



APPROACHING THE EAST

Issued by the Committee on Masonic Culture and Information



This treatise, designed and produced for the use of Senior Wardens, has been authorized and approved by

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL THE GRAND MASTER

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And

THE BOARD OF GENERAL PURPOSES OF

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Grand Lodge of New Brunswick

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Foreword

In an effort to help prospective Worshipful Masters, this publication is designed for the Senior Wardens. No claim of originality is made. The publications of other Grand Lodges have been studied and their ideas and phraseology used.

In New Brunswick, and in other Masonic jurisdictions, attendance at Lodge meetings, except on very special occasions, usually represents a small percentage of the membership.

Lodge meetings should be so designed as to attract the attention of the membership, so that a large percentage of them will be in attendance.

The prospective Worshipful Master must plan now to bring about Lodge meetings that are attractive to the membership.

Introduction – TO ALL SENIOR WARDENS

In almost all instances you as Senior Warden have reason to believe that next December, there will fall to your lot the highest honour and the greatest responsibility which your lodge can confer – that of electing you Worshipful Master. To be worthy of that honour should be the aim of every Senior Warden.

The duties are numerous and important, extending far beyond the conferring of degrees and conducting meetings. It is within the capability of every Worshipful Master to perform his duties with real distinction if he realizes that his primary function is to serve, and if he has prepared himself for the opportunity. This treatise is dedicated to you, as Senior Warden, in the hope that it may be of assistance in that preparation.

You, as Worshipful Master of your Lodge, will have duties, powers, responsibilities and privileges not accorded to presiding officers of other societies and organizations. They preside but do not govern. You will do both, and your decisions and orders will be absolute and can be overruled only by the Most Worshipful Grand Master or the Grand Lodge.

You should therefore be very careful that your decisions be wise and just. Some of them will be made on the spur of the moment without the opportunity for counsel and advice. In a few cases, the circumstances cannot be foreseen. The majority of decisions to be made, however, can be anticipated, thus giving you time to prepare for them. The importance of preparation cannot be stressed too much. You should study the Constitution of the Grand Lodge and the By-laws with diligence while you are a Senior Warden. Do not postpone this until you become Worshipful Master.

A Worshipful Master Speaks

The following statement by the Worshipful Master of a Lodge in England should be of value to all who are elected to serve in the East:

“This is an ancient office, and its antiquity is at once a Worshipful Master’s despair and his hope; his despair because he cannot expect to measure up to the standards the centuries have set; his hope, because he has a beaten path to follow. It is not necessary for him to discover his duties, to create his authority or to invent the functions he is to perform; long ago they were instituted and defined. It is only necessary for him to follow a chart laid down by the wisdom of many generations.

“The office belongs to Freemasonry. I am only too well aware that it is not my personal possession. I shall not presume to undertake to revise or reform it to suit my private personality, whatever idiosyncrasies of manner or peculiarities of character I may have, you will expect me to set aside. The man is not the jewel for which the office is a setting. I shall not seek to make the office conform to me; I shall try to conform myself to it.

“No man sits in the East in his capacity as a private person. He is no longer himself; he is the Worshipful Master of his Lodge. The private man with his predilections and prejudices must disappear in order that only the officer remain. He is not to play a part. To a superficial view, this may mean nothing more than the glamour which goes with the

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place and power, to the incumbent himself it is one of the most humbling and exacting of all the duties his position places upon him. It means that if his most intimate friend deserves to be rebuked, he must rebuke him; it means that if he must give instructions to those who are far wiser than himself, he must instruct them; it means that whatever limitations, whatever sense of failing and shortcoming he may be conscious of, he must sacrifice to the demands of his position.”

Qualifications of a Worshipful Master

The question is sometimes asked, “What are the qualifications of a Worshipful Master?” Actually, they are both Masonic and personal. He should have all those virtues which are normally associated with a member of the Masonic fraternity, being upright before God and of good repute among men; obedient to the moral law; and possessing the respect and confidence of his fellow men. He should know the Ritualistic and Lodge Work and be able to teach it to others.

