



## Worshipful Master

**Installing Master;** You will kneel on your right knee; place your right hand on the Volume of the Sacred Law, then repeat after me, substituting your full name for mine:

*I, ....., in the presence of the Great Architect of the Universe, and this worthy, worshipful and warranted Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, duly constituted, regularly assembled, and properly dedicated, of my own free-will and accord do hereby and hereon solemnly agree to accept the office of Worshipful Master of this Lodge, denominated ..... Lodge, and numbered ..... on the Register of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, and the duties of that high office faithfully, zealously and Impartially to administer to the best of my skill and ability for the ensuing twelve months, and until a successor shall have been duly elected and installed in my stead. I furthermore solemnly promise that I will not, during my term of office, or at any time a Lodge shall be under my direction, permit or suffer any deviation from the established usages, customs and landmarks. That I will not administer, or cause or suffer to be administered, any rite or ceremony contrary to, or subversive of, our Ancient Institutions; but on the contrary that I will support, uphold and maintain, pure and unsullied, the genuine tenets and principles of the Craft. That I will observe, and to the utmost of my power and ability, strictly enforce obedience to those Charges and Regulations to which I have already given my assent, to the By-laws of this Lodge, and the Constitutions and Regulations of Grand Lodge, and that I will, in all things, conscientiously discharge my duties as a ruler in the Craft and the Worshipful Master of this Lodge. So help me God, and keep me steadfast, in this my great and solemn obligation.*

**Installing master:** As a pledge of your fidelity, and to render this a solemn obligation, you will seal it with your lips once on the Volume of the Sacred Law

Installation, Canadian Work, Grand Lodge of British Columbia

## Definition

### WORSHIPFUL

ADJECTIVE

1. notable, distinguished
2. giving or expressing worship or veneration

### MASTER

NOUN

a man who has people working for him, especially servants or slaves.

1. a man in charge of an organization or group.
2. a skilled practitioner of a particular art or activity.
3. a person who holds a second or further degree from a university or other academic institution (only in titles and set expressions).

## Historical

The title of Worshipful Master is the term given today to mean the presiding officer of a Masonic lodge. But in the 1500's such a title meant honorable and reputable; applying to a person who was distinguished in regard to character or rank; entitled to honor and respect. By the 1700's, to call a man worshipful was an honorific and often temporary designation; applying to persons or bodies of distinguished rank or importance. When the title worshipful became attached to the word master, the two together denoted a man of great honor, integrity and learning who also had control or authority over something or someone. Justices of the peace, aldermen and mayors, governors and rulers; all carried the title of his worship, or worshipful master.

A Passed (or Past) Master is a Master Mason who is no longer the installed Master of a lodge of Freemasons. He has "passed the chair" as the presiding officer of his lodge. But in the 16th century, a Passed Master was one who had been examined and passed as a Master; and was

thereafter considered a highly qualified or accomplished Master of a trade, guild, society or corporation.

Today, the Past Masters, Worshipful Masters and Wardens (the traditional gatekeepers or sentinels of the realm, and later the regents who ruled in the King's absence—now vice presidents of the lodge), in addition to their hierarchical status within the structure of a lodge, also make up the body of the Grand Lodge, or state assembly of Masons, and are given the authority, on behalf of all members of their lodge, to collectively adopt the rules and regulations which govern all lodges in the state. These titled men represent the voice of the Grand Lodge when the Grand Lodge is not in session. This is the reason lodges can operate independently from Grand Lodges. Each lodge is a microcosm of the whole.

This is the hierarchical nature of the fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, and its authority in regard to the function and leadership of each lodge.

## THE MASTER'S JEWEL



The Worshipful Master's Jewel is the Square. This is a stonemason's tool to ascertain true and correct angles of the cut and smoothed stone. Thus his Jewel symbolizes virtue.

## THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER – jurisdiction of Grand lodge of British Columbia

“the honour, reputation, and usefulness of the lodge will materially depend upon the skill and ability with which you manage its affairs...” The Worshipful Master has a great deal of

responsibility and authority, and is therefore responsible to the brethren and to Grand Lodge for the conduct and wellbeing of the lodge.

As the principal officer you have the authority necessary to manage its affairs. The Worshipful Master must be fair and impartial in his judgment. If you find you have been in error, you should be quick to admit it and correct it. You must put the welfare of your lodge in particular, and the Craft in general, above self, remembering that you are a servant as well as a Master. You must uphold your authority, but not abuse it, and follow the masonic principles of parliamentary procedure in all business matters. (Robert's Rules of Order is available as a guide.) Be conscious of your own limitations, and receptive to good advice and counsel.

Do not be slow in asking for help when you need it; this is no reflection on your ability, for none of us can solve all the problems that from time to time beset us. Each lodge has its corps of Past Masters, who, presumably have acquired a good deal of experience, and to whom you should be able to turn for counsel and assistance. Preside with dignity, decorum, harmony, and good fellowship, remembering that in all matters you must set the example. As Worshipful Master you cannot fulfill the program of your lodge alone.

Select good men to serve on your committees, and inspire them to do their work efficiently. Be on the lookout for any brother with outstanding talent, that extra something which marks him as a leader, and encourage him with greater opportunities and challenges. It is important that the lodge study the qualifications of its petitioners and for this reason be careful in the appointment of your Committees of Investigation, especially the chairmen.

You are charged to preserve the warrant of your lodge and to deliver it to your successor in office. You and your Wardens hold all furniture, jewels, and other property of the lodge in trust for the members, and shall see that they are insured against loss of any kind. You may claim of your officers at any time, advice and assistance on any business relative to the lodge. You are ex officio a member of all committees. Be aware of the importance of holding practices and rehearsals, and exemplify degrees in the absence of candidates. In this way those participating gain self confidence, and develop a feeling of sureness, which makes for a far better performance of the ritual, and lodge work in general.

