

Masonic Friend's Night

Brother Bring a Friend Night

A Program Worth Trying

By: W. Richard C. Friedman

Worshipful Brother Richard Friedman is a Past Master of Ancient Craft Lodge No.943, Rochester, NY and currently is Assistant Grand Lecturer of the First Monroe District (New York). He brings to us a program of how to present the Lodge and its purposes to the public! And the program works! If you consider presenting such a program please check with the Grand Secretary of your Grand Lodge for approval — Editor

Background

Brother Bring a Friend Night was a vehicle which was employed by Ancient Craft Lodge No.943, Rochester, NY, in its desperate days when the Lodge faced the real choice of survival or death. The program is now utilized annually because it is fun and provides a constant potential source of new candidates.

The purpose of the evening is to expose qualified men to our gentle Craft. On that night, if the program runs well, these men will be exposed to Masonic History, a Mason's Commitment to his Community through Masonic Charity and Community Service, Masonic Literature, The Degree System and Masonic Costumes, the uplifting symbolism of the Working Tools and last but perhaps most important: Masonic Fellowship and Fun.

What follows is a *suggested plan* of action for your Lodge should you want to pursue the program. Please feel free to *be creative and innovative so as to improve on the plan!*

Steps to Arranging Brother Bring a Friend Night

Brother Bring a Friend Night consists of a dinner and a series of 3 five-minute presentations presented to your guests. The following is a guideline for organization:

1. An Action Team is appointed with three or four Brothers responsible for the following: A. Invitations, B. Reservations and Phone Committee, C. Dinner, D. Arranging for Speakers and Audio Visuals, E. Display Tables, F. Supplies, e.g.: Petitions, Q&Ns, Concordant Body Brochures and the like, G. Program Agendas.
2. The brothers must commit to bringing guests and should submit names and addresses to the committee so that guests may be invited in plenty of time and you will have a somewhat accurate count.
3. Let's break down each action team:
 - A. *Invitations*: Can be plain or fancy, but should contain an explanation of the event and relevant information such as dress, times etc.
 - B. *Phone Committee*: should reach out to members and get a count of those who will attend, also encourage participation.
 - C. *Dinner*: We have had good luck with a buffet prepared by the Brothers but other Lodges have had the meal catered or put on by Star Chapters, with excellent results.
 - D. *Speakers and Audio Visuals*: EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. Enlist Brothers who can speak well and impress the guests. As an alternative, several good films and slide shows are available such as "Brotherhood and Service," "The Quiet Fraternity" and "Symbol of Pride" should the Lodge desire. We have done it both ways with equal success.
 - E. *The Display Table* consists of several sections to be described later. The tables are set up in the Lodge.

F. *Supplies*: We found that the Q&A (Masonic Information Brochure), and the concordant body brochures were most informative and our supply was almost depleted. Petitions should be at the end of each table and offered to viewers. All guests should leave with one!

G. *Agendas*: Having a typed agenda can be snappy and classy. It also provides for a tight structure.

The Program

The suggested program could go as follows:

- Receive guests and dinner (Dining Room) 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Program (In Lodge Room) consisting of the following:
 - Welcome by the Master of Ceremonies 2-3 min.
 - Speaker 1: Masonic History and some Famous Figures 5 min.
 - Speaker 2: Community Service: In your Lodge Masonry as a Whole 5 min.
 - Speaker 3: What Masonry offers you and why should you join this Lodge? How to join, degree system, how to fill out petitions. 5 min.
 - Last Word by Master/MC who then leads the procession to Display Tables. INVITE QUESTIONS! The viewing of tables with Brothers behind them to invite and answer questions gets the candidates talking Masonry Have a brother give a Q&A along with a petition to each man. 9 Back to Dining Room for Dessert and FELLOWSHIP!

Suggested Outline for Speakers

Speaker 1: Masonic History and Famous Figures: This speaker touches on Origins, Influence on America, What we stand for: e.g., Friendship, Morality, Brotherly Love. Note some famous figures from Q&A.

Speaker 2: Community Service: This speaker highlights 1 million a Day for Charity, Charities of your Grand Lodge, Shrine Hospitals and other Concordant Body efforts, Local Masonic endeavors with a focus on your Lodges participation.

Speaker 3: What Masonry offers and why should you join this Lodge? This speaker focuses on: Fellowship, Friendships all over the country and the world, Service to humanity, the chance for self improvement, Petitioning and the degree process, and Time commitment.

Display Tables

The Display Table is one of the most important parts of the evening. We have found that guests, escorted by the Brothers who invited them, are much more apt to ask questions and seek answers. We usually set up the Display in an L shape. Each exhibit should have a written explanation attached to it. Here are the exhibits we recommend using.