Likewise, he should be familiar with the working tools provided by the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education, the Four Candidate Booklets, the Mentor Program, the Officer’s Manual, the Ancient Charges, the Constitution and General Regulations and By-laws of his Lodge.

Also, he should have certain personal qualifications. No one man can be expected to possess all the personal traits that are so highly desirable, but many can be acquired. Self-evaluation will point out faults that can be corrected. An efficiency expert once proposed a number of questions, all of which should be answered in the affirmative by an effective manager of men. Most of them apply equally to a capable Worshipful Master. It may prove helpful to review the following questions with the idea of preparing yourself to become an outstanding Worshipful Master.

1. Can you express your own ideas without causing others to feel you are overbearing and narrow minded?
2. Do you control your temper and not “fly off the Handle” – when things go wrong?
3. Are you usually cheerful?
4. Do you think for yourself, and not let the opinions of others unduly influence you?
5. Do you give credit where credit is due?
6. Are you calm when your own mistakes are pointed out?
7. Do your men respect you and cooperate with you?
8. Can you maintain discipline without resorting to the use of undue authority?
9. When thrown in with a group of strangers, do you adjust yourself readily?
10. Can you adjust to a misunderstanding and retain the friendship of the person with whom you have differed?
11. When talking to superiors, do you feel free from embarrassment?
12. When interviewing subordinates, do you put them at ease?
13. Can you meet opposition without becoming confused and saying things you wish afterwards you had not said?
14. Are you sought by your friends to handle delicate situations because of your ability to do so?
15. Are you patient when dealing with people who are hard to please?

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16. Do you make and retain friends easily?

On Presiding

Most of the duties of a Worshipful Master are enumerated in the Constitution and in the Ceremony of Installation. It seems unnecessary to dwell upon them here. There are, however, certain rules and maxims concerning the conduct of the office, the observance of which will be valuable in officiating effectively as Worshipful Master.

In the first place, be punctual. The By-laws prescribe that the Lodge shall be opened at a specific hour. See to it that this is done. Conduct the business of the Lodge with as much dispatch as is consistent with dignity and decorum. Make certain that the Ritualistic and Lodge Work is of the highest type. It should be as nearly letter-perfect as is possible, *but above all, it should be impressive*. If it does not create a favourable impression on the Candidate, it has failed in its purpose.

Be kind and courteous but firm in making such decisions as may be required. Do not be hesitant in asking for advice from experienced Brethren. What seems like a difficult situation to you may be quite commonplace in the light of wider experience. Be certain that the Candidates are being properly instructed, both in Ritualistic Work and also in connection with the booklets and pamphlets supplied by the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education. Whether or not a novitiate becomes interested in Freemasonry and an active Member of the Lodge, often depends upon the attitude and influence of his instructors during his first few months as a Freemason. His instructors therefore should be selected with the greatest of care.

As Worshipful Master, it will be your duty to appoint certain Lodge Committees. Here again, you should seek the Members most qualified and willing to serve. An appointment made as a favour to a friend might not be in the best interest of the Lodge; nor should you feel obligated to reappoint Members that have been previously appointed if in your judgment, others could better serve the Lodge.

It is suggested that you appoint a Program Committee on Masonic Education which may prove to be one of your most important Committees. The Members appointed to this Committee should be selected with great care. Such appointments should be made strictly on the basis of the member's ability and willingness to serve. Members of this Committee should have a reasonable knowledge of Freemasonry and be well-acquainted with the program and procedure set forth by the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education. Your selection for Chairman should be a member you are convinced will instruct each Candidate and new Member in the basic teachings of Freemasonry.

Every effort should be made to induce new Members and all Members living within a reasonable distance of the Lodge, to attend Lodge meetings and other Lodge activities. Learn the names of those members who attend regularly and address them by name, whenever possible. Everybody appreciates this type of attention.