This in turn increases interest in the lodge, both on the part of members and visitors, for any meeting, whether Masonic or otherwise, which is well conducted, makes a good impression. The informality of the practice session enables brethren to enter into discussion, where questions can be asked and explanations given. The following directives and information are given to assist you as Worshipful Master in the performance of your duties.

## REGARDING GRAND LODGE

As changes are approved to the Book of Constitutions at Grand Lodge almost every year it is essential to procure those amendments and ensure your copy of the Book of Constitutions has the most up-to-date information. See [freemasonry.bcy.ca/lodgesecretary](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/lodgesecretary).

It is your duty to see that your lodge is represented at the annual communication of Grand Lodge by yourself and Wardens or proxies.

If unable to attend Grand Lodge, be sure duly qualified proxies are elected to represent your lodge (Refer to "Votes and Voting").

If you have served previously as Worshipful Master of a lodge you are entitled to two votes at Grand lodge.

Your lodge shall have the right to give instruction to you, the Wardens, or proxies before the Communication of Grand Lodge (Refer to R61).

It is improper for you to communicate directly with the Grand Master on masonic business; communications must go through the Grand Secretary's office.

You must produce, if required, the Warrant, Minutes, and books of your lodge to the Grand Master, Grand Lodge, or brethren authorized by the Grand Master.

No public Masonic procession is permitted without a dispensation or previous ruling from the Grand Master (except funerals). Refer to R164 and the Book of Form and Ceremonies.

## REGARDING BUSINESS OF YOUR LODGE:

Continually familiarize yourself with the Grand Lodge Book of Constitutions, your lodge by-laws, and Book of Ceremonies, to avoid error.

See that all reports, returns, and remittances to Grand Lodge are made promptly by your secretary.

See that the books, records, and accounts of your lodge are kept properly and a "Financial Review" is conducted annually or in accordance with the bylaws of your lodge. Encourage the lodge to prepare and adopt a budget

The business of the lodge with the exception of degree work may be transacted in any degree at the discretion of the Worshipful Master.

The Regular Communication of your lodge shall be the only meeting in each month at which business may be done, with exceptions specified in the Constitutions, e.g., Funerals, Degrees, etc.

Before making any binding decision be sure that you know all the facts and that your decision is in the best interest of the lodge; from your decision there can be no appeal except to Grand Lodge.

It is your responsibility to see that every member who has been raised is properly instructed and examined in open lodge. (ensure that the sponsors and or the coaches are reminded of their responsibilities to the candidate.

You may withhold the reading of any communication, if in your opinion it is improper to be read. (See "Communications" under Rulings.)

If any member shall object to a visitor, you shall refuse the visitor admittance or ask him to withdraw.

A demit may be granted to an Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft.

It is strongly recommended that a brother be interviewed by a committee before he is suspended for non-payment of dues.

You should stress the point that every brother is, literally speaking, a member of the Sick and Visiting Committee.

Do not hesitate to use your gavel with authority.

It is not correct procedure to hand over your collar to anyone who is to occupy the chair temporarily. Transferring the gavel in the prescribed manner, the emblem of authority, conveys all the necessary courtesies. (Passed at G.L. 1967 - Revision of Ancient Ritual).

Insist on proper Masonic courtesy in your lodge and in the banquet room.

The brethren should be reminded prior to the degree that mirth has no place in the exemplification or conferral of degrees.

Physical qualifications for candidates can be found in Rulings under "Physical". Consult the Grand Secretary for additional information.

Ensure that a sufficient number of white balls and black balls, or cubes, are in the ballot box.

## GENERAL INFORMATION:

You must see that the affairs of your lodge are conducted in strict conformity with the Book of Constitutions, Regulations and Edicts of Grand Lodge and the by-laws of your lodge.

The ritual work of your lodge must conform to the ritual it has adopted.

You should be able to do the following in a capable and impressive manner: a. Confer the three degrees. b. Properly conduct a ballot for candidates and affiliates. c. Open and close your lodge in the three degrees in long form. d. Receive visitors graciously and make them welcome. e. Conduct your lodge business in conformity with your by-laws, e.g. motions, amendments, elections, etc.

It is your prerogative to: a. Appoint committees and designate a chairman. b. Rule on points of order. c. Close your lodge at your will and pleasure. 6 d. Initiate and close debates. e. Accord Grand Honours to distinguished brethren. Grand Lodge officers on official visits must be given Grand Honours. f. Refuse admittance to a visitor or visitors. g. Withhold the reading of any communication. h. Call an Emergent Communication of your lodge. i. Direct a ballot to be taken on any important question. j. Appoint non-elected lodge officers.

The following subjects should not be discussed or debated in open lodge or at the banquet table: a. Sectarianism, religion, or theological creeds. b. Private business. c. Partisan politics. d. Racial questions. e. Non-Masonic subjects which divide men by class, feud or schism. f. Any matters which slander your lodge or your officers, Grand Lodge or its officers, any brother, or the Craft in general.

## HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS:

The first item on the agenda after the reading of the summons of every meeting should be to welcome everyone, have visitors introduced, and invite those you wish to take seats in the east. It is an expected courtesy that you invite current Worshipful Masters, as well as past and present Grand Lodge officers. No one, other than the Grand Master, his representative, or the current DDGM are entitled by right of their office to a seat in the east. It is your prerogative to invite any brother to a seat in the east.

The reception of visitors with honours due their rank should never be omitted.

