

FORMULA FOR L.M.W.W.B.A.O.

Formula for Lodge Member Who Would Be An Officer

There may be many ways for men to become popular; two at least are common in everyday life; the popularity which comes from the political formula "be all things to all men," including hail fellow well met with the hail fellow, solemn sanctimony with the sanctimonious, agreeing with the views of the argumentative, never taking sides strongly enough to offend, unless on that of the overwhelming majority.

Sometimes this succeeds, even in Lodges. But the real way for the Lodge Member Who Would Be An Officer to be popular with his fellow members in Lodge is to have them popular with him!

It is of this formula that these lines are written.

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. attends the meetings of his Lodge; he arrives on time and stays until the close, not for the sake of popularity, but because of genuine interest in his Lodge and its deliberations, degrees, entertainments. Being a sensible man he knows that not all meetings can be unalloyed joys; sometimes a program drags, or the degree is less than good, or the entertainment is amateurish. But in his Lodge and so he sticks it through to help by his presence.

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. pays his dues promptly. All members should; a majority do; he who hopes for preferment, must.

More than dues, he pays attention! Nothing more disconcerts a Master, officers, interested brethren, than two non-interested members holding a *sotto voce* conversation during a discussion on the floor. It is a cause for justifiable resentment of what is, after all, bad manners. And neither the Master who must appoint or the Lodge which may elect, look with favor on brethren who lack good manners!

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. never refuses an assignment to a committee, whether investigation of @ petitioner, examination of a visitor, or any other. He welcomes such tasks and even seeks them. Some one has to do the work of the Lodge. The best officers and finest Secretary, alone cannot make a Lodge. They have well determined duties, and usually go far beyond them. But they cannot do it all, nor should they try. Some members must take the interest, bear the heat and burden of the day, do the job for the love of Lodge. The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. is wise if he early makes it a part of himself. Not only the Lord loves a cheerful giver; men love those who serve for the love of service.

If there is a Fellowcraft Team or Club in the Lodge, the L.M.W.W.B.A.O. joins it. A good Fellowcraft Team can be of great help to any Lodge, any Master. Not only do they materially

add to the dignity of the second section of the Masters' degree; they can do a hundred and one jobs in and for the Lodge as any Master fortunate enough to have a cooperative Team knows.

If there is no Fellowcraft Team or Club regularly organized in Lodge, the L.M.W.W.B.A.O. is always in that group which works in that part of the Master's degree. If the Master plans an especially fine ceremony for some "big night," the L.M.W.W.B.A.O. is among those prompt for the rehearsal. He comes not just to be seen, but because he is genuinely interested in making the degree a thing of beauty and precision and so does his small part to help make it so.

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. of course learns the work of an officer. If he hopes to be appointed or elected a Junior Steward, he must assuredly know in advance what a Junior Steward has to do and how he does it. Those duties differ to some extent in the several jurisdictions; in some the position demands little more than carrying a rod and being part of the picture. In others, the Stewards have well defined duties of a more exacting nature. Particularly will the prospective Steward learn his job in those Lodges in which a Steward is expected to be just that --- one who provides things to eat and drink. It is said---with what justice the reader can determine by consulting his own midriff---that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, One way to popularity is to provide excellent food and drink for hungry Lodge members, and he who knows the gentle arts of marketing and preparation of food for Lodges will, sooner or later, have a chance to display his knowledge. If his offerings prove unusual, there is very apt to be strong representations made to the new Master-"How about appointing Brother Jones? We never had better food, more quickly served, with less fuss, feathers, foolishness and waste than the night he had charge!"

In some Lodges Marshall or Master of Ceremonies is at the "foot of the line." A good Master of Ceremonies can do much to make, and more to mar, the success of a degree in which he has an important if silent part. The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. makes this knowledge a part of himself. Someday the incumbent will be late or absent. If the Master knows a capable substitute is ready, he will put him in---and a long step is taken towards realization of the ambition.

The would-be officer will do himself no injury if he learns the ritualistic work. It is not essential, prior to appointment or election, but it is helpful. A Lodge which knows that Brother A, just appointed Junior Steward, already knows the Middle Chamber lecture is much more apt to be satisfied with the appointment than with the elevation of some brother whose ritualistic capabilities are an unknown quantity.

In some Lodges so many brethren know the ritual, so many are anxiously clamorous for an opportunity to take part in a degree, that ritualistic proficiency is no especial asset. But in a great many Lodges the Master must depend upon a Past Master for a substitute when some officer is unavoidably absent or ill. While most all Past Masters are touchingly confident that they "know the ritual just as well as ever a demonstration frequently shows many, if natural, lapses in memory. Masters know this. Hence the Master who also knows that Brother A, on the side lines, is competent to fill in anywhere is usually well disposed towards giving him the chance whenever the chance occurs.

