

To the Grand Lodge:

The Membership Development Committee reports as follows:

We all know that membership is the key to growth for the Craft. Three years ago, the Membership Development Committee was shown a chart that predicted a straight decline in membership each year and decided to do something about it. On the contrary, we believed that we could act to increase public awareness of Masonry and facilitate improvements in the Masonic offerings of our Lodges, and that by so doing our jurisdiction once again could experience positive growth. Since that time the Membership Development Committee has made significant progress towards the initial goals set by the committee and continue these efforts in an ongoing process of improvement.

Brothers around the state worked together to develop a Grand Lodge Masonic outreach strategy that resulted in monthly inquiries from gentlemen with a potential interest in the Craft that ranged from 80 to over 380 inquires each month. While our campaigns conducted through Facebook and Masonic networking groups have resulted in increased awareness of Masonry and the Grand Lodge of New York among the public, much of the good results that were obtained were due to the dedicated efforts of Lodges and Masons working on the ground.

Last year over nine hundred Masons from every corner of New York State participated in NorthStar training, seminars, and online workgroups. The attendees learned from each other and shared their Lodges' best practices for community outreach and how to deliver a compelling Masonic experience to their members. Every District and Lodge of our jurisdiction has unique characteristics, strengths, advantages and priorities, and every District and Lodge of our jurisdiction faces different disadvantages, weaknesses and needs. Although the pandemic continues to present many difficulties, our Lodges still need to plan for the future and work to develop and deliver distinctive Masonic offerings in our Lodges that will attract gentlemen interested in the Craft, advance candidates, and retain members.

I am pleased to report that in 2019, for the first time in years, our Lodges Raised more Brothers than they did in the preceding year – seven hundred seventeen Master Masons in 2019, compared to seven hundred twelve in 2018. Perhaps even more compelling, our Lodges Initiated nine hundred seven Masons in 2019 compared to seven hundred eighty-one in 2018. What happened? What changed to start this positive growth trend?

YOU did it, my Brethren – your hard work, learning from each other during NorthStar training sessions, conducting targeted promotional campaigns on social media, attending membership workshops, and working to make your Lodges more visible in your local communities. Over the past three years, these Brothers have worked together as a team, and the positive leadership they brought to their Lodges has inspired new members to join our ranks. Hundreds of activities over the years are finally producing positive results and an increase in gentlemen with a potential interest in being made Masons. Even during the COVID pandemic there were twice as many inquiries compared to prior years.

New Membership Taskforce

The Membership Development Committee created a New Membership Task Force to increase the number of gentlemen potentially interested in joining the Fraternity by growing

awareness of Freemasonry in the State of New York, promoting a positive image of the Craft that is attractive to key targeted demographics, and connecting those who are inspired by the Masonic way of life with Lodges that will provide them a lifelong experience resulting in personal growth and a positive impact on their families and communities.

In directing its efforts to increase membership, the New Membership Task Force developed the following long-term strategic goals and tasks.

Goals:

- Leverage social media and other targeted outreach techniques and platforms to increase awareness of Freemasonry in New York;
- Increase online inquiries into Freemasonry from 80 to 200 per month;
- Target key demographics for each geography, deliver the message, set expectations and send referrals to Lodges with a track record of Raising 15% or more of gentlemen referred to them as Master Masons;
- Provide training, success models and techniques for meeting, evaluating, and allocating referrals within Districts;
- Provide training and success models at the Lodge level to assist in developing and sustaining distinctive and compelling membership offerings that retain members as active participants in the life and work of each Lodge.

Tasks:

- Collect outreach data from other Grand Lodges regarding membership statistics, success models, etc.;
- Research and develop target demographics for outreach. These will be different for different age groups, income levels, occupations, city/suburb/exurb/rural areas, growing/declining local populations, hobbies and interests, memberships in other organizations, subscriptions, etc.;
- Develop messaging and messaging platforms to encourage increased interest from each targeted demographic;
- Utilize targeted advertising and “boost posts” on the various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram;
- Spin-off new social media accounts designated to promote new membership interest from those social media accounts that are primarily targeted to existing members. These accounts should actively generate new content regularly, tie into existing promotional assets, etc.