Under the "good of the Order" do not feel that it is necessary at Lodge meetings to call upon everybody in sight. In addition to starting on time, it is highly desirable to close at a reasonable hour. Be courteous to the visitors and to you Past Masters, but if the hour is late, keep the speaking to a minimum. Don't kill a good meeting by talking it to death.

Before entering your term as Worshipful Master, establish certain standards in various phases of Lodge activity which you would like to attain during your year. Be reasonable in this; do not seek the impossible, but make your standards as high as you can possibly hope to reach.

Set The Craft At Word

The lack of interest in some lodges may be due to the fact that the Worshipful Master has not "set the Craft at Work". It has been said that no man is truly happy unless he is doing constructive work, and Freemasonry must afford opportunities for such work or it will suffer. Men, as a rule, do not like to be simply spectators. Give them something to do; make them responsible for it and you revive their interest in the Lodge. This does not mean that you should assign tasks indiscriminately. Study your members, find out what each one likes to do best, and try to give appropriate assignments to as many Members as possible.

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There are numerous ways in which this can be done. A few are listed herein:

1. Encourage a greater number of Members to interest themselves in Ritualistic Work, particularly Lectures. Assign parts to them, and then be sure that after having become proficient, they have a chance to take that role in actual Degree Work.
2. Have Members act as a Welcoming Committee. It will not only give them something to do, but it will develop many new friendships.
3. If there are Members with dues arrearages, have a Special Committee visit them. Possibly these Members are actually unable to make payment, but are too timid to make their circumstances known; or they may have lost interest. Quite often a friendly visit by this Special Committee will revive their interest and spark enthusiasm.
4. Practically all Lodges experience poor attendance at meetings. A visit by one or more Members of a Special Committee may cause the chronic non-attender to change his habits.
5. A Committee specially appointed to visit the sick would perform a worthwhile function.
6. In many localities, there are numerous Members living a distance from their own Lodges and consequently seldom, if ever, attend lodge meetings. A special committee to search out these brethren could do a real service in bringing such Members back into Masonic fellowship.
7. Every Lodge has Members who are capable of presenting a program for the information and enjoyment of their fellow Members. Find out who they are and use these talents.

PROGRAMS

Do not underestimate the importance of having interesting programs for all Stated Meetings to entice and inspire the Members to be present. When Members of a Lodge learn that the Worshipful Master has planned programs that are interesting and worthwhile, they will make a greater effort to attend Lodge meetings. A successful year will follow such planning, but do not assume that this can be accomplished without serious thought and a lot of work.

At the beginning of his term of office, the Worshipful Master should know what his program will be for the whole year.

1. ANNIVERSARIES: The granting of the warrant is an important Anniversary. Many Lodges celebrate with a dinner meeting while others have an appropriate ceremony in the Lodge Room.
2. PAST MASTERS NIGHT: A degree could be conferred with Past Masters in all the Stations and Places. Various Past Masters may be designated to speak on their recollections of Lodge activities of the past, or give timely advice for future improvement. A memorial service could be held for the deceased Past Masters, or a ceremonial honoring both living and deceased Past Masters could be used.
3. BOOKLETS AND PAPERS: The various booklets and papers, published and issued by the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education, the Masonic Service Association of North America, or the Masonic Information Center, provide excellent material for review in the Open Lodge Meeting. A brief review of the Four Candidate Booklets and of the five parts of the Mentor Program can prove interesting and constructive.
4. PATRIARCH: Fifty-year and near fifty-year members could be the invited guests at a meeting in their honour. One or two of them could be scheduled to address the Brethren in Open Lodge.
5. OPEN FORUM: Three or four well-informed Brethren could form a panel and answer questions on all phases of Freemasonry. There are numerous ways in which this can be accomplished. A question-box could be placed in the ante-room for several prior meetings where questions could be deposited. "Planted" questions plus those asked from the floor could also be used. The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education may supply questions and answers which can form the basis for a program of this kind. The moderator of the panel should be a knowledgeable Mason such as a Grand Lodge Officer, a member of the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education, a District Deputy Grand Master or a Past Master approved by the DDGM.
6. MASONIC EXPERIENCES: Members of the Lodge who have travelled widely could be scheduled to relate their Masonic experiences while visiting Lodges or Masonic functions in other jurisdictions.
7. RECOGNITIONS: A special program, set aside to recognize or honor a Member of the Lodge on his achievements, preferably Masonic, although this could be done for other attainments in various fields of endeavor.
8. GRAND LODGE VISITATION: A visit arranged for a Grand Lodge Officer or Officers on the occasion of presenting a Grand Lodge 50-year Masonic Service Pin and Certificate, or for some other special event.
9. INVITATIONS EXTENDED: Stated meetings could be set aside to extend special invitations to Members of the Craft from a local industry, such as oil refineries, steel mills, railroads, etc. This enables the Lodge

