

# So you want to be a Senior Warden?

Here are a few things you should know

## **THE BASICS**

According to Constitution and Code (C&C): Section U 210

A. To succeed to and exercise all the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Master in the event of the absence, death, removal from jurisdiction of the Lodge, or inability from any other cause of the Master.

B. To represent the Lodge at the annual communications of the Grand Lodge.

## **WORK ON YOUR LINE!!!**

You have one year to get your line worked out, and sometimes it takes every bit of it. It is getting harder and harder to find quality men to do the work. It would be best if you involved the Junior Warden in your selection process, because the men you leave behind in line following your year in the East, he will inherit. Remember, the men you choose must have turned in their Master Mason Categorical Lecture for proficiency. If they have not, then you have time to get them to turn it in.

Explain their duties to them. The best way to do that would be to give them the "So you want to be" guide for their specific position. If you do this, then they cannot come back later and say they had no idea what to expect.

It is sad to say, but is oft times true, that an empty chair is a better thing than simply filling a chair with a body. Forcing or coercing a man into taking a position he does not want or is not capable of performing is a sure fire way of potentially making a Brother leave the Lodge. This can cause hurt feelings and anger which benefits no one. However, under C&C you must fill every chair. A Lodge that can't fill every chair can have its charter pulled. You may be required, and oft times will, need to pull past officers back into line. Even if they have no desire to proceed in line, we must fill every chair.

While it is true that the appointed positions are at your discretion, to drop or jump a Brother who is in line and is performing his duty is generally considered to be in bad form, fairly insulting to the Brother, and not very Masonic behavior.

## **LEARN THE RITUAL**

We call the Worshipful Master by this title in part as a sign of respect, but also by the time a Mason reaches this position, they should be a Master of Masonic knowledge and in particular

the ritual necessary to conduct the proceedings of the Lodge. This does not mean that you have to be an "A" certificate holder, but you will bring embarrassment on yourself, your position, and the Lodge, if you require continual prompting from others in order to perform your duties. You have a year to study and learn how to conduct the business of the Lodge, don't waste it.

## COMMITTEES

There are standing committees of the Lodge that need to be filled and tasked. There are three committees which by C&C you are bound to serve upon; Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, and the Charity Committee. Our Lodge has elected to fill the Board of Trustees from the Lodge floor as allowed by C&C, however according to our by-laws you will act as an advisor to the Board of Trustees. Additionally by the terms of our By-Laws as Worshipful Master you will be responsible for the following:

- A. Charity: This committee shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) members of the Lodge whose duty shall be to investigate and make report of any requests that the Lodge receives for assistance.
- B. Finance Committee: This committee shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) members of the Lodge. The duties of this committee are set forth in Myrtle Lodge Policies and Procedures.
- C. Budget: The Finance Committee, with the assistance of the Treasurer and Secretary of the lodge, shall prepare an Annual Planning Budget to be submitted to the lodge for approval by the membership. The budget should be prepared and presented no later than the first stated meeting in February of each calendar year.
- D. Audit: The Worshipful Master shall appoint a committee consisting of two an odd number of members of from the lodge, not less than 3 in number, to audit the books and accounts of the lodge at least once each fiscal year. Excluded from membership within the committee will be any member who possessed financial authority for the Lodge or authority over those members, during the period of time to be audited.
- E. Jurisprudence Committee: You will need to refer to the Lodge Policies and Procedures for the exact functioning of this committee, but you will need to appoint at least one new member during your year, and possibly a replacement should a member need to step down.
- F. Education Committee: Refer to the Policy and Procedure for the composition and duties of this committee.

Other Committees you might consider:

- By-Laws: a simple committee whose only task is to review the By-Laws and Policies and Procedures for any needed updates.
- Fellowship: The Masonic Outings can be a popular event if handled effectively. Why not appoint a committee of men to plan out and schedule these events?

You are the unofficial "Whip" for all Lodge committees. This means that it is your responsibility to make sure that the committees are meeting and performing the tasks as required by their mandate.

## **YOU ARE EVERYWHERE**

Just like the Master is responsible for everything, you too will be expected to be at everything, every time. You should plan to be in Lodge every Monday and Tuesday night for practice or a Special or Stated Communication. You should plan to work at every fundraiser. You should plan to be in attendance at every special function like Fifty Year Pin ceremonies, Widows & Wives Appreciation, Past Master's Dinner, and so forth. You should plan to attend all officer meetings, district meetings, district schools, as well as Grand Lodge Warden's training, and the Grand Lodge Communication. Yes, you should plan to be at Lodge or wherever required each and every time that the doors are open. Is this a realistic expectation? No, but you should do your best to make these things a priority in your scheduling. As an officer you took an additional obligation when you were installed into office, obligating yourself to higher action than a non-officer. Keep your Lodge and/or Masonic calendar handy at all times, so as to reduce the possibility of scheduling conflicts.