The New Membership Task Force has implemented a Grand Lodge Masonic awareness campaign that has exceeded all expectations. In a world where social media and other technologies have resulted in young men who have “large friend lists but few real friendships,” the in-person social intercourse provided by the interconnected network of like-minded men embodied by a Lodge is more critical than ever. It is not coincidental that the most successful public awareness campaign the Task Force ran on Facebook had the tag line, “Building real friendships, not friend lists.”

Our Grand Lodge made a financial investment of \$17,500 to be used in public awareness campaigns targeting potential Masons. Over 935,000 gentlemen who had no prior Masonic affiliation viewed our ads, 18,547 clicked through to the discovermasonry.com website, over 425 asked for information about joining the Fraternity, and 63 have been Raised as Master Masons over the course of a year. This is vital information to develop a strategy for the future. For every \$40 we spend, a gentleman asks to join; and for every \$250 we invest in social media, we make a Master Mason within a year. It may sound like making sixty-three new Master Masons in 2019 as a result of public awareness campaigns is a small number. Still, the increased inquiries that came out of the campaigns resulted in more men being Raised as Master Masons than in the preceding year instead than the anticipated decline.

Below is a chart that sets forth detailed information for all the campaigns.

Campaign	# Men Who Viewed	# Who Visited Website	# of Days	Total Cost	Cost Per Click-Through
Public Awareness in Albany	28,396	682	30	\$599.98	\$0.88
Public Awareness in Albany	19,580	242	28	\$218.93	\$0.90
Public Awareness in Albany	13,188	200	20	\$199.96	\$1.00
Public Awareness in Albany	14,028	183	18	\$269.99	\$1.48
Public Awareness in Angelica	6,964	123	6	\$119.99	\$0.98
Public Awareness in Babylon	42,562	1,058	30	\$597.74	\$0.56
Public Awareness in Berlin	14,116	174	28	\$150.95	\$0.87
Public Awareness in Binghamton	18,416	336	25	\$499.99	\$1.49
Public Awareness in Binghamton	11,840	206	28	\$218.84	\$1.06
Public Awareness in Binghamton	9,358	155	20	\$199.99	\$1.29
Public Awareness in Buffalo	16,852	290	28	\$218.89	\$0.75
Public Awareness in Cortland	24,626	483	30	\$449.99	\$0.93
Public Awareness in East Erie	14,035	220	7	\$160.99	\$0.73
Public Awareness in East Erie	8,290	87	7	\$102.08	\$1.17
Public Awareness in Elmira	15,672	399	25	\$499.99	\$1.25
Public Awareness in Kingston	12,220	148	18	\$269.99	\$1.82
Public Awareness in Kingston	3,599	56	5	\$50.00	\$0.89
Public Awareness in Marathon	25,184	736	25	\$999.99	\$1.36
Public Awareness in Mid Erie	10,470	199	7	\$160.99	\$0.81
Public Awareness in Mid Erie	6,924	70	7	\$101.61	\$1.45