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Members to invite Masons of other Lodges with whom they are associated in their places of employment. They can be requested to assemble in the ante-room and be admitted in a group. Members of the various professions can be considered in like manner. A guest speaker could be scheduled to address the brethren on such occasions.

10. VISITORS NIGHT: A Stated Meeting set aside to extend a special invitation to Members living in the community who are members of Lodges at distant points.
11. NON-RESIDENTS NIGHT: Members of the Lodge living elsewhere could be extended a special invitation for a visit to their Lodge at a certain Stated Meeting. If unable to attend, they could be asked to write letters that could be read in the Open Meeting.
12. FATHER AND SON NIGHT and/or KIN NIGHT: A Stated Meeting could be set aside to extend special invitations and recognition to father and son combinations within the Craft. Where father and son combinations do not attract too many, the invitation could be extended to family combinations that would include, sons, brother, nephews, sons-in-law, brothers-in-law, father-in-law, etc.
13. MASONIC CELEBRITIES: A guest speaker could be scheduled for a Stated Meeting using a topic of Masonic philosophy, symbols etc.
14. MASONIC BIRTHDAYS: A greeting specially designed and signed by the Worshipful Master, could be mailed to a Member prior to the Stated Meeting of the anniversary month in which the Member was Entered. This greeting should congratulate him and slow urge him to be present at the Stated Meeting of his anniversary month, so that special recognition could be extended to all Brethren celebrating the memorable occasion. When the Member is introduced in Lodge, the number of years he has been a member should be mentioned. The entire group could be given a seat of honour at the hour of refreshment with a birthday cake, and the singing of "Happy Birthday" or other recognition.
15. FORMAL LODGE DEBATE: Members of the Lodge could debate some Masonic subject that shares different opinions. Effort must be made, however, to keep this within reason so as not to disturb harmony and good order of the Lodge.
16. EXEMPLIFICATIONS: Time could be set aside at the Stated Meeting to have qualified members exemplify Masonic procedures such as the Examination of a Visitor, the Masonic Burial Service etc.
17. FILMS AND COLOR SLIDES: Films and color slides on Masonic and non-Masonic subjects of interest are available for the entertainment and enlightenment of the Brethren. Information concerning these films and slides may be obtained from your Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education or DDGM.
18. SHORT TALK BULLETINS: Copies of this monthly publication of the Masonic Service Association of North America are mailed to the Elected Grand Lodge Officers and others who subscribe individually. These Bulletins cover many phases of Freemasonry and furnish an excellent basis for brief and interesting talks at Stated Meetings.
19. FRIEND-TO-FRIEND: A night could be set aside for the brethren to invite prospective members.
20. WIDOWS NIGHT: The widows of our departed brothers could be invited for an evening at the Lodge. Start with a free meal (for the ladies) and present the widow's pin and certificates to the new widows. Let them know we care. A single long-stemmed rose given to each one is an often-appreciated and inexpensive gesture.

The success of each of the suggestions and any other thoughts and ideas you may adopt, will be assured only by proper and adequate promotion. You must find ways and means of communicating with your Lodge Membership. This requires advance notice of what is coming. Every monthly notice should include such announcements. The delegating of certain details to other members is essential so that all is in readiness well in advance of the Stated Meeting. Nothing should be left to the last minute.