You should hold frequent rehearsals to ensure that officers are ready for any work which may present itself.

If no candidates are available during your year, the degrees should be exemplified by and for the benefit of the officers and members, because the ritual is the very heart of Freemasonry.

Successful meetings must be planned carefully in advance. There is no substitute for good planning.

A well rounded program for the year should include competent degree work, educational features, and good fellowship.

Examples of programs that have helped to improve Lodge Communications are: Past Master's, Senior Member's, Fathers and Sons, Non-officers, and Ethnic Nights; Anniversaries, Roll Calls, Fraternal Visitations, Guest Speakers and Visiting Degree teams.

Do not rely on memory. A notebook containing a page for each meeting with the order of business spaced to allow for notes has proven to be of valuable assistance.

Activate committees by encouraging them to perform their duties and have them report in open lodge.

The more your brethren are involved in lodge activities the healthier your Lodge will be.

You should open your lodge promptly at the stated time and transact the business in an expeditious manner.

Time spent with your secretary before the meeting will help to ensure a smoother presentation of the business.

Be very careful with the use of Masonic titles, e.g. Most Worshipful Brother, Right Worshipful Brother, Very Worshipful Brother, Worshipful Brother, and Brother.

A regular informal newsletter has proved to be popular in many lodges, and W.M.'s comments in the regular notice are also an effective communication tool.

## IN GENERAL COMMENTS

The Worshipful Master of a Masonic Lodge is the highest ranking of all Lodge Officers which a Lodge may elect.

He sits in the East of the Lodge room (symbolic of the Rising Sun in the East). From here he directs all of the business of the Lodge. However it should be noted, it does not matter the actual geographical direction of the building is facing. The Master is always said to be "in the East".

He also presides over ritual and ceremonies. His position is similar to a President of any other organization. As Master, his word is final over any and all actions pertaining to his Lodge.

## HIS DUTIES

While the Worshipful Master's rank is highest of all members, his Lodge Officer Duties are the easiest to remember.

The Worshipful Master is responsible for every single thing within his lodge during his year as Master. He is ultimately responsible for every other lodge officer and their duties. In short he is responsible for, every lodge committee, ritual and degree work, Masonic education, social functions, fundraisers, District and Grand Lodge liaison, Trestle Board communication, etc. But remember, just because the Master is the responsible party, it does not mean he has to do all the work.

All eyes are upon the Master. If lodge functions go smoothly, it is the Master who takes the credit. If lodge functions go awry, it is the Master who bears the blame. Therefore, the Master wears many hats.

*It is his duty to, set the Craft to work and give them proper instruction for their labor*

It is his duty to preside over business meetings and the conferral of degrees. He oversees the delegation of duties to all other Lodge Officers.

While Freemasons call the Master, "Worshipful Master", they do not, as some people may erroneously believe, actually worship him. "Worshipful" is an honorary title which shows respect for his position. In France, the word "Worshipful" is replaced with the word "Venerable".



## Does the Worshipful Master have to wear a Masonic hat?

Masonic hats are the privilege of the Master of the Lodge, and only his. To remain with his head covered to signify that his is the position to which the greatest respect should be paid.

If in doubt, however, contact your Grand Lodge for more information about your specific jurisdiction.

The Worshipful Master of a Lodge holds the most honored, prestigious and sacredly held chair of office during his term.

The Worshipful Master's position (not the man, himself) is one of the 3 Lesser Lights

The 3 Lesser Lights of a Lodge are the Sun, the Moon and the Worshipful Master.

As the highest ranking officer within the lodge, it is the duty of the man holding this office to preserve the solemnity and respect of this ancient and historic position, symbolic of his duties as one of the Lesser Lights.

While Masonic hats differ within jurisdictions around the world, Masonic hats are a visible symbol of the Master's authority, and as such, should reflect a respectful, classic or traditional style.

### Worshipful Master's Hat



There are numerous styles of Masonic hats that are worn by the Worshipful Masters in various jurisdictions around the world.

There are satin top hats, the satin collapsible folding top hat, felt top hats, men's fedora hats, derbies, bowlers, and many more. Other jurisdictions around the world wear different varieties of Masonic hats, caps and tams.

Many Prince Hall Affiliated Freemasons wear a white top hat, black top hat or white fedora hats.

While most Freemasons are aware that ritual and a few officer duties and Masonic symbols vary somewhat around the world;..."From many, one;...and from one, many."

...A brotherhood of many, ...who speak different languages, who reside possibly half a world away...who each wear different hats...come together as one....within the brotherhood of Freemasonry.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

For starters, here is one PM's description of the position:

"To become the model Master of a Lodge should be the ambition of every brother; and to discharge with efficiency and zeal the duties of that office should be his most anxious desire."

"These duties are not confined to the mere repetition of a few phrases learned by rote, but he should be able to instruct the Craft, not only as to the meaning and origin of our ceremonies, but also to explain to them the philosophy which is veiled in its allegories and illustrated by its symbols."

"He should be able, also, to convince his brethren, that all science and all art, legitimately directed, are but lines that radiate toward the great 'I AM'; that the sciences are the media by which we are led to contemplate the goodness, greatness, wisdom and power of the Great Architect of the Universe; and that the arts are the modes we have developed of expressing our sense and admiration of the wondrous glories of an Almighty Father which are scattered around us."

"The Master of a Lodge should also, in his life and in his conversation, be a model for his brethren to admire and imitate, and should himself practise, out of the Lodge, those great moral doctrines and virtues which he inculcates within its walls. He should be punctual and methodical in all things and, both by his character and conduct, command the respect, the esteem and the good-will of all men; for as the Master is supreme in his Lodge and distinguished by his position in the Craft, so should he also be distinguished as the possessor of an irreproachable character, a dignified demeanour, an expanded intellect, and a liberal education."