Campaign	# Men Who Viewed	# Who Visited Website	# of Days	Total Cost	Cost Per Click-Through
Public Awareness in Morrisville	3,681	75	5	\$49.99	\$0.67
Public Awareness in New Paltz	12,360	127	18	\$269.99	\$2.13
Public Awareness in New Paltz	3,511	61	5	\$50.00	\$0.82
Public Awareness in NYC	75,572	1,716	177	\$1,259.53	\$0.73
Public Awareness in NYC	47,883	1,021	30	\$599.99	\$0.59
Public Awareness in NYC	31,856	841	20	\$399.91	\$0.48
Public Awareness in NYC	49,840	786	28	\$437.75	\$0.56
Public Awareness in Oneonta	11,508	297	25	\$499.38	\$1.68
Public Awareness in Poughkeepsie	3,180	68	5	\$50.00	\$0.74
Public Awareness in Rhinebeck	11,592	150	18	\$269.99	\$1.80
Public Awareness in Rhinebeck	3,641	49	5	\$50.00	\$1.02
Public Awareness in Rochester	27,999	847	30	\$599.99	\$0.71
Public Awareness in Rochester	12,904	310	20	\$199.99	\$0.65
Public Awareness in Rochester	17,336	268	28	\$218.69	\$0.82
Public Awareness in Saugerties	3,388	68	5	\$50.00	\$0.74
Public Awareness in Schenectady	14,156	211	18	\$269.99	\$1.28
Public Awareness in Schenectady	11,420	276	25	\$499.67	\$1.81
Public Awareness in Syracuse	28,133	681	30	\$599.99	\$0.88
Public Awareness in Syracuse	22,472	439	28	\$437.21	\$1.00
Public Awareness in Syracuse	18,836	412	20	\$399.95	\$0.97
Public Awareness in Utica	17,888	370	28	\$437.23	\$1.18
Public Awareness in Utica	14,796	368	20	\$399.99	\$1.09
Public Awareness in West Erie	10,352	183	7	\$160.99	\$0.88
Public Awareness in West Erie	6,546	75	7	\$101.05	\$1.35
Campaign Testing	13,300	448	18	\$269.99	\$0.60
Campaign Testing	11,116	193	18	\$269.99	\$1.40
Campaign Testing	10,400	189	18	\$269.99	\$1.43
Campaign Testing	7,630	185	14	\$139.99	\$0.76
Campaign Testing	7,243	160	14	\$139.99	\$0.87
Campaign Testing	11,864	159	18	\$269.99	\$1.70
Campaign Testing	9,888	153	18	\$269.99	\$1.76
Campaign Testing	6,363	116	14	\$104.99	\$0.91
Campaign Testing	6,757	115	14	\$139.99	\$1.22
Campaign Testing	6,364	107	14	\$139.99	\$1.31
Campaign Testing	7,058	101	14	\$139.99	\$1.39
Campaign Testing	4,720	101	14	\$104.99	\$1.04
Campaign Testing	6,644	100	14	\$139.99	\$1.40
Campaign Testing	6,914	91	14	\$139.99	\$1.54

Campaign	# Men Who Viewed	# Who Visited Website	# of Days	Total Cost	Cost Per Click-Through
Campaign Testing	3,770	55	7	\$52.49	\$0.95
Campaign Testing	3,932	54	7	\$52.49	\$0.97
Campaign Testing	3,548	53	7	\$52.49	\$0.99
Campaign Testing	3,207	45	7	\$52.49	\$1.17
Campaign Testing	2,488	43	7	\$34.99	\$0.81
Campaign Testing	3,279	41	7	\$52.49	\$1.28
Campaign Testing	3,084	39	7	\$52.49	\$1.35
Campaign Testing	3,479	38	7	\$34.99	\$0.92
Campaign Testing	1,688	32	7	\$21.09	\$0.66
Campaign Testing	1,712	32	7	\$21.09	\$0.66
Campaign Testing	2,550	29	7	\$34.99	\$1.21
Campaign Testing	1,694	19	7	\$21.09	\$1.11
Campaign Testing	792	18	2	\$12.00	\$0.67
Campaign Testing	771	17	2	\$12.00	\$0.71
Campaign Testing	1,089	15	2	\$12.00	\$0.80
Campaign Testing	1,027	13	2	\$12.00	\$0.92
Campaign Testing	677	12	2	\$12.00	\$1.00
Campaign Testing	1,041	8	2	\$12.00	\$1.50
Campaign Testing	696	8	2	\$8.00	\$1.50
Campaign Testing	766	6	2	\$12.00	\$2.00
Campaign Testing	741	5	2	\$12.00	\$2.40
<u>Totals:</u>	<u>935,462</u>	<u>18,546</u>	<u>1,312</u>	<u>\$17,529.19</u>	<u>\$.95</u>

One important learning for the New Member Taskforce has been that social media campaigns have different results around the State. The Taskforce observed that, while rural areas did have increased inquires as a result of the campaigns, the effect was not as large as in urban and suburban areas. This is clearly an area in which additional work, education and experimentation will be beneficial in developing strategies that provide the greatest benefit to rural areas.

On the other side of the coin, the results have been so impressive in some areas that individual Lodges are now developing their own promotional materials and have committed funds for the New Membership Taskforce to deploy these customized campaigns on their behalf. The Membership Development Committee, New Membership Taskforce and our Grand Lodge are committed to continually developing tools, techniques, models and strategies to help the Brethren build their Lodge memberships, retain Masons, and restore the Craft to its rightful place as an important institution in our communities.

Below are charts setting forth online inquiries and referrals.