ASSIMILTION OF NEW MEMBERS

No Lodge can long endure without acquiring new members, nor can it continue to thrive unless new members are properly assimilated. To aid in this process, certain working tools have been provided.

The Mentor Program has been developed by the Committee on Masonic Education and should be used as set forth in the program. That is, one lesson before the Entered Apprentice Degree, one lesson between each of the Degrees and two lessons, held separately, after the Master Mason Degree.

Sets of the Four Candidate Booklets: "Forward", "The Entered Apprentice", "The Fellow-Craft" and "The Master Mason" are available upon request for distribution at the proper intervals to each newly made Mason.

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As Worshipful Master, it will be your responsibility to make certain that these working tools are used to the best possible advantage for indoctrinating the new Member and in stimulating his interest and enthusiasm. Only then will he become a working Mason and an asset to the Lodge.

But the instilling of certain ideals and information is not enough. He must see the beauty and idealism of Freemasonry before he will be truly sold on our Fraternity. This can be accelerated by continued instruction and constant attention. It is worthy of your effort as Worshipful Master.

A “Mentor” – preferably his sponsor, should be assigned to each new Member to ensure that appropriate answers are obtained to his inevitable questions. The Mentor should also see that he is properly introduced and befriended during the “Hour of Refreshment.”

IN CONCLUSION – A SUMMARY

“The Ideal Worshipful Master”

Perhaps the ideal Worshipful Master has seldom presided in any Masonic Lodge, for the ideal Worshipful Master would be perfect, and total perfection is not given to human beings. But the clearer and more attractive his ideal and the more strenuously he strives toward it, the greater will be his success.

The ideal Worshipful Master knows his Freemasonry. He has been inspired, not only from listening to well-informed Master Masons, but he has read and studied Masonic books written and compiled by Masonic scholars.

The ideal Worshipful Master looks at his Lodge and sees it wholly harmonious. No rifts or schisms develop under him. He is friendly with every Past Master, every Officer and every Brother.

The ideal Worshipful Master leaves his Lodge better off financially than he found it. He spends less than the income and receives full value for money expended.

The ideal Worshipful Master attends to the duties which are his in Grand Lodge. He answers promptly all correspondence received from the Grand Lodge and governs himself accordingly.

The ideal Worshipful Master has interesting Stated Meetings. He is willing to work hard arranging programs, planning events which will not only be of interest to the Brethren but will also be instructive and for the good of the Craft.

The ideal Worshipful Master considers the sick and sorrowing as his personal care. He is ever ready to visit a Brother or Brother’s family in the hour of need.

The ideal Worshipful Master considers not his personal pleasure, not his social engagements, nor his hours of rest and recreation when his Lodge calls. He puts his Lodge first, except for his family and his God.

The ideal Worshipful Master protects and endorses the Ancient Usages, Landmarks and the Customs of the Fraternity. He sees to it that the laws, resolutions and edicts of Grand Lodge are enforced and that the By-laws of his Lodge are meticulously observe at all times.

The ideal Worshipful Master is a guide, philosopher and friend to the Brethren in times of trouble. Members of a Lodge will often turn to their Worshipful Master for counsel. The ideal Worshipful Master is always ready and willing to help, aid and assist his Brethren in any way possible.

The ideal Worshipful Master is eager for suggestions even though he may not follow those which seem to him unwise.

The ideal Worshipful Master is primarily concerned with policies rather than details. He therefore delegates details to carefully chosen Members and Committees, however he knows what is going on at all times.

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The ideal Worshipful Master is humble. He keeps ever before him the knowledge that although elevated to the most honourable office of the Lodge, he can fill the chair only if he thinks first, last and always of his Lodge and his Brethren.

The ideal Worshipful Master is an ideal Master Mason. Freemasonry is part of him – a large part. With all his heart and soul and strength, he strives to live a true Masonic life, so that the Brethren may see that he is no mere figurehead, but a vital force for the good and welfare of his Lodge in particular, and Freemasonry in general.