"...The Worshipful Master who presides over his Lodge with ability, firmness and decision (for without force of character, there can be no force of expression); whose manner is courteous yet dignified; whose decisions are consonant with reason and Masonic law; and who dispenses light and information among the Craft, will ever be regarded by his brethren as one who is entitled to their highest respect and most fraternal regard."

These eloquent words were written by William Mercer Wilson, the first GM of the Grand Lodge of Canada, about 130 years ago.

Another source (Anderson's Book of Constitutions) says that the Worshipful Master should be "of good morals, of great skill, true and trusty, and a lover of the whole Fraternity, wheresoever's dispersed over the face of the earth." And, on such recommendation, it was expected that he would "discharge the duties of the office with fidelity."

If this is too esoteric for you, and you want a "nuts and bolts" description of the position, here's an outline of a speech made in 1941 by PM in British Columbia, to a Lodge there, posted by Br. Frank Kendrick:

1. Study the books of ancient lore and modern proceedings in order to qualify for the high and important office of Worshipful Master.
2. Get to know, really know, all the members of the Lodge.
3. While serving as Senior Warden, learn all the Master's Ritual and so have time when Master to plan the programme and prepare the speeches.
4. Before assuming office settle with ye Little Woman, ye Boss of ye Household, that Great Question of going out nights.
5. Stow away in the Grey Matter of the Cranium a set of five minute speeches for various occasions, and thus be ready whenever called upon to do justice to the Lodge and Office.
6. Consult the Chairman of Committees before appointment of members, and afterwards keep them active by calling for regular reports of progress.
7. Many members working means much enthusiasm in the Lodge.
8. Have all the Officers and the Chairmen of Committees meet together on convenient occasions.
9. Plan the program of the Lodge meeting and harmonize its details with the Great Masonic Design, then go over the Agenda with the Secretary before Lodge and thus avoid those irritating delays, whispered consultations and mutterings in the East.
10. Keep a timepiece always at hand and let not procrastination become the thief who robs the Brethren of their beauty sleep.
11. The visitors are honoured guests of the Lodge, therefore proclaim a welcome to them with happy words and smooth phrases, and never call upon a visitor to speak in Lodge or at the Festive Board without previous notice and due enquiry as to his ability and willingness to do so.
12. Preserve the Dignity, Courtesy and Privilege of the East at all times. Let no matter of personal modesty affect those Ancient Rights and Prerogatives of the Oriental Chair

which must be handed on untarnished to those who follow.

(I'll have more "nuts and bolts"-type materials later, although I do not intend to write strictly a "nuts and bolts"-type article. Rather, I aim to give you a "big picture" of the position of Worshipful Master. Almost any facet of this "big picture" could be subjected to a "nuts and bolts"-type analysis.)

## PREPARING FOR THE POSITION

You cannot start too soon preparing for the position of Worshipful Master! Hopefully, if you are reading this article with a view toward structuring your year In the East, you are progressing through the Officers' Line, and are not facing imminent election to or installation in the position of Worshipful Master. Begin thinking NOW about what it is that you want to do as Worshipful Master--if you wait until you are elected or installed, you have simply waited too long, and will spend your year In the East reacting to situations that you might have anticipated, and playing "catch-up."

My sense is that far more WMs who do their Lodges disservice by inaction rather than by poor action; by simply trying to "get through their year," rather than by trying to "do something" In the East.

Ask yourself, for starters: What ideas do you have for the Lodge? What do you want to accomplish? How do you want your year as Worshipful Master to be remembered? [I'll have more questions for you to ask yourself, and more for you to think about, later.]

And, do not wait for the position of Worshipful Master to come to you--it won't. TAKE the position. Within some fairly broad parameters, in most jurisdictions, you can largely define the position of Worshipful Master during your year In the East. Those who have gone before you In the East have in fact defined the position during their respective years. It has been defined in different ways by different Worshipful Masters.

With each succeeding Master having additional years of service performed by other Past Masters, and additional ideas used by other Past Masters, to review and draw on, the performance of each succeeding Master, in each Lodge, should be better and better in the position. Note that I said "should be." In fact, we all know it does not happen that way.

Look back on the years of those who have served previously as WM of your Lodge. Some had good years; some had bad years; some had indifferent years.

What makes a WM's year good, bad, or indifferent?

That is the big question, I think. If I had a perfect answer to that question, I'd turn cartwheels. But, I don't.

However, some general factors HEAVILY influence the answer to this question:

1. The WM's ability and willingness to assess his own human strengths and weaknesses candidly.
2. The WM's ability to "play to his strengths."
3. The WM's willingness to seek help to cover or minimize his weaknesses.
4. The WM's ability to determine who to seek out for that help.
5. The WM's ability and willingness to set goals and determine what he wants to do during his year In the East.
6. The WM's ability and willingness to craft a plan for his year In the East.
7. The WM's ability and willingness to seek help from constructive Brothers and PMs to aid in the crafting and execution of that plan.
8. The WM's ability and willingness to master the Degree work and ritual work of the Lodge.
9. The WM's ability to inspire the Brothers.
10. The WM's ability to lead by example.
11. The WM's ability to anticipate problems and events, and to plan for contingent ways to respond to them.
12. The WM's ability to make decisions.
13. The WM's ability to be flexible and accommodating.
14. The WM's level of interest in the position.
15. The WM's ability to evidence enthusiasm for the position.
16. The WM's willingness to listen to suggestions and comments made by others.
17. The WM's ability to separate the wheat from the chaff, in receiving advice and counsel.