## **GET YOUR CALENDAR READY**

It is a good idea to consult with the Junior Warden and Secretary when constructing your calendar to help insure no items are neglected or in conflict. The occurrence and time of the Stated Meetings are prescribed by the By-laws of the Lodge, but you will need to schedule numerous other items, such as:

- Officers Meetings - These should not be neglected. You want good participation from all your officers to insure a harmonious team.
- Practices - Often overlooked and this should not occur.
- District Meetings - this will be difficult to do since the meetings will not typically be scheduled till you are in the East. However, you should not delay reaching out to the District President to insure you get the preferable dates for your Lodge.
- Widows & Ladies Appreciation Luncheon - You will need entertainment
- Sustainment Fund Fundraiser - This is a new item, but should be planned as an annual event
- Lodge Spring Cleaning - Should consult other Orders for help
- Corned Beef Luncheon - No surprise here - schedule near St. Patrick's Day
- District School - Each district is required to have 1 school each year. It should rotate between the district Lodges, but seldom does.
- Street Clean-up - Must be done every three months. The Secretary must then file a report
- Special Communications or Degrees
- Fifty Year Pin Luncheon – should be scheduled early in the year.

- Past Master's Dinner - this is a special one for you, as you are responsible for organizing and running it.
- Rusty Nail Degrees - Always a good idea
- Friend's Nights - Also a good idea.
- Monthly Breakfast Fundraiser - Last Saturday of the Month from 7 to 9 AM

When you work on your calendar there are some things that you should consider:

- Try not to schedule too many consecutive weekends, particularly in the summer. You want good attendance and officers who don't want to strangle you.
- If you are having an event on the weekend which involves food, then try to schedule it the weekend before a following Stated Meeting, so that any leftovers may be utilized.
- Check the Grand Lodge Calendar, particularly the schools and Communication
- Check the Scottish and York Rite Calendars
- Check the Shrine Calendar
- Check the calendars of our Lodge's other organizations (OES, Amaranth, DeMolay, Rainbow) for any items which need to take place on specific dates within the Lodge.
- OU Football Schedule - Yes - you heard me.

Lastly, make sure you keep the Web Administrator informed of your calendar updates so that he may keep the Lodge website up to date.

### **Past Master's Dinner**

As the Senior Warden you will be responsible for the Past Master's Dinner for the outgoing Master. It will be necessary for you to obtain the date of the dinner from the Master's calendar. This is typically an evening meal and as such you will need to coordinate with the Junior Warden as to the menu and preparation. There is typically also some sort of entertainment, which you will be expected to make arrangements for. Work with the Secretary to insure that the Past Master Apron has been arranged for and that the announcements for the dinner have been sent out to the Brethren. This is your show from set-up to tear down, so make sure that it goes off smoothly.

### **YOUR SPECIAL PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS**

Having a special project or program for the Lodge to work on is always a good idea. Men need something to focus their energy on other than simply learning ritual work. If you do not have any ideas for one; you might contact Grand Lodge to see what programs the incoming Grand Master intends to launch. The Masonic Charity Foundation as well as the Masonic Services Association often times will have various programs that they either routinely support or intend to roll out during your year.

Do not wait until you are in the East to develop your own project plan or attempt to adhere to one from one of the other organizations. Sometimes certain time constraints can cause your plan to fail before it ever gets off the ground.

## **YOUR INSTALLATION**

What are your plans for your installation? Will it be a simple reception following or a catered affair? The Lodge typically approves a few hundred dollars for the incoming Master to use to defer the costs. Any monies expended by you in addition will be at your own expense.

Will you be decorating the reception hall?

Will you be including the other orders, such as the DeMolay for a sword presentation or the Rainbow for the Bible Presentation?

Will you want a photographer? You need not hire a professional, but we do typically take pictures of the incoming officers for the Officer Display and the Hall of Past Masters, as well as the website.

You will need to secure the services of an Installing Team. Typically some form of gift for their services is suggested.

Will you want flowers for the lapels of your officers or for the ladies?

It is not required, but oft times the incoming Master will give a simple gift of gratitude to his officers.

**HAVE FUN**