

The Importance of Television

Short Talk No. 1

A short talk about the importance of television in promoting the craft by **Brother John Randolph Martin**. Orange-Charles Town Lodge No.14 AFM. Charleston. SC. Jacques DeMolay Lodge No.1390 AF&AM. Houston. Texas, Holland Lodge No. 1 AF&AM. Houston. Texas. Member of the Philalethes Society. et al.

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Brethren: These days, we hear a lot of discussion concerning one-day classes versus the need to take time to learn the work of the craft. and we often get so worked up over how to make masons that we miss an important point. If we are trying to get masonry back on its feet, whether we give one day classes or one degree per year is almost irrelevant! Why? Because. as one wise old past master used to say, "You may not be able to make a horse drink if you lead him to the water, but first you first must lead him to the water!" In other words. a man cannot be brought to masonic light unless we can get him to the lodge in the first place.

Here is our answer: Television!

We know that we can sell masonry and the initiation system in whatever form it takes. we have done it before! What we often cannot do, and have historically been prevented from doing, is to tell the good man that we want him. Such recruiting is NOT what is proposed here! That, too,. can be counterproductive! If a good man comes to us "of his free will and accord", you and I you can get him initiated, passed and raised one way or another. But, if he is asked to join, the good man is just as likely not to value the experience no matter how it is conducted. Here is the crux of the matter! He must come to us and ask in order to truly value what we have to give.

So...how do we get him to come! Easy! Advertise! Do "public relations" activities. Get a higher profile in the press. But MOST important, get on television! Television is the key, one way or the other.

Television is the common denominator for all of our "brave new world". The Shriners are already beginning to see this, and their excellent shrine hospital public service announcements are an example.

If we are willing to see this, then we, the blue lodges, can blossom into this new era of electronics.

How do we know this? Great examples abound! The Navy gets large PERCENTAGE increases in recruits every time there is a new television series about the Navy (like 'JAG', or even "McHales Navy "). And we do not have to get into the television series business. Every time a "good guy" on TV is identified with an organisation or cause during a show, the calls and public interest go up dramatically. Also. every TV station needs public service announcements, so get in there and push. These are just a few ideas to start the creativity rolling.

Most, if not all, grand lodges have public relations committees. If you, as a mason, are really concerned with doing more than you are to encourage new petitions, or to prevent the loss of membership, put some time into this grand lodge committee.. They probably need your help.

Some may say that the reason for sagging numbers and lost members is that so many good men are watching television instead of coming to lodge, but as long as these men are in front of the tube, let's show them the craft as a worthwhile alternative.

Of course we need to find ways to retain members, but we are most vulnerable at the application level. We must keep looking to television as a tool. Because we cannot bring a man to masonic light unless we can lead him to the lodge. And these days, you may not be able to lead a man to a lodge unless you show it to him on television, first!!