I'm sure there are others--these are the ones that occur to several of the Past Masters who provided input, and to me.

- What does it mean to be Worshipful Master?
- What can the Worshipful Master do?
- What programs or projects can the Worshipful Master advocate or sponsor?
- How far can he lead his Lodge?
- In what direction?
- To what end?

The answers to these questions, and others, are largely up to each Worshipful Master during his year In the East. For your year In the East, the answers to these questions are largely up to YOU.

Why is that? Why isn't the position more clearly defined? Why isn't there something, somewhere that tells a Worshipful Master what he needs to do to have a good year In the East?

The answer to these questions is something alluded to above, and which will not be obvious to you, AND which you MAY need to "be there to know."

What didn't immediately dawn on me--and it took about a month of being In the East to realize this--is that the WM has tremendous powers in a Masonic Lodge. Unless the WM does something so outrageous that it prompts an appeal to Grand Lodge by a disgruntled Brother or group of Brothers, nothing the WM does can be effectively challenged. And, those appeals are very rare.

That doesn't mean, of course, that you should let the powers of the position go to your head. That wouldn't be healthy or constructive. But, when I began to realize the scope of my powers as WM, I began to take initiatives that I thought would be in the best interests of the Lodge. While I sought, and listened to, advice from PMs, and others, I made my own decisions.

You should, too. The Brothers of your Lodge will elect you to the position of Worshipful Master with the expectation that you will lead the Lodge during your year In the East. They will not expect--and almost certainly will not appreciate--your deferring critical decisions to others, be it a Lodge Secretary, or a Past Master, or a group of Past Masters.

Making those decisions is no small task! While your instincts will be of some help to you, gained through progress through the Officers' Line, you doubtless will benefit from some more "formalized" insight into the decision process. Several written resources are available to you, both as to making these decisions, and with respect to ideas for your term as Worshipful Master. They are discussed in the next section.

## THE "WORKING TOOLS" OF A WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Once I had adjusted to the position of Worshipful Master--and, even with the best of preparation, that adjustment will take some weeks--I crystallized a mission statement for my year as Worshipful Master, from the ideas I had been working on. Here it is:

I want to make the Lodge a better place to be associated with (to be a member of); a better place for its Brothers and families to spend time (attending meetings and special events and banquets); and, a better Community asset.

Once you have formulated a mission statement for your year In the East with which you are comfortable, it will make the remainder of your task in defining your year MUCH easier! Indeed, the mission statement for your year In the East is arguably the most important Working Tool you will have as a Worshipful Master-- because it will tell you, to a very large extent, how to use the other Working Tools that are available to you.

[You didn't realize that being Worshipful Master involved creating a mission statement? Neither did I, going in. I wish someone had told me! I stumbled onto the concept of a mission statement almost by accident; but, was glad I did. Essentially, your mission statement should answer the

question, "What do you want to do, as Worshipful Master, during your year In the East?" That answer should be a single sentence (although I will admit that I compounded my single-sentence mission statement). A detailed discussion of mission statements is far beyond the scope of this article, but several recently-published books describe the process of creating a mission statement. I liked Laurie Beth Jones's book, "The Path," and found it quite readable.]

Some of the other Working Tools that you will have available to you as Worshipful Master will be obvious to you--the written resources set out above; and, the Past Masters of your Lodge.

As Master express your opinions; stimulate discussion among the Brothers; educate the Brothers; set out your mission statement; state your goals and aims as WM; encourage the Brothers to get active or stay active in Lodge affairs.

Written materials from others constitute another Working Tool for the Worshipful Master. I found Carl Claudy's "The Master's Book," especially helpful, although it is a bit dated. Other helpful works would include PGM Dwight L. Smith's collections, "Whither Are We Traveling?," "Why This Confusion in the Temple?;" and, "Look Well" (written from the perspective of a Past Master providing a series of letters to a Senior Warden throughout his year as SW, designed to help him prepare for the position of Worshipful Master).

Further, "Macoy's Worshipful Master's Assistant," rev. by the late Allen E. Roberts, contains valuable insight into the prerogatives and duties of the Worshipful Master, and other resource material.

Here are two additional Working Tools for a Worshipful Master that may not occur to you: Your computer, and the Internet. The larger and more active your Lodge is, the more use you will want to--and need to--make of a computer. At a minimum, the computer can help you keep track of Lodge events--I used the computer as my only calendaring tool during my year as Worshipful Master, determining to keep no paper calendar at all. From there, the computer can be used to help you keep notes of meetings, special events, and the like. It is invaluable as a Working Tool for a Worshipful Master. I did all my letters as Worshipful Master on computer, prepared reports to the Lodge on computer, and kept program notes on computer. Additionally, I appointed myself Chairman of the Lodge Publications Committee, and created a Lodge TrestleBoard on computer. Let me summarize the importance of this Working Tool by stating simply: I do not think I could have functioned effectively as a Worshipful Master without a computer.

Also, with the computer can come access to the Internet. I obtained Internet access shortly after being installed as Worshipful Master. I find the Internet one of the most important technological innovations since the invention of the printing press--and, in time, its utility to mankind may surpass that of the printing press. It is too early to make that call, but its potential for doing that is clear, at least to me.

Numerous newsgroups and web sites pertaining to Masonry exist, and others are being

created. They provide insight, ideas, (usually) constructive criticism, and valuable information on almost any Masonic topic imaginable. Many Grand Lodges, and quite a few local Lodges, have web sites on the World Wide Web; many of these provide links to other Masonic sites. Explore the Internet well in advance of your installation as Worshipful Master! You should have no trouble locating sites that interest you, and with which you are comfortable. You should avoid the temptation to spread yourself too thin on the Internet, and this valuable Working Tool lends itself to that temptation!

