



New York Council Of Deliberation Table Settings



WINTER 2011



THE DINNER BELL

Welcome to the winter edition of Table Settings. This issue will focus on those areas that seem to need a little more help during the cold winter months. As a reminder of Table Settings four goals are to:

- 1) Reach out to our membership and ensure we are taking care of them. "THE FIRST MISSION OF OUR MEMBERSHIP is to ensure that we RETAIN those members that we already have..."
- 2) Develop ICE initiatives.
- 3) Develop new membership. And;
- 4) Collect and exchange ideas on how to do all of the above.

By the time you receive this December will be half over. We are looking back at the last year with mixed emotions and in some cases regrets that we did not accomplish all we set out to do in 2011. The good news is that a new year will soon be here and we can start anew. Before we say goodbye to this year, there are still some things we need to do.



Sometime during the last quarter century or so, it became the fashion for organizations to develop mission statements or visions. Good mission statements or visions will accomplish three goals: 1) focus on what is really important to that organization; 2) be easy for its members to remember and 3) resonate with those who are not members.

Our Supreme Council recently announced their new Vision Statement:

"We will strive to be a fraternity that fulfills our Masonic obligation to care for our members"

How does this new vision statement stack up against those goals?

- 1) Does it focus on what is really important to the organization? ***Our focus could not be clearer.***
- 2) Is it easy for our members to remember? ***It certainly should be. Caring for each other should be a part of each and every one of us.***
- 3) Does it resonate with non-members of the organization? ***It will for those men who we would welcome as new friends and Brothers.***

So does this mean we can all sit back and say – "Vision in place; My work is done?" No. This is the time when we need to get busy. It is not the organization that makes any mission statement or vision work; it is the members of that organization. We all took the same obligation -- to care for each other and each others widows and orphans. It is up to us to make this vision more than just words.

During this time of year and with our new vision in hand, what can we do during these cold winter months when many of us would rather stay in a warm home instead of traveling?

Inviting our Brothers Back to the Table

Many of our members don't like to drive at night and may not come to meetings or events anymore so why not arrange to drive those Brothers to and from the meeting? Its possible there may be more than one Brother in the area and you could all travel together while enjoying good fellowship before, during and after the meeting.

For those Brothers who live too far to come to meetings contacting them by phone could brighten their day during this holiday season. Sure they receive the printed communication or e-mails during the year, but that is a poor substitute for a friendly voice on the other end of the phone. Let's also remember our surviving spouses. A holiday card or phone call to our special ladies will



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remind them they are still a part of our Masonic Family.

The months of November and December are busy ones for Lodge secretaries. They check the list of those who are in arrears. They send notices to those Brothers who are behind and many of them will be dropped for Non-payment of Dues from their Lodges and subsequently from all other concordant bodies they belong to. Some of those members may be behind in your Valley as well. Do we just send them a letter with a threat to drop them or do we have a conversation with them? Perhaps they have been unemployed. Maybe they have devastating medical bills that have depleted their bank accounts. Is there a reason why they haven't paid their dues? Are we adding to their stress and ignoring our obligation by simply dropping them from our rolls because they haven't paid? Instead we should talk with these Brothers and see what we can do to help. Dropping a Brother who is experiencing financial problems beyond their control will ensure they will not come back once they are financially stable.



Giving our Brothers a Reason to Join us at the Table

INSPIRATION – CONVENIENCE – EXCITEMENT

Some of these members may not like leaving their lady home at night. Have you created any ladies programs lately? Some of your ladies may have talents, abilities or experiences that others may find interesting.

A number of years ago there was a presentation at a Lodge in the Hudson Valley by a surviving spouse who had traveled to Washington D.C. for half a decade to help decorate the White House for Christmas. She was there during the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. She came in with photos



and stories of what goes into decorating the White House. Everyone enjoyed the evening and learned how much work it takes to make America's house look special for the Holiday Season.

There may be some hidden jewels in your own back yard.

How full is your Degree Passport? When was the last time **you** saw a Scottish Rite Degree or a Degree you hadn't seen before?



These are questions we should be asking all our Brothers – especially those we haven't seen in a while. If our Brothers are not involved with or seeing Degrees, they are missing out on one of the great experiences of a Scottish Rite Mason. Many of the Degrees are Inspiring and when properly presented will create Excitement in your Valley – but if attendance is low maybe they are not Convenient.

Wait a minute. Let's take a step back. Do all your members have Passports? Some senior members are still active in other aspects of Masonry, but may never have received a Scottish Rite passport. Having a passport in hand gives our Brothers a glimpse of what they have seen and what they have missed. Many of us don't like seeing holes or unstamped pages and will take the necessary steps to fill in those blanks. Make sure all your members have their passports.



