

**GRAND LODGE AF&AM OF MONTANA
Robert A. Coleman, Grand Master**

Pride & Excellence In Ritual Work



Grand Master's Plan for 2008 -2009

Introduction

Enclosed you will find my goals and objectives for the 2008-2009 Masonic Year. You will find direction for both Grand Lodge Officers and our constituent lodges. I propose the following as a guide toward achieving these goals, which after consultation with the other Grand Lodge Officers, will be adopted. The following goals are consistent with the direction provided during the two prior Masonic years:

- To strengthen our Masonic culture through education processes which develop Pride and Excellence in the delivery of the Montana Standard Ritual work.
- To strengthen our constituent lodges through the education processes of the Lodge Instructor Program and the Ritualist Program.
- To attract new candidates of exemplary character and moral qualifications.

Philosophy

As MWGM Nielsen stated, “The main mission and function of Masonic lodges is to make Masons. Though lodges are encouraged to do charitable works and perform civic services, their primary function, which is the moral basis for their good works, is to make Masons.”

Making Masons has two components: 1) initiating men into our fraternity; and 2) constantly educating our brothers in the moral teachings and lessons of Masonry. In other words, making Masons means attracting new men to petition for membership and tending to the needs of our existing members. Making a man a Mason is not only accomplished through the conferral of degrees on a candidate but a life-long endeavor for all brothers. Each of us is on that journey making ourselves Masons.

To make Masons means the lodge must approve candidates worthy of the fraternity, confer meaningful degrees that inspire the new Mason to be a better man and continue Masonic education. The man we seek must be of exemplary character and moral qualifications. We are not seeking into membership a man whose moral character is marginal at best. We want the best because it attracts the best.

Both Grand Masters Valente and Nielsen helped build the foundation on which we will now proceed. Like many of you, I am a traditionally oriented Mason. We will continue with many of the same programs set into place over the prior two years. In the pursuit of Pride and Excellence, our overarching goals for the next year are:

- 1) Teach and instruct lodge brothers, officers, and instructors ritual proficiency and excellence in the conferral of degrees and in the opening and closing.
- 2) Provide educational resources and programs for lodges to continue making Masons, both newly initiated and established Brothers.
- 3) Provide assistance, when requested of the District Officer, to lodges in their conferral of degrees. Candidates will be conducted by the Lodge receiving the petition. The Grand Masters Classes program will be discontinued.

Grand Master's Direction and Goals

1. District Lodge of Instruction: The purpose for the District Lodge of Instruction is to develop and teach excellence in Ritual work to the Lodge officers and brethren. The district meetings will continue to be District Officer-sponsored Lodges of Instruction and will be scheduled throughout the year rather than just in the fall. Each district meeting is a Lodge of Instruction to instruct lodge officers and brothers in the ritual for the opening and closing and the conferral of a degree. No petitioning candidates will be conducted nor will any degree be conferred at the District Lodge of Instruction. If time permits the District Officer may also present other Masonic matters to the brethren of the district. Emphases will be on education, training, and execution of the work. District Officers may conduct up to three District Lodges of Instruction during the Masonic year. The Grand Master will be consulted prior to scheduling a District Lodge of Instruction.

2. Lodge Instructor Program: Each lodge will recommend a Brother to the District Officer who will be appointed by the Grand Master to serve as Lodge Instructor. Instructors must be Masons who exemplify the virtues of Masonry and are knowledgeable in the Ritual and the Constitution and Code. During their appointment Instructors ensure their lodges do proper degree work in accordance with the Montana Standard Work approved by the Grand Lodge of Montana and mentor and instruct Brothers in the Ritualist Program. The Lodge Instructor's duties are:

- a. Attend a District Lodge of Instruction during 2008-2009;
- b. Complete and pass the Grand Lodge's open book test on the Constitution and Code within the previous five (5) years;
- c. Conduct ongoing Lodges of Instruction in his lodge utilizing the Ritualist Program to instruct and mentor brothers in learning and executing Ritual work.
- d. Record and maintain each Brother's Progress Log for the Ritualist Program.

Upon completion of these criteria, the Lodge Instructor will be awarded the Certified Instructor Pin by the Grand Master.

3. Ritualist Program: The primary intent of the Ritualist Program is to create a culture for the Lodges to be self sufficient and proficient in the Montana Standard Work. The focus is to encourage the brothers to develop Pride and Excellence in delivering Ritual work. The Masters of the Lodges can promote this program as a means to strengthen their Lodge.

The Ritualist Program is based on the ritual and the lectures contained in the Montana Standard Work found in the Mnemonic and Monitor. The Ritualist Program is designed to encourage the Brethren to develop Pride and Excellence in opening, closing, and degree work. Upon completing each portion of the Ritualist Program a point value is awarded which will go toward a special recognition award for the participants.

The Ritualist Program has three levels of accomplishment that will be recognized:

- Ritualist
- Senior Ritualist
- Master Ritualist

The participant will be awarded a different pin as they reach each higher level.

4. Unauthorized Copies of the Work: District Officers and Lodge Instructors must ensure that lodges do not use unauthorized rituals or materials in the lodges. The only authorized materials that lodge officers may use in delivering ritual work are the Mnemonics and Monitor. The Lodge Instructor and District Officer may have his copy of the written Secret Work in the Big Book. It is illegal to copy pages from the Big Book and thus machine or handwritten copies of the Big Book Secret Work may not be used by any person in lodge. Other written-out versions of the Secret Work regardless of the form are not allowed in lodge for use. When such materials are discovered the District Officer or Lodge Instructor after notification to the Master of the lodge shall request that the unauthorized materials be surrendered to that officer or instructor. Lodges failing to voluntarily turn over such materials must be reported to the Grand Master for possible disciplinary action against the lodge, including suspension of charter. For explanatory lectures, extraneous written materials and copies are allowed for use by the lecturer or for prompting. The Montana Standard Work is the only work that is authorized to be used. Unauthorized copies or materials are to be destroyed after confiscation.

5. Education: Each lodge is encouraged to work on Masonic Education at every meeting. This will be enhanced by the use of the District Lodge of Instruction, the Lodge Instructor Program, and the Ritualist program.

6. Master Builder and Fraternal Mother Programs: The Master Builder and the Fraternal Mother Programs will not be continued. All programs have a life cycle and it is time to retire these two programs. In doing so, lodges will be able to concentrate upon the two primary programs of education which are the Lodge Instructor program and the new Ritualist program.