

T.F.S. - Three, five, and seven - 3 5 7
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“I was brought up to believe that the only thing worth doing was to add to the sum of accurate information in the world.” Margaret Mead

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“I find that a great part of the information I have, was acquired by looking up something and finding something else on the way.” Franklin P. Adams

1st a bit of information for you about my web site and email addresses: I've been informed again by Google that my Blog at www.halpaus.net will go away as of May 1st.

In the meantime I have set up a new Blog titled Ed Halpaus at <http://halpaus.blogspot.com> where T.F.S., Masonic Matters, and More Light, and maybe another thing or two can be read on-line. I will continue to use my domain name (Halpaus.net) to send out the e-publications through mailman for as long as it works with ed@halpaus.net However, for all other email I will be using erhmasonic@gmail.com. E-mails sent to my old address still get forwarded to my Gmail account, but I think when it goes it will be abruptly gone, so please put my preferred email address into your address book (erhmasonic@gmail.com).

Another thing I wanted to mention is the type size of these e-publications. I do set the type size on my computer to fit a certain number of pages, and that works well most of the time. However the last Masonic Matters was sent from a MAC instead of a PC, and the type size when it was received by most if not all of you was extremely small. Since I will be using both a MAC and a PC to send these out (depending on which computer I'm nearest to, and where I am I am switching as of today to using Google Documents, instead of Microsoft Word or Apple's Pages, to email these papers to you. Please let me know what you think of them. Google Docs has a nice Share feature, but from what I know if I use that to distribute these papers I can't use BCC to hide the list of email addresses, so I will copy and paste into a separate email for distribution.

When it comes to computers we're always learning.

Open Houses

By Ed Halpaus

Masonic Open Houses, or Prospective Member's Nights, have been used successfully by Lodges for a few years now. Hosting such an event is not complicated, in fact, it is fairly simple to organize and hold, but it does take effort and dedication by the Lodge members.

I first became aware of this when I served as a Grand Lodge District Representative a number of years ago; a Lodge in my district held one, and it was a great event. They didn't invent the concept, but they took the idea and ran with it. When this Lodge first held what they termed a Prospective Member's Night the result was that 70% of the invited 'Prospective Members' attended, and of those who attended 80% of them submitted petitions. 3 months later they held another one, and that resulted in 50% of those attending submitting petitions. That Lodge kept doing it and because of that, neighboring Lodges began to do it too.

When other Lodges began to hold evening like this, they had good results too. However, since this is a law of averages membership effort the more it's done the closer you come to a realistic result. Finally the average came to about 30%, so for every 10 prospective members attending the evening you could count on 3 petitions. There were times when it was sometimes more or less, but it averaged 30% over the long haul. When it was the prospective member and his wife

who were invited the turnout of those attending was better than if it were only the men invited. It seems that wherever this concept is tried it works.

The key to hosting and evening like this is for the Lodge to decide that this is something they will work on to have it succeed: The more members who enthusiastically participate with the invitations and the event the better. The goal is to invite quality men and their wives to come to the Lodge for a pleasant evening to hear about Freemasonry under favorable circumstances from knowledgeable Masons. The purpose is not to sell them, but rather to inform those invited about Freemasonry and to have them meet some local Masons. A Lodge could also invite Masons from neighboring Lodges to bring guests, and to share in the evening.

As it was mentioned in a recent discussion on this topic, attitude is everything. As in anything that is worthwhile a positive attitude is contagious, and will go a long way in securing a favorable outcome. The attitude of the Lodge membership, positive or negative, will have a significant impact on the success of the program.

The first thing to do is to tell the members of the Lodge about it and how it works. It is usually best when the plan is explained in Lodge so that the Masons present can ask questions and voice concerns as well as support. Once the plan is adopted those present can then help spread the word amongst the rest of the Lodge members

Next the plan should be talked about in the Lodge newsletter, so that each member knows about it, and a date should be set to begin implementing it. Each member should know that, at the next communication, a list of those to invite will be compiled.

At the next communication it should be talked about and discussed if discussion is wanted, then the Lodge could close early for coffee and treats to allow time to compile a list of those to invite. This is where the members would each be given pads and pens, and then asked:

Who is your best friend, is he a Mason, if not would you like to have him as a Lodge Brother? If so put his name on your list.

Who is your best friend at work? Is he a Mason? If not would you like to invite him and his wife to our Open House?

Who is your next-door neighbor, is he a Mason?

Who is your wife's best friend, is her husband a Mason?

When you go to your house of worship who do you hope will be there so you can visit with him, is he a Mason? Would you think it would be good if he was?

Do you have kids at home, if so who is your son or daughters best friend, is the best friend's dad a Mason?

Who do you like to do business with, is he a Mason?

Who do you look for in the Hardware Store who gives friendly and helpful service, is he a Mason?

How about in the Grocery Store, is there a man there you go to for assistance and conversation is he a Mason?

I'm certain you can think of some other good questions to ask that will give the Brethren something to think about. The key to these questions is for Masons to think about men they might know who might be the kind of man who ought to have the opportunity to hear about the Masons and know how to ask for a petition.

Asking questions like these is easier than just asking a brother to contribute a name of a prospective member. Asking questions like these is important because they result in qualified referred leads from a brother Mason. The brethren are encouraged to put as many names on their list as they can think of: If it is only one that's O.K., but if it's more than one that's even better.