It has been said that the Scottish Rite is the College of Freemasonry. Does that mean that only the Scottish Rite can be discussed by its members? College is an overall broadening of learning and experiences. We should learn about other aspects of Freemasonry as a means of comparison and to give us a better appreciation for what we have.

Keeping within a Scottish Rite theme there have been many special men and Masons who have been coroneted as a 33rd Mason. Who are some of these men and what made them so special?





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There is a world full of ideas for Inspiration and Excitement. What about Convenience? This idea fits nicely with attracting existing Brothers as well as enticing new Brothers to join.

Some Valleys take their Degrees on the road. They will travel to an area that is not a hotbed of activity for the Scottish Rite and confer the 4th Degree in a local Lodge.

This idea was behind the addition of 15 new Brothers in the old Valley of Westchester back in 2006. Westchester was struggling and searching for new blood. The Brothers traveled north to Dutchess County and thus began the revitalization of what is now the Valley of the Hudson.

The Degree was Convenient for those living in Dutchess County and lit a spark in an area that had been very quiet in Scottish Rite even before anyone knew about the coming ICE age. Of the 15 Brothers who joined on that March day all but two are still members.



Brothers are thirsting for what the Scottish Rite has to offer. Why not give them a little ICE.



Inviting New Brothers to join us at the Table

Taking Degrees on the road is not a new concept. Many Valleys travel to other states to confer Degrees in exchange programs with other Valleys. Sometimes we need to look a little closer to home to find that new core of dedicated Brothers who will help pick up the slack in our Valleys.

How do we find those quiet little Lodges with Brothers waiting to be Inspired and Excited? That is where our Ambassadors come in. Each Lodge in the geographical area of your influence should have an Ambassador. Each Ambassador should make a Scottish Rite announcement

at each meeting. Is there a Degree coming up? A social event? A fund raiser for the Children’s Learning Center? There must be something going on! At the very least the Ambassador should say something like:

“On behalf of the Valley of (fill in your Valley here) I would like to wish everyone in (ABC Lodge) a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season and a prosperous New Year.”

Do your Ambassadors carry petitions with them? Do they know your initiation fees? Do they know when Degrees are scheduled? Are they carrying the latest issue of your Valley’s communication? If that communication is sent automatically to each Lodge secretary are the secretaries announcing that they’ve received the communication or the upcoming events?



If we are sending Ambassadors out to speak in Lodges they should be equipped with the latest information about your Valley.

Many of our Lodges are bringing in new members at a tremendous pace. That is good news for Masonry in New York and potentially good news for our concordant bodies including the Scottish Rite.

The potential downside for new Brothers joining these growing Lodges is that it may be many years before they find an opening in the officer’s line. They are full of enthusiasm and ready to move -- NOW.

If we believe that concordant bodies do not “steal” members from our Symbolic Lodges, but enhance their Masonic experience and those members learn that without the foundation of our Lodges our concordant bodies will not survive then we shouldn’t be shy about asking young Brothers to join us. We shouldn’t push too hard. Brothers shouldn’t be pressured into joining, but look to join when ***they are ready.*** Many, members in the concordant bodies are among the most active in their Lodges. We can offer these young





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Brothers, leadership opportunities along with their membership in our Valleys.

What they learn by being a part of a Valley's leadership team will help make them become more effective leaders in their Symbolic Lodge. We must also stress – **Your Lodge Comes First!!** If you are part of a Degree Team and the Degree is scheduled on the same night as a Scottish Rite event let's prove that we "steal members" is a myth and cheerfully tell them to "Go to your Degree". Are there any Valleys out there that would turn down this type of help if offered?



Pass the Potatoes

Once again Brethren, there are success stories all around us if we only know where to look. Please share your ideas with us so we can pass them on to other Valleys. There are things we can do to sustain the Scottish Rite, help it grow and prosper well into the 21st century. It starts here and now. Be part of our success. This is an exciting time to be a Scottish Rite Mason.

Hoping everyone has a Holiday Season and a



Our 2011-2012 Sustainability Initiative Team's mission is to educate, train and lead in New Member Recruitment and Current Member Retention.

We need your feedback on this newsletter. We would also like to know what is working in your Valleys so we can share your successes with other Valleys. With your cooperation, we can better meet your Valley's needs and support your Valley's growth and the growth of Scottish Rite Masonry in New York and beyond.

Resource Team Members: {These Team Members are available as a resource group to meet with Valleys in the planning and development of both New Member Recruitment Programs and Membership Retention Programs.}

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