



COMING HOME GUIDE

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Bringing all members back to
their blue lodge

February 2010

Message from the Grand Master

Brothers,

When I reflect on all I have gotten out of my lodge and how grateful I am to have a community of men who share the same values, I can't help but think about my brothers who have lost touch. In a typical lodge today, we are lucky if we see more than 15 percent of our membership. My vision for this year is to bring the remaining 85 percent back to our lodges.

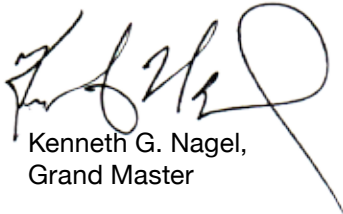
We need to put forth whatever effort it takes to reconnect our membership with our blue lodges. With the help of our Membership Development Committee, I am working towards a membership call to come home to your blue lodge in February 2010.

See that your entire membership is contacted by phone – and not just to leave a message, but to have a personal conversation. Invite them to come to a special stated meeting during the same month as all other lodges in California. On this same virtual night, we will start the process of member re-engagement. My goal is to achieve the largest blue lodge gathering in decades.

Use this guide as you plan your Coming Home event. Provide every lodge officer and Coming Home Committee member with a copy (you can download it from freemason.org) and print copies of the Call tracking form for members who are assigned to making phone calls.

It is up to you, our lodge leaders, to ensure that members find the drive, the desire, and the motivation to continue Coming Home, today and in the years ahead. Together, we can make this vision a reality.

Sincerely and fraternally,



Kenneth G. Nagel,
Grand Master



Coming Home

The need

We took a vow to care for our brothers – and that includes helping each other stay connected to the fellowship and shared values at blue lodge. Active, participating members are critical for the viability of the lodge.

The goals

- plan a Coming Home event for the February stated meeting
- re-engage inactive brothers in attending lodge, beginning with the Coming Home event
- remind members of the fellowship, shared values, and community of Masonry
- identify reasons for non-participation and implement changes to meet member needs
- focus on ongoing engagement and retention
- recommit to the values of Freemasonry

The challenge

Reach out to every member of your lodge. Remind them that they are valued assets of the lodge and that they matter, and invite them to the February stated meeting. Together determine what would inspire them to return to blue lodge long-term, and develop lodge programs that will keep them coming back.

The event

February 2010 stated meeting

Every lodge is unique

There's no set formula for staging a Coming Home event. It's a way to bring all members together and start rebuilding relationships.

So be creative. Think of the event as a lodge reunion. Plan it around member interests – whether that's a meal, a Masonic speaker, family-friendly activities, or something else. It could be as simple as a break in the stated meeting to introduce returning brothers.

This year, our fraternity is making a special effort to honor veterans. Consider thanking your lodge's veterans during the event, and introduce the Grand Master's Project, Operation Greatest Gift.

Keep the event upbeat and celebratory, and recognize the participation of the returning brothers.

Contest

The lodge with the highest percentage of its lodge members in attendance will win two free spots – one for the master and one for another member, selected by lottery – on the Grand Master's Trip to Washington D.C. May 2-8, 2010.

Turn in your lodge's Contest reporting form (page 9) by March 1.

Let's make this the largest California blue lodge gathering in decades!

Coming Home Committee

The 2009 senior warden should form a Coming Home Committee in November 2009.

Committee responsibilities

- Create a campaign to contact every lodge member, and make an extra effort to speak to inactive members
- Plan the Coming Home event for the February 2010 stated meeting
- Identify reasons for member non-participation and implement changes to meet member needs

What they'll need

- Membership roster
- Small budget to fund planned activities

At first meeting

- Review the Event planning timeline and checklist (next page)
- Establish a calendar of committee meetings
- Set specific deadlines for stages of event preparation
- Assign member phone calls and discuss deadlines for first, second, and third attempts
- Prepare articles/reminders for the December 2009 and January 2010 Trestleboard, including the Coming Home ad (downloadable from freemason.org)