One of the things to have present is a telephone book. If your Lodge is in a small community this next step is easier than in a large metro area. After the lists are put together then the names are reviewed with the brethren; should this name stay on the list to receive an invitation to a prospective member's night? If yes then his address and phone number is looked up, spouses name if known is added to his on the list. If the brother wants to delete someone from his list then that is done. What we're after is someone he wants attending and someone he thinks would come to our Lodge.

The object is to get qualified prospects; every salesman knows a referral is the best kind of lead he can have to tell his story, make his presentation and land another client or customer. We won't be selling anyone on anything here, but we will have a list of men who would be referrals from a friend to come to our Lodge and hear about Freemasonry.

After the list is completed another time is set up to meet again to sign and mail the invitations to those on the list. Then someone who is good at such things prints up the invitations and the envelopes to have ready for the next meeting.

The next get-together is to get the invitations signed by the brother who put his friend's name on the list, and to answer any questions or concerns that may come up. The invitations work best when the inviting brother signs the invitation and less effective when it is signed by the Master. The invitation needs to be signed by someone the recipient knows.

The invitation will state the date and the time, what the event is, and that there will be a meal with dessert and a speaker. Then the inviting brother needs to know it is his duty to follow up the invitation with a call asking if his friend received the invitation, and then offering to give his friend and spouse and ride to the Lodge and back, and to answer any questions that might come up. This call can be in person or on the phone as the brother thinks is best for him to do. If a question comes up our brother cannot answer, he should contact the Master to make sure the question is answered and then our brother can return with that answer.

If there is a commitment to come great, if not then we try to get a commitment for another time when the next open house is to be held. There are times when other commitments will conflict, so a turn down, so to speak, is not always permanent. It's important for the Mason to know that a rejection to the invitation is not a rejection of him or of Masonry, just the time etc. This is important because sometimes people are reluctant to give a referral out of fear that their friend might become angry because of the invitation. But this is not a logical emotion or fear; when someone is invited to something by a friend he will come or not based on his wants and schedule, but he won't be angry because his friend thinks enough of him to invite him to something. Rejection happens, and it's important to keep it in the proper perspective. Not everyone invited will come, but of those who do - know you have a quality qualified friend to hear what Masonry is all about.

The evening should begin with friendliness and fellowship from the Masons and their wives. There is no basket out for money for supper; either the Lodge stands the cost or the brother pays for him and his wife later, but no money basket etc. because it could detract from the mission, and that is fellowship and information.

Next comes supper and a welcome from the Master or a Master of Ceremonies. After supper everyone should adjourn to the Lodge Room. There could be a short video tape shown on Freemasonry, and followed up by one knowledgeable speaker. Then adjourn for more fellowship over coffee and dessert in the Lodge dining area.

Some Lodges will also include a speaker from Order of the Eastern Star, and maybe a youth group, which is good since we want to convey that Freemasonry includes our families. How the evening is planned is flexible, the important thing to remember is to have a Prospective Member's Night that is pleasant and informative. Once the first one is done the second and subsequent events are easier to do, but they should be 3 to 4 months apart.

It is made clear to the members that we will sell or pressure our guests. They will not be urged to fill out a petition at this get-together; that is something the Mason who invited his friend will talk with him about at another time. However, petitions will be in the packet given to each man, (handed to him by his friend,) who comes as a guest of the Lodge. The packet should contain relevant information. Some good items to include are pamphlets from the Masonic Information Center such as:

"What's A Mason?"

"Who are the Masons and What Do They Do?"

"There's No Sin in Symbols,"

"Get a life,"

The little wallet card "A Mason;"

And finally - a petition.

This idea of an 'Open House' goes to what many think is true: 'The more men who know what Masonry is, the more men there will be who will want to become a part of it.' The trick is to tell the story of what Masonry is to enough men who would make good Masons, and this referred lead way is a very good way to do that.

Words to live by: The Stone Age was marked by man's clever use of crude tools; the information age, to date, has been marked by man's crude use of clever tools.

Please remember: if you would like to participate in the latest Masonic Monday Question, please go to <http://www.lodgebuilder.org> and click on the Lodge Education forum. When you have an answer send it to masonicmonday@gmail.com the Masonic Monday Question for the week of 04/26/10 is: **In July 1863, Confederate raiders rode into Versailles, IN capturing the local militia and stealing the county treasury. The next day, General John Morgan (CSA), learned that his men had also made off with the jewels of the local lodge. There were returned the following day. What lodge was Brother Morgan from?**

"An individual without information can't take responsibility. An individual with information can't help but take responsibility." Jan Carlzon

More Light – Mehr Licht ©, Masonic Matters © and T.F.S. ©, are sent out by Email at no charge to anyone who would like to receive them. If you enjoy these publications please share them with others. To subscribe to these publications just send an E-mail to erhmasonic@gmail.com with Subscribe in the subject line and you will be added to the list to receive the publications.

The newest Education video from the Grand Lodge of Minnesota can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAcUiBn8xI0>.

TFS & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed's Face Book page; <http://www.facebook.com/ed.halpaus> - <http://halpaus.blogspot.com> - <http://www.mn-masons.org>

With "Brotherly Love",
Ed Halpaus

Seek to mentor a Brother Mason: It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!