

The Maven's Journal

(May, 2017)

"Dedicated to promoting Masonic leadership and education"

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Meeting Management – Planning a Meeting
(Richard H. Ryder, 2017)

This is the first in an occasional series devoted to discussing management skills for the effective leader. When presented, it will

The Maven's Journal promotes Masonic leadership and education. The articles in this and future editions appear on MasonicMaven.org, where you will also find information of interest to all Freemasons and the general public. [Follow us](#)

replace the usual leadership article. Leadership and management require different skillsets, but are related and it is important that effective leaders master basic management skills. As such, **The Maven's Journal** will present applicable management topics.

This occasional series starts with meeting management and will appear in two installments – Planning a Meeting and Conducting a Meeting. This two-part article will focus on meetings separate from the monthly Masonic meeting, although there are some common considerations. A discussion of effective monthly Masonic meetings will appear in a future edition of **The Maven's Journal**.

Meeting Management – Part 1: Planning a Meeting

How often do you cringe when someone invites you to a meeting? Maybe you flash back to a meeting where you spent what seemed like days listening to the drone of one person rambling on about a seemingly meaningless topic. Maybe someone went on and on about how things used to be and all we need to do is return to those days of yesteryear. Maybe they seriously drifted off topic and the meeting chair did not reign them in. **Let's face it, some people** would rather have a root canal than attend a meeting. However, there are times when only a face to face session will effectively address a topic that needs thoughtful discussion and meaningful input.

During those times, it is critical that meeting planners and attendees follow basic meeting management rules. When trying to decide if I need to plan a meeting I like to use the method of asking who, what, when, why, and where. If a meeting makes sense, then I concentrate on the how. Too often we call a meeting without a clear understanding of what one hopes to accomplish, why a meeting is necessary, when to hold a meeting, where to hold a meeting, and who should attend. Secondly, how attendees should meet (i.e. conducting a meeting) is a major topic requiring a dedicated discussion. In summary, meetings should be held only if there is no better way to arrive at a decision or to discuss a topic.

What do you want to accomplish?

Before deciding if you need a meeting have you first determined

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This month the Leadership Series introduces an occasional management related topic and presents the first of a two-part article on meeting management, focusing on planning a meeting. The Education Series completes a trilogy on the three degrees and reflects on the third degree lessons. Those seeking the oriental chair will appreciate The Trestle Board article on selecting line officers.

Regards,
Wor. Richard Ryder



Masonic Spotlight: Brother
Manuel Hoyo
Richard H. Ryder, 2017

Freemasonry is attracting

exactly what you want to accomplish? If not, how will you know if you need a meeting? Take the time to identify your goal; doing so will help you decide the best way to accomplish it. For example: are you trying to decide if a celebration event is required? Maybe you **don't need a meeting**. Are you trying to decide which of three agreed upon options would work best? **Maybe you don't need a meeting**. Are you trying to plan a lodge turnaround? Well, you most likely need one or more meetings.

Click [HERE](#) to continue reading.

*Richard H. Ryder
May, 2017*



Education Series

Transition to Age: The Masonic Third Degree
(Richard H. Ryder, 2016)

The meaning of one's life has challenged mankind for millennia and our conclusions are as varied as the numbers of times we ponder the thought. At some point in our lives we all struggle with the age old question, "Why am I here?" As if that is not a hard enough query we also ask, "How will I be remembered?" In our later years the frequency of these questions may increase as we face our fate at the hands of our creator.

many fine young men who desire association with others that are likeminded and of strong character. This has been **true since the Fraternity's** inception and it is refreshing to see that continue. After reaching adulthood and starting a career, men today are looking for ways to form lasting relationships and to give back to society. One such person, Brother Manuel Hoyo from Celestial Lodge in Westwood, MA., is **this month's spotlight** Mason. I asked Brother Hoyo to share with readers why younger men join the Fraternity, what they hope to experience, and, more importantly, what they hope to contribute.

Click [HERE](#) to continue reading.



The third degree symbolically marks our transition from manhood into age, where the lessons learned and applied come to fruition in the symbolic completion of our internal edifice. We are given a rare opportunity to improve upon the lessons of the previous degrees. Wisdom replaces inexperience, reflection displaces dreams, and thoughts of immortality diminish as one contemplates his personal legacy. The internal temple is nearly complete, yet in some respect the biggest challenges await. What shall we do with the lessons of our lives? How will we be judged? Is mankind better because we exist? At the portals of the celestial lodge stands our creator, ledger in hand, judging our actions and tallying the score.

