

WISCONSIN MASONIC HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 3

SUCCESS SYSTEMS



A. INTRODUCTION

Progress is defined as "a moving forward, or onward, an advance toward perfection or a higher development." By this definition, progress is surely something every Worshipful Master wants for his lodge. Progress is assured for the Worshipful Master who will incorporate the plans of action in this chapter. They have proven to be successful in every lodge in which they have been properly implemented, and faithfully and enthusiastically carried out.

These "plans" are promoted, administered and vigorously supported by the Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Wisconsin and were developed with the individual symbolic lodge in mind. They are to aid and assist lodges to foster growth, and to inspire, support and instruct the officers of the lodge.

Contact your Area Administrator, District Deputy, or the Grand Secretary for further information.

B. THE COUNSELOR SYSTEM

A major key to success for a lodge is a thorough and well-planned membership development. Masons realize that the retention of existing members (particularly new members) is important in increasing membership or eliminating a decline in membership.

When a new brother sees that his lodge is interested in him and cares for him, he will return that commitment to his lodge. The "Counselor Program" is designed to accomplish this.

The "Counselor Program" is now available through the web site as the "Wisconsin Program." Administrators are vitally concerned with the implementation of the Program. The ASHLAR Award also promotes counseling and Mentorship in the Lodge. See the website for details under the Awards

category.

It is the duty of the Worshipful Master of every lodge in Wisconsin to:

1. Appoint a Lodge Counselor.
2. Make sure his Lodge Counselor participates in scheduled training sessions.
3. Ensure the implementation and continuation of the "Counselor Program."

The first booklet in the Wisconsin Program Handbook, "Let There Be Light," explains succinctly why candidate counseling is important. Briefly, candidate counseling is:

- The candidate's right.
- Needed to secure the candidate's interest.
- An expression of brotherly love.
- Important to prevent defaults.
- Of assistance in maintaining the new brother's involvement.
- Helpful to develop future officers.

Succeeding booklets in the counselor series are:

- "Seeking Light in Masonry" (for presentation prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree).
- "Light in Masonry" (for presentation after the Entered Apprentice Degree).
- "More Light in Masonry" (for presentation after the Fellow Craft Degree).
- "Further Light in Masonry" (for presentation after the Master Mason Degree).

All of the above counselor materials are part of the "The Wisconsin Program" which can be obtained through the web site.

C. LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A blueprint for a sure-fire schedule of activities and a notable year is provided for lodge officers in a Leadership Training Seminar. It consists of a one-day interactive program.

After completion of this workshop, the lodge officers should be able to recognize their individual skills, be better able to plan and organize lodge activities, be better able to understand the communication process within the lodge and to realize the importance of team building and participation.

Participants will leave the workshop better prepared to meet the challenges and stresses of Freemasonry. Materials and case studies are tailored to the specific audience and can be used as a reference and guide after the seminar.

The participation in this program should be on a continual basis. Whoever expects to serve the lodge as Worshipful Master or as a Warden in the ensuing year, should attend even though he may have participated in a previous session. This will help immeasurably to improve regularity, continuity and proper preparation for the lodge's activities from year to year.

These workshops are held throughout the state during the year. To arrange for a workshop, or even host one at your lodge, contact your Area Administrator.

D. DISTRICT SUPPORT TEAM

The District Support Team is structured to act as a guide to assist Masonic Lodges in the district. The goals of the District Support Team are aimed at improving the functional level in lodges related to financial, ritual, program or membership standards. Combinations of these areas may become the focus in each lodge. The program is designed to give support in the very special areas of need for specific lodges in the program. In this way, a "personalized program" of assistance can be developed for individual lodges with a special team of experts assembled to address their particular challenges.

In its operational mode, the District Support Team will be under the supervision of the District Deputy. The identification of the "targeted" lodges will be determined by the District Deputy based on the recommendation of the Area Administrators who serve with him.

As the individualized team is assembled, a District Support Team Leader will be identified (usually the District Deputy). He will assist in drawing together the

proper mix of team members who will be able to react to the unique needs of each lodge being so served. The District Support Team, therefore, is made up of different men who are specially identified for each participating lodge. The District Support Leader has authority and responsibility to identify and organize the membership of the complete team.

It is the responsibility of the Area Administrator to contact targeted lodges and inform them of the nature of the District Support Team program and offer the services of such a team. The specific lodges identified for "support" then have the responsibility to accept or reject the initial involvement of a District Support Team.

The lodges, by votes of their members at regular business meetings, will determine if they are ready for the involvement of the District Support Team. As lodges agree to participate, the Area Administrators will then alert the District Deputy.