- *The Degree System in Freemasonry and its Costumes*. This exhibit should include a full candidates costume including slipper, hoodwink and cabletow.
- *The Entered Apprentice Apron*. We usually have a Past Master's and Purple Apron on display as well, with a corresponding write up. This usually spurs questions about the differences.
- *Masonic Literature*. This display should have a wide range of old and new Masonic Books of all kinds, the Local Masonic News, Grand Lodge Publications, Philalethes, Royal Arch, Scottish Rite, and anything else you may think of. This display is meant to show the guest the richness of our heritage and the extent of our doings.

- *Your Lodge's Working Tools and Volume of Sacred Law.* A short explanation of the working tools should be highlighted. The Volume of Sacred Law is self-explanatory, however, someone should be prepared to answer questions about its importance to Masonry. Note: Picture books of the Lodge in action, news clippings and most importantly the Q&As and petitions should be available.

Each station is manned by a Brother and there should be plenty of interchange as the guests go through the exhibits.

Fellowship

The fellowship following the formal part of the evening is our opportunity to reveal in our own lives the lessons of friendship which we espouse. Make sure the guests are attended to and are not left standing alone. Many people do not join organizations because they fear the initial period of getting to know everyone or are tense in strange social situations. Your brotherhood and sincerity can turn the internal key for a man to really want to be a part of your lodge and allows him to feel that it is really possible to do so!

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W. Richard S. "Bud" Cook III
Historian / Librarian

June 27, 2006 Revision

Letter to a potential participant in a Lodge Friend's Night.

**See special option if wives are invited.
Dinner included in this plan.**

(Lodge Letterhead)

(Month, date and year)

(Invitee's first name, middle initial and last name)

(Street address)

(City/town, state and zip)

Dear *(first name)*:

On behalf of the more than ____ members of *(Lodge name and number)* located in *(town/city and state)* I would like to invite you to a Friend's Night at our Masonic Lodge. A Friend's Night is a very informal meeting between Masons in the community and their friends. Your name was suggested by one of our members *(optional: first and last name of member)* who thought you might want to meet with other men in the community and learn a little bit more about Freemasonry.

A Friend's Night is simply that. No recruiting, no serious business, just a good meal for you *(and your wife - if invited)* and our members. It is also a chance to meet some interesting men in a fraternal and social setting. We will have a few brief remarks and a brief presentation about Freemasonry but the majority of the evening will be with good friends and neighbors. The meeting festivities will begin at ____ p.m. and should be concluded by ____ p.m. Confirm preferred attire; casual, ties required, etc.

Our Masonic Lodge has been in continuous operations since *(date)* and has been in its current building since *(date)*. Altogether, there are *(number)* Masons in the Lodge with more than *(percentage)* still residing in this area. Some of our members, although retired and living out of state, still retain their membership and their support for their Lodge.

We would very much appreciate you attending this Friend's Night and would be most grateful if you would call the Lodge and tell the Secretary that you *(and your wife)* will be attending.

We've asked *(member's name)* to call you and answer any questions you may have about the evening and you can also inform him of your acceptance when he calls.

(Optional) For your additional information, we have included information about Freemasonry so you can be a bit more informed when you attend. Remember, no one will ask you to become a member. No one will ask you for any money whatsoever, and no one will pressure you about joining or about attending any future meetings. The decision to take any further steps towards becoming a member is by our law, most definitely up to you.

We hope to see you at our Friend's Night. If I can answer any questions before or after you decide to attend, I will be happy to do so. Just call me at the number on this letterhead and I will be happy to speak with you.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

(Signature)

(First name, middle initial and last name)

(Title)

Letter to an individual who attended the Lodge's Friend's Night.

See special option if wives were invited and attended.

(Lodge Letterhead)

(Month, date and year)

(Invitee's first name, middle initial and last name)

(Street address)

(City/town, state and zip)

Dear *(first name)*:

I would like to thank you *(and wife's first or full name, or Mrs. and last name)* for attending our Lodge's Friends Night. We hope you enjoyed the evening and found our members and other guests interesting.

Lodge's like ours host Friend's Night to help men in the community learn more about Freemasonry from men who are friends and members living in the community. At a minimum, by having a successful evening, our members meet and make a number of new friends and the Lodge becomes better known in the community. A number of men do take this opportunity to ask about joining and we are, of course, always happy when they do so.

Because a man has to ask about joining before we can offer a petition, we feel a Friend's Night is a perfect opportunity to provide additional information with no pressure on our guests. Again, I would like to thank you for attending and for your interest in Freemasonry. If I can be of any additional assistance to you, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

(Signature)

(First name, middle initial and last name)

(Title)