I have mentioned the Past Masters of the Lodge already. They are an obvious, and quite valuable, Working Tool of the Worshipful Master. Almost all of the Past Masters who responded to my request for input mentioned the availability and willingness of the Past Masters to help you have a good year In the East. Your progress through the Officers' Line, and your familiarity with each of the Past Masters of your Lodge, should suggest to you which Past Masters can be most helpful with particular projects or programs, which Past Masters can be most informative with respect to ritual or Degree work questions, which Past Masters have the time necessary to commit to specific tasks, and most other questions which will come up with respect to obtaining assistance, guidance, or advice from the Past Masters. One contributor referred to the Past Masters as the real "ancient Landmarks" of the Lodge. Some of these ancient Landmarks, in some Lodges, have a tendency to forget that they are no longer In the East. Your use of Past Masters as Working Tools must be tempered with the realization that the Past Masters have minds of their own; and, that, on occasion, it may be necessary to gently remind them of who is In the East. (Ever so gently!--Your year In the East will be a struggle, and your Lodge will suffer, if you do not have the cooperation and support of these Working Tools.)

Programs, projects, and banquets constitute another class of Working Tools for the Worshipful Master. The magnitude and scope of these will necessarily vary with the size, location, and resources of your Lodge. However, if you believe your Lodge is not capable of doing much along these lines, you will never know until you try! Also, consider joining with other area Lodges in cooperative programs, banquets, and activities. Pooling resources and talent can have a synergistic effect which may surprise you.

The Brothers and other people associated with the Lodge "vote" on the WM's programs, and on Lodge activities generally, with their feet--they vote by attendance, in other words. Keep track of attendance at the first few programs you sponsor. You should be able to tell whether you are on the right track with your programs and activities in this way.

The Brothers of the Lodge are a vital Working Tool for the Worshipful Master; they are the reason for his existence and for his holding the position of Worshipful Master. They will elect you to the position because they have confidence in you and will want you to succeed in the position. They (most of them) will be willing to help you in any way you need. Be reasonable and prudent in your requests to them; be specific in what you ask them to do; and, be appreciative when they do it.

I have tried to mention the most helpful Working Tools which occur to me, and which were

suggested by other contributors. Still other Working Tools may be available to you--a District Deputy Grand Master, a District Education Officer, Ashlar College or some other representative from your Grand Lodge, for example. Use any Working Tool that you believe will help you fashion a good, successful year In the East constructively!

## SOME GENERAL POINTERS FOR THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Once you have assumed the position of Worshipful Master, you will find a myriad of expectations, duties, and responsibilities waiting for you. How you discharge those duties and responsibilities, and measure up to those expectations, is largely up to you. As PGM Dwight L. Smith put it, in his "Look Well" collection, addressed to an imaginary Senior Warden named Tom:

'Why are you here, Tom?' They want to know. 'What can we expect from you? A year of zealous, inspired leadership? Twelve months of casual, half-hearted coasting? An apologetic year in which everyone governs the Lodge except the Brother who was elected to do so? Or are we just giving you the opportunity to get your name on the list of Past Masters?'

A list of specific advice and suggestions for you, once you have assumed the position, would likely be virtually endless, and no such comprehensive or all-inclusive list is possible in an article of limited scope, such as this. I will include, in the next section, some of the specific advice and suggestions received from other contributors. But, here are five general pointers which you would do well to remember and practice:

1. The WM must evidence enthusiasm for the position by showing up at the various Lodge meetings, programs, and banquets throughout the year. This position requires a significant time commitment which you must be prepared to make, and which probably will interfere with other things that are important to you in life. (Be sure those in your household understand this, before you assume the position!)
2. The WM must demonstrate support for the youth programs that the Lodge sponsors by his presence and attendance. Yes, the Lodge provides a place for them to meet, and (usually) some funding. But, BE THERE for them! This will pay dividends, both in their lives as they move to adulthood, and in the life of the Lodge and its appendant bodies. (Our two newest EAs, for example, are Senior DeMolays from our Lodge DeMolay Chapter.)
3. While it is good to seek advice and counsel, the decisions need to be yours, and not someone else's. (I hope you've picked up on that!) The Brothers will react negatively if they perceive that the Worshipful Master is only "doing the bidding" of anyone else. Having a WM "under the thumb" of someone else (usually that "someone else" is a Past Master who thinks he knows it all) reflects poorly on the WM and the someone else.
4. Each and every decision you make will leave at least one Brother who would have done it differently unhappy. You simply cannot make every one of the Brothers happy. There are a number of paths to a successful year as Worshipful Master, and you will need to

find one with which you are comfortable. One certain path to an unsuccessful year is to try to please everyone.

5. Along with #4, you will make mistakes. Expect to. No one learns anything without making mistakes. "A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday."-- Jonathan Swift

When it becomes clear to you that you have made a mistake, examine it, rethink it, learn from it--but do not wallow in it. Move on.