Yet this degree is also filled with optimism, for the Master Mason now has the tools and the experience to masterfully complete his internal structure in the remaining years of his life. The measure of **success is not internal, but external; not what's in it for me, but how can one translate industrious work into charitable relief for others.**

To illuminate his way during this degree, Freemasonry offers the new Master Mason a multitude of symbols, each carefully selected to impart useful truths. With this knowledge he is able to enter an introspective period of his life where careful reflection and applied wisdom can positively shape his destiny and the lives of others. Among the brethren, he is taught to spread brotherly love and uncontentious affection; with all mankind he is encouraged to industriously relieve the burdens of those less fortunate.

The relentless passage of time leaves no man immune from the elapse of this precious and finite resource. We all view the hourglass differently, each from the perspective of our cumulative experiences. The choice is both personal and revealing. As the sands steadily flow, some fear the loss as time wasted and resign in its wake, while others see opportunity and the possibility of new beginnings based on new perspectives.

Permeating this degree is the concept of renewal and rebirth; a powerful message that should not be overlooked or discounted. We are symbolically given a new chance to shape our remaining time. What we do with this opportunity will be a true measure of our

The Word

West

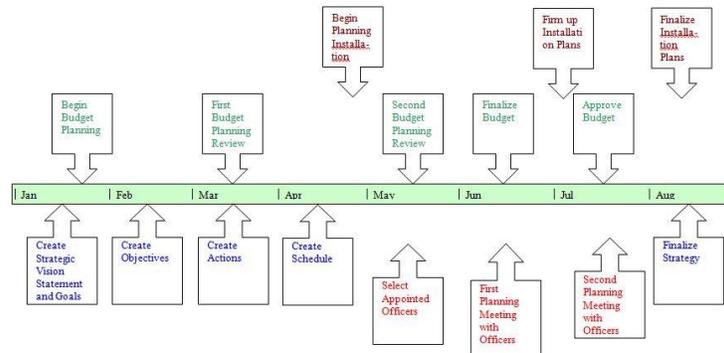
In Freemasonry, we learn the West is both the Senior **Warden's** station and the pillar of strength, but it is also where the sun sets in opposition to the East. Where the East is a source of light, the West represents symbolic darkness and ignorance. Where the East represents the world of spirit and the origination of the soul, the West represents the material world into which the soul has wandered. It is in the West where we, as Masons, have symbolically lost something of human value. As a result, we travel from the West toward the East in search for that which was lost, the essence of our being.

The Encyclopedia of Freemasonry implies that the West is not a destination but rather a point of departure, for *"in primeval times all human wisdom was confined to the eastern part of the world and that those who wandered toward the West were obliged to return to the East in search of the knowledge of their*

commitment to the tenets of this degree.

Richard Ryder
April, 2016

Master's "Pre-Term" Timeline



The Master's Trestle Board

"Selecting, Engaging, and Utilizing Line Officers"

(Richard H. Ryder, 2017)

A Master's team of officers, elected and appointed, has a direct impact on the current and future state of the Lodge. Dedicated and competent officers are a tremendous asset and help ensure the health of the Lodge well beyond your term of office. Selecting the right appointed officers obviously helps you during your year, but also is an investment in the future. Engaging and utilizing officers in a way that effectively leverages their skills and interests is challenging for a new Master, but done thoughtfully and with feedback from trusted and respected members it is certainly not insurmountable.

As you plan for your term as Master, consider the following suggestions:

ancestors". The Lexicon of Freemasonry mentions that "he who sought light was obliged to leave it [the West] and travel to the East. Thus, in Masonry, it is no wonder that we travel from West to East in search of light.

However, according to Wikipedia the West has and still does possess great meaning for many of the world's population.

- In Chinese Buddhism, the West represents movement toward the Buddha or enlightenment.
- The Aztecs believed the West was the realm of the great goddess of water, mist, and maze.
- In Ancient Egypt, the West was the portal to the netherworld, or underworld.
- The Celts believed that beyond the western sea off the edges of all maps lay the Outerworld, or Afterlife.
- In Judaism, west is toward the presence

- Communicate frequently and regularly with your Wardens, even starting well before your term. Share your plans and seek their feedback. Have honest discussions about how they can support you in meeting your goals and how you can support them in meeting theirs. **Part of a Warden's** responsibility is to be an extension of you, serving as implementers of your goals and objectives. Discuss their skills and interests well in advance of your term and then plan your goals and objectives around team strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, fully understand their personal goals and objectives, and discuss how you can assist in attaining them. Promoting team work and responsibilities within the three senior officers will help ensure success.
- When working with your Treasurer and Secretary, follow the same guidelines as those stated above for your wardens. The Treasures and Secretary round out your senior team and typically they are Past Masters with plenty of experience to leverage. They are knowledgeable about working with Grand Lodge, able to assist in balancing lodge activities with lodge finances, and can provide insight into upcoming challenges. **Don't underestimate the value** of a strong and productive relationship with these important and vital members of your team.
- Seek out a well-respected, knowledgeable, and trustworthy Past Master to serve as your mentor, beginning during or before your term as Senior Warden. Make him an unofficial appointed member of your team. Just knowing that you have an experienced support person can build your confidence.
- Junior Officers are appointed and thus present challenges and opportunities. Your challenge is to appoint the right person to the right job at the right time. The person you appoint could be a future Master, however, not every person can or should become a line officer. There may be other ways for a member to contribute that better suits their situation and interests.

of God. The Tabernacle and the Jerusalem Temple faced east with God's Presence in the Holy of Holies up the steps to the west. Also, the Bible tells us the Israelites crossed the Jordan River westward into the Promised Land.