Inquiries and Referrals 2016-2020

Inquiries and Referrals 2016-2020

Total Inquires	6,018
Ineligible Inquiries (<i>out of state, women, etc.</i>)	(1,440)
Total Referrals Entered into NorthStar Portal	4,578
Referrals Deactivated by Lodges	(1,151)
Referrals on Hold by Lodges	(194)
Total Active Entries in NorthStar System	3,233
• 2020 Active NorthStar Entries	1,831
• 2019 Active NorthStar Entries	737
• 2018 Active NorthStar entries	442
• 2017 Active NorthStar Entries	148
• 2016 Active NorthStar Entries	75

Referrals by District	2019	2020
Allegany	1	2
Bronx	71	126
Cattaraugus	5	7
Cayuga-Thompkins	15	16
Chautauqua	7	7
Chemung-Tioga-Schuyler	4	23
Clinton-Essex	2	15
Cortland-Madison	1	9
Mid-Hudson	24	44
Erie	36	76
Franklin-Hamilton	2	5
Fulton-Montgomery	3	5
Letchworth	3	13
Herkimer	0	7
Jefferson-Lewis	14	26
First Kings	76	3
Second Kings	33	45
Third Kings	52	178
First Manhattan	91	67
Second Manhattan	26	43
Fourth Manhattan	70	27
Fifth Manhattan	20	52
Seventh Manhattan	25	116
Eighth Manhattan	16	29
Ninth Manhattan	33	26
Tenth Manhattan	7	29
Monroe	26	56
Nassau	37	99
Niagara-Orleans	11	28

Referrals by District	2019	2020
Old Seventeenth	49	68
Oneida	7	26
Onondaga	24	56
Ontario-Seneca-Yates	2	5
Orange-Rockland-Sullivan	39	78
Oswego	6	11
Central Leatherstocking	9	16
Queens	91	159
Richmond	25	40
St. Lawrence	19	6
Saratoga-Warren-Washington	18	40
Southern Tier	7	35
Steuben	5	4
Suffolk	24	87
Wayne	2	6
First Westchester-Putnam	14	9
Second Westchester-Putnam	19	20
<u>Total:</u>	<u>1,071</u>	<u>1,845</u>

NorthStar Training

The techniques and philosophies embodied in the NorthStar program have demonstrated effectiveness, and the NorthStar training courses have helped many Lodges select and benchmark proven engagement techniques and implement Masonic education as a working tool to make every new Brother a lifetime active Brother in the quarries of Freemasonry. Every Master Mason and Success Coach is a mentor and has benefited from NorthStar training.

The updated NorthStar course covers:

- Increasing awareness of Freemasonry in local communities through social media;
- The seven-step candidate selection process;
- Using the NorthStar portal to engage, track and manage Lodge inquiries;
- New membership engagement and building Lodge membership;
- Success coaching for new Brothers.

While 2020 was a challenging year, it was the first time the Northstar training was done virtually using Zoom videoconferencing, and it was a great success. Over nine hundred Brothers participated in more than forty-five training sessions in 2020, most of which were combined with a workshop on building new membership. These sessions were tailored to the unique needs and demographics of the local areas for which they were conducted.

Our NorthStar Success Coaches play a critical role in our Fraternity's future by assisting their Lodges in implementing NorthStar principles in whatever manner suits that Lodge's unique

circumstances. The first steps in these efforts are to have prospective candidates meet the Lodge members in a way that will help form the bonds of friendship and increase retention.

That said, we still have much work to do. There are still more than one hundred twenty Lodges without NorthStar Success Coaches. These Lodges are not only ineligible to receive referrals from inquiries on the Grand Lodge's websites, but are depriving themselves of the tools and training that will assist them in engaging with prospective new members and developing Lodge programming and member retention strategies. I encourage every Lodge's leadership to participate in the new online NorthStar training and to benchmark strategies with other Brothers throughout the State.

Masonic Community Outreach

Every Mason performs public relations whether he realizes it or not. If he wears a Masonic shirt, hat, ring or lapel pin, if he has a Masonic emblem on his car or if his social media profile identifies him as a Mason, he is a "PR man for Masonry." Simply put, public relations are the relationship an organization has with the general public. If you have new members excited to engage with the Masonic experience, empower them to assist your Lodge by getting active in the community.