## KERNELS OF WISDOM & INSIGHT

What specific insights and suggestions can those who have occupied the position of Worshipful Master give you? Here are some of the succinct points made by the contributors, in no particular order:

1. Seek advice from the Past Masters--you'll know which ones to go to.
2. Put your heart, soul, and toenails into your Lodge TrestleBoard.
3. Have a term plan, in addition to your mission statement, that includes Masonic education, Lodge visitations, and social events, and be sure your Line Officers, including the Secretary, have copies well in advance of your installation.
4. Know your ritual work before being installed, and ask for help if you don't.
5. Read, and re-read, your Lodge by-laws and the Book of Constitutions, your Grand Lodge Constitution, and Book of Regulations.
6. Use common sense.
7. Communicate with your officers and candidates.
8. Be organized and efficient at meetings.
9. Be prepared for emergencies--expect Brother Murphy (Murphy's Laws) to be a regular visitor to your Lodge.
10. Be patient with the Past Masters who think they know it all.
11. Find at least three Past Masters and ask them to help you put together a program that will make the Lodge much better by your term's end.
12. Concentrate on what the Lodge needs, not just what interests you.
13. Take your wife, if you have one, on a mini-honeymoon before your installation, and promise her another after your successor is installed.
14. Direct and lead with the gavel, but avoid dictating with it.
15. Have a solid handle on your Lodge's financial condition.
16. Try to get on the same page as your two next likely successors, your SW and JW.
17. Listen to everyone, even the jerks.
18. If it's important, it needs to be done. Now. Waiting for consensus is procrastination. You were elected to lead, so lead!
19. Think marathon, not sprint.
20. Try asking people to do specific, achievable things--"Would you write to these three

Brothers (addresses attached) whom we haven't seen for several meetings?," not "Would you contact some of the guys who haven't been coming to Lodge?"

21. Have fun with your year In the East!
22. Use the phone, in addition to putting Lodge events in the TrestleBoard. Use a phone committee, with specific Lodge members for each committee member to call.
23. Hold officer rehearsals at least monthly.
24. Keep the business part of the meetings as short as possible.
25. Analyze what programs have worked for Past Masters, and what programs didn't work.
26. Be prepared to be in control of your Lodge during your year as Worshipful Master.
27. Learn the ritual work, and (unfortunately, given the aging Masonic population) the Funeral Service.
28. Have your committee appointments lined up before you are installed.
29. If you desire to make significant changes, do so in a way that avoids alienating the Brothers who have brought your Lodge as far as it has come.
30. Try to respond to the desires of the majority, but do not sell yourself or your program down the river to do so.
31. Seek input from others to define the needs of the Lodge, and formulate a program responding to those needs.
32. The key to success is planning, planning, planning.
33. Involve your Line Officers in your planning.
34. Sponsor and plan for interesting Masonic education programs, with outside speakers if possible, as well as Past Masters and other Brothers interested in specific Masonic topics. Avoid non- Masonic topics; leave those to the service clubs.
35. Have education programs for topics of interest, including non-Masonic topics such as heart disease. [The topic of non- Masonic education & information programs brought sharply divided input from the contributors. Some recommended them; some condemned them. You know your Lodge; use your judgment.]
36. Keep in touch with all Brothers if possible, paying particular attention to shut-in or infirm Brothers, and to those who have been regular in attendance but who suddenly stop coming. This could be a sign of health problems of which you may not be aware.
37. Utilize a transportation committee to provide transportation to those Brothers who may be unable to drive to meetings or events.
38. Be practical in your planning for your year In the East.
39. Hit the ground running! You can't afford to spend two or three months figuring out the position of Worshipful Master.
40. Utilize a calling list for your officers, passing calls down the Officers' Line to the Tyler, and have the Tyler report back to you.
41. Take a humble pill immediately after your installation, and remember that Masonry is a volunteer undertaking. Don't make it a drudge, and make it interesting for the Brothers.
42. When conflict arises, be prepared to deal with it quickly, before it becomes a problem for the Lodge.
43. Don't try to turn a failed program into a success. Admit the failure, learn from it, and move on to something else.
44. Vow to love all of the Brothers--the good, the bad, and the ugly. This will get harder as

your year goes on!

45. Deal with all Brothers out of love, fairness, and honesty, and don't play politics with them.
46. Let the Brothers know when you are pleased with them, and let them know (constructively) when you are displeased. Don't expect them to read your mind.
47. Pay attention when a Brother wants to tell you something, even if you're occupied. It may be important to you; it's definitely important to him.
48. Don't let anyone rush you into snap decisions. But, when a decision has to be made, make it.
49. Get to know the Secretary. Be mindful of the Secretary's many responsibilities, and use him sparingly and efficiently. Every request you make of the Secretary causes him extra work. Any Master or Brother, in about fifteen seconds, can think of projects that will require several hours of the Secretary's time. He is busy enough! Any request by a Brother for something extra from the Secretary should come through you as Worshipful Master. The Secretary can make or break your year as Worshipful Master, not only by what he does, but by what he does not do, or does not inform you about.
50. Be flexible in your planning. Changes are inevitable, and will need to be made.
51. Include the Lodge Widows in your plans, with several--more than one--events for them during the year.
52. Spread the work around. Asking that marginally-active Brother to participate in a project may be just the thing that will cement his relationship to the Lodge, and will spark his interest to the point of becoming an active regular.
53. Spend time getting to know the new candidates and Brothers. They are the future of your Lodge.
54. Masonic Lodges are not ruled by the membership but by the Master. The members expect the Master to rule and lead, and the Lodge suffers when he does not.
55. Try a community activity with some other organization, such as Knights of Columbus, Elks, etc.
56. Remember the "back bones," who do all the work, and the "jaw bones," who gripe about the work that the back bones do.
57. Remember the story about Anybody, Somebody, Everybody, and Nobody; and, remember that there are really only two: Somebody and Everybody. [See Sec. F.]
58. Plan your work, and then work your plan.
59. Remember the concepts of courtesy, Masonic etiquette, and protocol, and know what they are for each situation that you know you will confront as Master.
60. Be prepared for your meetings, with a definite program and agenda.
61. Avoid trying to be "one of the boys" to curry favor with the Brothers or to get them to like you. It is more important that they respect you in the position of Worshipful Master, and you need to earn that respect by the example you set. If they respect you, be assured, they will like you.
62. Be sure visitors are made to feel welcome.
63. If you have a Festive Board, be sure it is done properly, with all required protocol and ceremony.
64. Be mentally prepared for the position of Worshipful Master. Care for the Brethren. Care

for the Lodge and its work. Care for your candidates, and be sure your Degree work is done properly and with the necessary decorum.