- Finally, in American Literature moving West has sometimes symbolized gaining freedom.

Thus, the West, through the ages, has had different symbolic meanings, some uplifting and some filled with uncertainty and death. However, for us as Masons it has consistently represented a vantage point of strength. From the West, we face the East where the illumination of light is clearly visible and serves as a beacon toward which we travel in search of truth and understanding.

- Refrain from just filling a seat with a warm body. During your year as Senior Warden, earlier if possible, get to know your entire membership. Develop a short list of candidates who have a combination of ability, interest, dedication, and potential to aspire to higher office. Sometimes this is not possible, maybe because of decreasing membership or other factors, but always strive to look to the future in every appointment.
- The steward stations and below can be testing grounds for those men who would like to test the waters to determine if becoming a line officers makes sense for them and the Lodge. A Junior Deacon should have his sights on higher office, since he and the lodge have invested time and energy in his advancement. A man who seeks the Senior Deacon station should have already decided to seek the oriental chair.
- In addition to floor work and ritual, junior officers also have responsibilities to you and the lodge. There are many tasks to perform, not only in Lodge, but without. There are lodge and district events, behind the scenes work, blood drives, new candidates, open houses, dinners, charitable events, etc. There is plenty of work and plenty of opportunity for junior officers to be engaged and to feel part of the team. These are opportunities to demonstrate leadership, commitment, and the potential to be a senior officer or even Master. Work with your senior line officers to determine the best way to tap the potential and energy of these future leaders.

So, what do you look for in a junior officer? Here are some tips.

Junior Steward and below:

- Desire to serve as an officer and positively represent the lodge at all times
- Commitment to attend rehearsals and meetings

Senior Steward and Junior Deacon



What did he say?

“What can be said today, regarding all the dark and tangled problems we face, than let there be light.”

President John F. Kennedy, University of Washington, on its 100th anniversary, November 16, 1961.

(If alive, John Fitzgerald Kennedy would have celebrated his 100th birthday this month, on May 29th)



Attract and Retain
September – The Ideal Membership Growing Season

- Same as Junior Steward
- Ability to memorize and present ritual, perform floor work, and a commitment to do them as well as possible.
- Become more active in lodge activities
- Serve as mentors to lower line officers

Senior Deacon

- Same as Senior Steward and Junior Deacon, but at a higher level
- Ritual and floor work should be done at a high level of proficiency
- A strong desire to proceed through the warden stations to Master
- Higher presence and involvement in lodge activities

Richard Ryder
April, 2017

When is the best time to grow grass in New England? If you answered September, you are correct. With its warm daytime weather, cool nights, and no germinating crab grass, it is ideal for growing new, lush lawns. **It's also an** ideal time at the beginning of a new Masonic year to grow your lodge membership. If you have not already done so, now is the time to prepare the soil for membership growth in the fall.

Many lodges go 'dark' during July and August, providing a much-needed summer vacation from Masonic duties. Though it is a good time to slow down and refresh oneself, it is also an opportune time to plan recruitment for your next class of degree candidates. With normal Masonic responsibilities in hibernation we have a bit more time to concentrate on what is most important to the future of Freemasonry – membership growth. We are a membership driven organization and as such we must constantly take steps to grow the Craft. Why not **leverage summer's downtime** and make plans for the fall?

Masters and Ambassadors should actively think about how to leverage this time for lodge growth. However, it is the responsibility of all members to do their part. As individuals, we can all think of men in our lives who would benefit from Freemasonry. As lodge officers, it is imperative that you actively set the example for others in adding new candidates. The ways in which we do so are varied; some traditional, some more creative. Recently, I attended a Meet and Greet at a local restaurant that not only served as an evening of Masonic fellowship, but it also was a chance to introduce eight guests to the fraternal nature of Freemasonry. A simple concept, but a very creative idea to attract and retain members.

So, what can you do now to get ready for September? Click [HERE](#) to continue reading.

Richard H. Ryder
May, 2017





Coming Attractions

Stay tuned for the June edition when The Master's Trestle Board series discusses the art of leading by example. As Master it is important to set high standards in every aspect of your responsibilities. This article will explain how.



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