Provide members with an appreciation of the history and traditions.
4. Educate members on the role of a fraternity in the general community.
5. Ensure the brothers acquire a sense of brotherhood.
6. Give brothers a new skill, such as computers or public

speaking.

Start off by identifying brothers who can address your lodge on educational topics. These can include a wide variety of subjects, such as Masonic history, symbolism, and philosophy, the biographies of famous Masons, the relationship between Freemasonry and the Church, Masonic charity, and the part which Masons have played in the constitutional, political, military and economic history of our Country.

Through the Masonic Service Association, several filmed addresses by outstanding Masonic leaders are available. Films of the Washington Memorial may also be obtained. For a quiet evening with your own members, you might well read, or have read portions of the Grand Master's address. Your lodge regularly receives the monthly "Short Talk Bulletins" published by the M.S.A.

Some of these are very good. They are meant to be read in lodge, and this practice is to be commended.

You might also have one of your own members review a paper published by the M.S.A., or prepare and present his own. The topics could even be non-Masonic. You could have a speaker on how to use a computer, proper etiquette, or even how to prepare a paper for a future presentation.

Several of our national holidays are particularly suitable for the presentation of Masonic programs, such as Washington's Birthday, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Constitution Week in September, and Veterans' Day. All of these holidays have a special Masonic significance. Of course, our own Masonic festivals, St. John the Baptist's Day and St. John the Evangelist's Day are always good occasions for inspirational addresses.

Of course, no Master could never use all of these suggestions in a single term. After all, there are only twelve months in the year. But there should be something every month.

"The purpose of an education program is to educate men, old and young to the fraternal experience."

"No one of us is more important than the rest of us."

-Ray Croc

Future Issues

The Leadership Development committee would like your input on what future issues should look like. We would also like to know if there are other topics we should consider. We have selected eight topics that we know are relevant to you lodge, but we know there are others. Please let us know if you have any suggestions.

Please also share this newsletter with the other officers of your lodge. It can be a valuable resource for officers coming through the line before they are thrust into leadership responsibilities.

You can send the editor, John Dornier, email at : john@ilorlibrary.org