Lodges are scheduled for assistance based on the availability of the proper mix of Masons who will compose each Support Team. If several lodges request assistance, they will be scheduled for direct involvement following an orderly rotation of such lodges based on the recommendations of the Area Administrator and their District Deputy.

Each "team" can consist of as many as six members serving under the direction of the Support Team Leader. Each of the teams will require two members from the local lodge. Additional participants will serve as needed with each maintaining a focus on individual areas. The concept recognizes that team members will be made up of Masons who may not be members of the lodges being served. It stands to reason because lodges would otherwise make use of their own members to solve their own problems. Each of the Support Team Members has a specific set of duties and guidelines.

The "Team Leader" is the actual "director of activities" relating to the team and its contact with the lodge. He works with the District Deputy and Area Administrator in determining the needs of the lodge and assists in identifying and securing two local lodge members who will serve on the team.

Other key members of the "Support Team" are the financial advisor, local lodge leader, program advisor, member advisor, and ritual advisor. These key team members may or may not be included in the "Support Team" for a targeted lodge, depending on the lodge's actual needs.

No lodge can improve using only the resources obtained from outside services. Suggestions, examples, encouragement and advice are only potential pathways for improvement. Members of the individual lodges must be willing to work for improvements and must be willing to increase their own levels of care and commitment to their lodges if true results are to be established. Lodges served by support teams must also be willing to respond to new ideas and suggestions with positive attitudes.

It also stands to reason that each trial activity or method may, in itself, not prove to be the "answer to the problems" confronting an involved lodge. If easy answers were just that, easy answers, all lodges could quickly be on the road to recovery and success.

We know that time; perseverance and patience will overcome any problem. The District Support Team program is a functional tool that can help to direct lodges to higher levels of activity and success.

E. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

One of the most successful projects is the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation's High School Scholarship Program. These scholarships serve the dual purpose of philanthropy and public relations.

The Wisconsin Masonic Foundation presently will match funds, from \$100 to \$500, submitted by Wisconsin Masonic Lodges toward scholarships for graduating high school seniors who intend to pursue a college education. Under this program, the maximum scholarship awarded is \$1000. This is subject to change from year to year.

To participate, a lodge will annually submit funds to the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation, in care of the Grand Lodge Office, giving the names of the high school and where the scholarship will be given. The annual period of time is based on the Grand Lodge year, which closely coincides with the academic school year.

The Wisconsin Masonic Foundation will return a check(s) in the amount doubling the fund submitted. This policy is subject to change and dependent on market conditions. The check(s) will be sent to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge, made payable to the high school, for the benefit of the student(s) named.

In addition to the regular scholarship program, constituent lodges or individuals

may participate in providing larger grants to these students. This program allows lodges to provide a \$1,000 scholarship and also allows lodges or individuals to name this scholarship-in perpetuity. There are two programs.

Program - Number 1

In this program a lodge or an individual contributes \$5,000 to the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation, which may be given at one time or over a period of time and in any amount until the \$5,000 is reached. Donors may name the Scholarship after the lodge or individual donor. The lodge or donor will contribute \$350 each year toward the scholarship and the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation will add the \$650 to complete the amount. Scholarships will be awarded every April following the year in which the donor's fund reaches \$5,000. Contributions should be made payable to: "Wisconsin Masonic Foundation Scholarship Fund."

Program - Number 2

This program is similar to the first scholarship program with two exceptions. One in this program a \$10,000 contribution is required from a lodge or individual donor and may be named at the discretion of the contributor. Two-the second variation is that the \$10,000 funds an annual scholarship of \$1,000 in perpetuity for a worthy graduating high school senior with no additional contributions needed. The other details related to the \$1,000 Scholarship Program Number 1 apply to this Scholarship Program.

Special note: The contribution amount may change for new scholarships and is dependent on market conditions.

1. INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY

Selection

The responsibility for selecting the recipient(s) from any given high school rests entirely with the local faculty scholarship committee. The only limitation imposed by the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation is that the selection criteria be followed as closely as possible.

Criteria

1. The recipient(s) must be a graduating student from a Wisconsin High School, display a commendable academic record and the potential to successfully continue achievement in a post secondary college or university. This includes a junior college or technical college when

the full credit load is acceptable to a degree granting institution. The attending college may be public or private and the course of study must lead toward a baccalaureate degree.