Event planning timeline and checklist

November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2009 senior warden forms Coming Home Committee <input type="checkbox"/> First meeting of the Coming Home Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Initial event planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Program <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner/refreshments <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of returning members
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assemble member phone contact information <input type="checkbox"/> Event budget finalized <input type="checkbox"/> Members assigned event responsibilities (refreshments, program, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Ad and/or article in Trestleboard (Download ad from freemason.org) <input type="checkbox"/> Play the Grand Master's Coming Home video at the stated meeting
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Committee members assigned to calls; set deadlines for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd attempts <input type="checkbox"/> Event plans finalized <input type="checkbox"/> Ad and/or article in Trestleboard (Download ad from freemason.org) <p>After January stated meeting: Refer to call tracking form (page 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All members contacted <input type="checkbox"/> Needs of returning members determined, including reasons for non-attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation needs determined for returning members; assign drivers <input type="checkbox"/> Determine member skills and interests
February	<p>Two weeks prior to event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers assigned to members needing transportation assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Returning members called and confirmed prior to event <input type="checkbox"/> "Buddies" assigned for returning inactive members <input type="checkbox"/> Print name tags for all attendees <p>Stated meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coming Home event <p>Immediately following event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Submit contest reporting form (page 9) by March 1
March	<p>Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Address action items on assessment form, ex. set up rides and involve returning brothers <p>Buddy or initial caller:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with inactive brothers and invite to future events

The key to Coming Home

The most important goal for your lodge is to make a personal connection with every brother. This takes more than an e-mail and more than just a voicemail. It takes a conversation.

If you reach an answering machine, leave a message explaining that you're checking in, and will try again in a few days.

The phone call

Use the Call tracking form (page 8). Submit completed forms to the Coming Home Committee.

- Invite brothers to the February Coming Home event
- Check on brothers' health and welfare, and connect them with Masonic Assistance* if they need support
- Find rides for those who need transportation assistance
- Remind inactive brothers that they're a valued part of the lodge family, and that they are missed
- Ask why inactive brothers lost touch, and what the lodge could do to bring them back long-term

*If a member or his family is in need of support, provide the phone number for Masonic Assistance, or offer to call for him. Calling **888/466-3642** connects you to information and resources provided by:

- Masonic Homes of California
- Masonic Outreach Services
- Masonic Family Resource Center

The important role of the buddy

Returning to lodge may be stressful or intimidating for inactive brothers, especially those who are normally homebound.

As the first point of contact for returning brothers, buddies play an important role. Brothers appointed as buddies should be welcoming and attentive, and focus on ensuring that returning brothers feel included and valued.

Coming Home through the years

You'll kick off Coming Home with the February stated meeting, but it's more than just a one-time event. It's an ongoing effort to re-engage members in the lodge. To be successful, you must plan thoughtful programming that will bring members back to lodge regularly.

During your planning, consider your lodge's unique demographics. Here are a few suggestions:

Members with young families

- Plan kid-friendly activities, such as family movie nights
- Offer babysitting services at lodge activities

Members focused on community service

- Plan group volunteer activities, such as a local park or canyon cleanup
- Establish a partnership with a local public school

Members focused on fellowship

- Plan Masonic education activities
- Hold informal fellowship nights regularly

Members focused on leadership

- Plan group candidate coaching nights
- Call a special meeting to hear member ideas for new lodge programs and community activities, and solicit volunteers to coordinate them

Older members who are no longer able to drive at night, who have hearing and sight disabilities, or who are unable to sit for a long period of time

- Plan short daytime activities, such as a weekend brunch
- Record older members' memories about the lodge and their Masonic experience to develop and maintain a lodge history

For more ideas, refer to Engage and Retain: Guide to Member Retention. Download it from freemason.org by selecting the Member Center pull-down menu, then Member Resources.

Make sure that the members responsible for Coming Home phone calls complete and submit the Call tracking form (next page). After the event, use it as a reference to plan programs and activities tailored to your lodge.

Contest reporting form

Lodge name:_____ Lodge no._____

Master:_____

Number lodge members total (as of July 1, 2009) _____
A

Number lodge members at February 2010 Coming Home event _____
B

Percent in attendance: _____%
(B÷A) x 100

Example

lodge members total = 90
lodge members at the February 2010 stated meeting = 65

Percent in attendant = (65÷90) x 100
 = (.72) x 100
 = 72%

Contact phone:_____

Contact e-mail:_____

Contact signature:_____

Scan and e-mail to khegg@freemason.org or fax to 415/776-7170 by **March 1, 2010**.