Lodges have increased local awareness by recognizing community members who have contributed to quality of life in the area with a Dewitt Clinton Award. A great example of this comes from the Orange-Rockland-Sullivan District, which identified a local couple for their longstanding mentorship of young people in their karate dojo. Over one hundred twenty people attended the awards dinner, and several gentlemen who participated in the event later petitioned the hosting Lodge. Other events such as presenting a Daniel Carter Beard Masonic Scouter Award can provide similar benefits in the community.

Lodges that have partnered with other local groups have also increased recognition and opened new avenues for membership by, for example, hosting a spaghetti dinner together with a local Lions Club, Rotary Club or Kiwanis organization. Gentlemen who belong to these and other membership and service organizations are frequently suitable matches for our Fraternity. One Lodge had a basketball tournament and invited Amateur Athletic Union players. Parents and players saw our Masonic brochures and banners and that led to questions and increased engagement.

Working with the social orders can also help with community outreach. For example, the Shrine Club in Cortland delivered Toys for Tots and the Shrine is highly respected in many communities. One Lodge has partnered with the local Shrine and the Special Olympics, and another has done a "torch run" with law enforcement that has grown into a community event.

It's also important to tailor a Lodge or District public awareness effort to the unique characteristics of the local community. What works in a densely-populated city may not have a similarly beneficial effect in an exurban community. In a recent online NorthStar session, a group of more than ninety-five Masons from rural areas in New York discussed ways to increase Masonic awareness in their communities and this dialogue generated several effective ideas that have been put into practice, such as marching in Independence Day and Veterans Day parades,

sponsoring local adult and youth sporting leagues, weekend open houses, tours of Lodge buildings, monthly breakfasts and more.

Lodges located in or near college towns have also seen an increase in inquiries into the Craft. Our Fraternity is an excellent option for collegiate men seeking multigenerational fraternal bonds without all the hazing and partying associated with “Greek letter” college fraternities. This can be a great way to get men involved with Masonry at a young age. The challenge is to keep them as members after they graduate and potentially relocate, which can be helped by providing a dues structure that makes it easy to retain members after they move out of the area.

Next Steps: Retention through Quality Programming

A critical next step before us now is to begin to address shortcomings in Lodge offerings that have resulted in membership losses after new Brothers are brought into the Fraternity. In doing this, the committee will work to develop tools and assets, assist with programming ideas and exemplify a variety of distinctive and adaptable success models that can be put into practice by our Lodges so that their members keep coming back for more. It is essential to instill a burning passion for Masonic learning within each new Brother, inciting him to acquire more and more Light in Masonry. The Candidates who petition our Lodges are not only interested in knowing their Masonic heritage but entitled to receive it. This legacy includes understanding the Craft’s history, purpose, operation, symbolism, law, philosophy, obligations and ideals.

Rebuilding the tradition of offering quality Masonic programming as the central feature of every Lodge meeting will be a tremendous challenge that will benefit new and old members alike, and all our Lodges and Brethren will be called upon to assist with this great and important undertaking. Our goal is to practice Masonry in our Lodges and make Masons for life.

We have used videoconferencing to engage members during the pandemic that we have not seen for years, and to reach out to interested gentlemen and answer their questions about the Craft. Indeed, we have used technology to our advantage in any number of ways. But it’s important to remember that websites, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds are not a silver bullet that will fix our retention issues. Quality and Masonic focus in programming remains the single most important factor when it comes to membership retention.

The common thread throughout all of this is that Lodges across the state that promote local awareness, implement aspects of the NorthStar philosophies, and offer a quality in-person member experience focused on Masonry are increasing in membership.

My Brethren, we have a bright future and with your assistance and participation we will continue to grow the Craft in New York State. Feel free to contact me with any questions you have, and let me know if you would like me to schedule special training for your Lodge or District.

As I have said on numerous occasions while traveling the state, “We have the opportunity to enter a golden age of Masonry, as many young men are seeking what Masonry has to offer: work/life balance, mentoring, intellectual and spiritual development, and the opportunity to lead. Our NorthStar training explains all the tools we have put together to help you create a compelling Masonic experience in your Lodges that will keep your current members engaged and retain all the new Brothers that will join the Craft over the coming decade.”

Respectfully submitted,

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