65. Read your Lodge's minutes book, especially during periods of growth, to get a feel of what True Masonic Charity is all about. This will give you a feeling of appreciation for the efforts you are being allowed to follow--along with a sense of humility.
66. Be sure each Brother receives recognition during the month of his Masonic Birthday. If a Brother cannot attend, ask him for a written greeting to the Lodge that can be read at the recognition portion of the program.
67. Do not try to do everything yourself.
68. Solicit ideas from others, including your Line Officers. Give them a feel for what you are going through in the decision- making process as Worshipful Master.
69. Be sure to visit the Lodge's youth groups. You will receive special recognition as the Lodge's representative, and your interest and support by your presence will be appreciated.
70. The most important part of the Worshipful Master's position is having a sense of vision, a sense of direction, and a sense of purpose. The Worshipful Master must know where he wants to take the Lodge, how he is going to accomplish that task, and who he can go to for help. Having a sense of vision, direction, and purpose will be appreciated, and will draw support from the Brothers, even if they do not necessarily agree with all the points of the Worshipful Master's program.
71. Avoid taking on too many responsibilities in other appendant bodies.
72. Try to build continuity into your programs, to the extent possible, without leaving your successor lacking in flexibility.
73. Have contingency plans for the unexpected collapses of events or programs.
74. Don't try to do too much--concentrate on a few core items and goals.
75. Your purpose as Master is to motivate, stimulate, and coordinate the Education and Leadership activities of your Lodge.
76. To get help--Seek, Ask, and Knock.
77. Invite the Brothers to "Dream Along with Me," in imagining a better course for the Lodge.
78. Bring the bare words in your ritual and Degree work to life; this will reveal a wealth of deeper meaning for the Brethren, and for you.
79. Try to find constructive things for the Past Masters to do, so that they will not wind up having finished their years as Master, and then vanishing from the Lodge.
80. Remember that you are in charge of a management team, and that other members of the team will eventually lead the Lodge. Do what you can to help them develop their respective styles of leadership, and to encourage them to accept the responsibilities that go with the position of Worshipful Master.

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

I hope this article has given you some insight into the position of Worshipful Master in your Lodge, and how that position can be filled. I would leave you with three parting pieces of

thought and insight:

1. This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.
2. Here is a posting I made to the Internet Freemasonry List, describing what I thought of the position of Worshipful Master of our and the continuity of effort in the position:

At no time did I feel that any PM was trying to 'run the show' from the sideline. At no time did I feel that my toes were being 'stepped on' in the East. This was my feeling in spite of the fact that we have some pretty opinionated PMs who, I am sure, would have done things quite differently from the way I did them.

I set out to ambitiously expand our Trestle Board; I set out to initiate a series of banquets and special events to try to draw Brothers and their families back to Lodge functions; I set out, as much as anything, to try to show the Brothers that there was more than one way to fill the East in a Masonic Lodge.

The problem, though, that I think ambitious and progressive Masters will encounter in almost any Lodge is that there is no way to ensure continuity of direction. Perhaps this is as it should be; no Master should try to tie the hands of those who come after him. The best he can hope for, as I see it, looking back at the East, is that, by his example and direction, he can show those following him a path that worked for him.

The man who sits in the East in any Lodge, in any year, will bring his own strengths and weaknesses to that position. It is up to him to 'play to his strengths;' the PMs are there to help him deal with and overcome his weaknesses--or, at least, to see to it that those weaknesses do not interfere with his year as Master, or cause lasting problems for the Lodge.

But, the Master needs to run the Lodge. I found that, with a definite sense of direction and purpose, and with a mission statement set out early in my year, I got good support from almost all the Brothers in the Lodge, and from all the PMs whom I approached for assistance. (By the same token, I suspect that a Master who tries to simply fill the chair, with no program, with no ideas, and with no purpose other than putting in time, will have problems. Those problems, in my opinion, are of his own making.)

The Master of a Masonic Lodge has tremendous powers. Used for the benefit of the Lodge, and with a definite purpose and program, those powers enhance the Lodge and the sense of belonging that all Brothers should feel. Misused, or not used, those powers are simply wasted--and the Brothers are left feeling that they are being dictated to, or

are without a sense of direction. Either way, the Brothers, and the Lodge, lose.

3. The Greek philosopher Aristotle tells us that there are three kinds of friendship:
  - We have friends who make us laugh, whose company we enjoy.
  - We have friends who are useful to us, who lend things to us, who do things for us that we cannot do well for ourselves.
  - Finally, we have "friends in the good." This friendship occurs when we are united with others in a common undertaking, which lifts us to another level, giving us a desire to strive for something beyond our own lives. This is the highest form of friendship, and we seek it, says Aristotle, because we quite simply become better people for having "friends in the good."

If you will take care that the Masonry practiced in your Lodge, during your year In the East, is reflective of Aristotle's third kind of friendship, a lot of things that could go wrong will take care of themselves!

I hope you enjoy your tenure In the East as much as I did. I wouldn't have missed the year I spent as Worshipful Master for anything, and will have good memories of that year for the rest of my life!

## **Assignment**

**Describe the qualities of a "successful" Master in your lodge and also explain what "successful" means to the average Mason.**