2. The academic course of study selected should be the choice of the student and not a factor in the selection process.
3. The recipient(s) will have demonstrated leadership ability and service as evidenced by school, community and church or synagogue involvement.
4. The recipient(s) must initiate schooling within eight months of receiving the award.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LODGES

It is also expected that the Worshipful Master, or some qualified member of the lodge, present the scholarship grant to the student (at the High School graduation ceremonies or some other appropriate function of the school.)

In cities that accommodate more than one lodge and/or more than one high school, arrangements should be made to divide or alternate the monies to service all potential recipients. Should more than one lodge be located in a consolidated school district, each lodge may submit its scholarship to that High School.

In the unlikely event that a school district does not permit individual high schools to receive and disburse scholarship funds, the Wisconsin Masonic Foundation should be notified through the Secretary and proper attention will be focused on the specific problem to help resolve the situation.

It is also recommended that a news release be prepared and the local press informed of the presentation. See at the end of this HANDBOOK a sample news release.

F. LODGE EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Grand Master's Achievement Award was established in 1977 to recognize those lodges, which develop and participate in a well-rounded program of activities. It later was amended and renamed the Lodge Excellence Award (LEA). The entire program is outlined and has the application on the web site under the category of Awards. This program should be used by elected officers to plan the upcoming year.

The LEA has been very successful in stimulating lodges to have full slates of well-planned activities and lodges have benefited immeasurably as a result.

Those qualifying for the award are suitably recognized at the Annual Communication and the Worshipful Master is presented with an plaque with an engraved marker for display in his lodge building.

G. SPRUCE-UP PROGRAMS

"SOMETHING SHOULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF FREEMASONRY!"

Have we ever heard or expressed these or similar words?

Each of us must be part of the solution in our local community. The outside appearance of the lodge building presents an image of Freemasonry to the community. The inside appearance of the lodge building presents an image of Freemasonry to our members and guests.

Each lodge, in cooperation with other groups using the lodge building, should have regular spruce-up projects. Such projects are necessary to maintain and improve the image of Freemasonry in each community and throughout Wisconsin. Such projects also contribute to our individual pride in being a Freemason.

SPRUCE-UP SUGGESTIONS

External:

- A sign on the building or property; lights on the building
- Telephone listing with address
- An internet presence
- Signs leading into city
- Sign directing visitors and members to the building
- Landscaping
- Painting
- All forms of external repair
- Exterior or building front remodeling flag pole

Internal:

- Painting lighting
- Energy savers
- Furniture repair/replacement carpeting
- Redecorate lounge/dining area/update safety - (exits, extinguishers)
- Update library
- Display past officers' photos/ display awards received
- Welcome sign
- New/refurbish aprons
- Kitchen addition/improvement bulletin board
- New/refurbish rest rooms/ kitchen addition
- Safety strips on step edges or hand rails
- Furniture repair

H. TRAVELING GAVEL

Visitation between the lodges is highly desirable. This is beyond dispute for reasons, which are obvious to all. To encourage visitation, each District has a "Traveling Gavel" and lodges are encouraged to gain possession of it. Rules governing the "Traveling Gavel" follow:

Rules Governing the Traveling Gavel

- The Grand Lodge Jurisdiction of Wisconsin shall be divided into twelve Districts. One Traveling Gavel is assigned to each District.
- The purpose of the Traveling Gavel is to increase Lodge visitation
- The Traveling Gavels cannot leave their assigned Districts.
- The Gavel can be delivered or captured at a stated or special tiled meeting. A tiled meeting must be opened by the lodge that is being visited.
- At least three members of the capturing or delivering Lodge must be present, one of which must be an elected officer (W.M., S.W., J.W., Sec., or Treas.).
- If more than one lodge arrives on the same night to capture the gavel, the following criteria are to be used to determine who captures the gavel:
 - a. Lodge with the most visiting brothers

- b. If same number of brothers attend, the lodge that travels the furthest (determined by their Stated Meeting locations) captures the gavel
 - c. If all of the above are the same, the lodge with the highest ranking officers in attendance would capture the gavel. (I.E. If you have your Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden, present, you would take the gavel v/s Master, Senior Warden, Senior Deacon, and Junior Deacon. This is highest ranking, not the most officers)
 - d. If all of the above are the same, the lodge with the youngest Mason (by age, not years as a mason) present would capture the gavel.
- Gavel can only be transferred one time per day.
 - District Deputy must be notified by the lodge delivering or capturing the gavel within 24 hours. This allows for quick communication with the other lodges in the district.
 - If there are questions about the rules for capturing or delivering the District Traveling Gavel, the District Deputy's decision should be accepted.
 - The "Traveling Gavels" are not to be used in the lodge work, but are to remain in their display boxes, and should be displayed at the Lodge.