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. is sufficiently interested in Lodge discussions to know what they are about. Not necessarily does he take part; the chap who is f forever on his feet to argue pro or con gets to be considered argumentative for the sake of argument, if not a positive nuisance. When he does speak it is from conviction. He argues good naturedly; never under any circumstance does he use personalities. He always addresses the Master, says his say briefly and sits. Men like common sense. They like a man who has something intelligent to say, whether they agree with it or not. They like brevity, (and how!) So a brief argument occasionally on some motion is a point in any brother's favor; an argument on every occasion, and at length, will as surely keep a man out of the line as any known method.

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. has two inflexible rules: "don't butt in" and "keep my knife in its sheath." He doesn't try to tell the Tiler how to tile, the Secretary how to collect dues, the Senior Deacon how to deliver the Middle Chamber work. He does not instruct the Master in the art of the presiding nor tell the Treasurer how to keep accounts. If he has a constructive suggestion he tries to get it over as a question; "This occurred to me-maybe I'm all wrong, but I'd like to know - would it help any in collecting dues if we used registered mail?" Such a suggestion is without offense. Compare with: "If you were really on to your job, you'd use modern methods. Now where I work, I said to the President, I said 'if you want that money collected, I can tell you how to do it. I know all about collecting money. You use registered mail for your bills, and you'll get the money!' "

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. keeps his knife in its sheath, if indeed, he has a knife. He wants no one's job; has a knife out for no one. He does not criticise. Having common sense he knows that the only Perfect Man was crucified nineteen hundred and some years ago, and that ever since men have been making mistakes and will continue to make them; even he makes them! Consequently he does not tell his fellow members what a poor job John made of the charge, or how if Jim would only study a little, he could almost do a good obligation, or if old Tim, on the door, was a little less stingy he'd buy some glasses and recognize members when they came to the door. Poor Old Tim, going blind by inches; he knows every one by voice, and is beloved of the Lodge! Criticism of Tim will put the would be officer outside the pale for ever and a day!

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. knows that oil smoothes more bearings than sand. He goes out of his way to say something good about the chap who is all cast down because he made a mistake. Suppose the Junior Warden did leave a phrase out, or invert two words, or say "repaired" when he meant "retired" or spoke of a "heck-at-em" when he meant "hecatomb?" He's ashamed. Then some one says "swell job, fellah; oh, I saw you look worried when you made one little slip, but so what? It was a grand job and I'm proud of you!" How does the mistake maker feel? Compare with; "Gosh sakes, man, don't you know any better'n that? How can a man '*repair*' by a door? He has to '*retire*', you nit wit!" Even a laugh can't take the sting out of such a speech and no man likes the bee who stings him.

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. makes it a point to give something for nothing---perhaps it is better said: "he makes it a point to give something for his Masters' Wages."

Is there a contest, debate, spelling bee or other function requiring a prize? If a merchant, he gives something from his stock for a prize: if not, he buys something. It may be little, inexpensive, but

the point is in the offer. Do not misunderstand; no man should try to, and no man may, buy his way into favor. But willingness to give for the sake of the many is seldom confused in other men's minds with an attempt to buy favor. The man in modest circumstances, known to be anxious for election, who bought and presented a fifty dollar Bible or a hundred dollar flag to the Lodge might well be suspected. He who from the goodness of his heart and interest in the event offers to help out the entertainment committee staging some sort of a Lodge contest will not be misunderstood.

The ambitious brother is quick to offer his car for Lodge use; if a funeral, he can take so many. If on an outing, he has place for some brethren and their wives who have no car. If an old or a lame brother cannot easily get to Lodge, it is not too much trouble to drive out of his way to take him to Lodge. He visits the sick; he doesn't minister to the ill because he wants to be popular; he is genuinely interested in John or James or Tom and wants to tell him he is missed in Lodge and "Come on, fellow, get well soon so we can be back on the job together!"

The L.M.W.W.B.A.O. spends some spare time thinking up novel and different Lodge entertainments. No harried Entertainment Committee but happily will receive such suggestions; it may be they cannot accept one which may be old, or tried-and-found-wanting, or too expensive, or whatever. But Entertainment Committee members have thankless tasks, and suggestions are like a drink of water to the thirsty!

The L.M.W.W.B.A * O. remembers names. Easy and simple in a small Lodge, a memory for names in a large Lodge is a great asset. To be able to speak to 'a brother who hasn't been in Lodge for a year and call him by name both surprises and pleases. Every brother is human. All humans have a certain amount of vanity. To be remembered by name is at once the subtlest and the simplest of flatteries.

Finally (although this catalog could be extended for pages) -the L.M.W.W.B.A.O. knows how to smile a natural smile; a smile that comes from within, not from pulling face muscles by an effort of will. Perhaps it is best said that he knows how to smile with his eyes. Any man may force a grin but eyes smile only from a smiling heart. Smiles beget smiles. Smiles thus begot evoke friendly feelings. Friendly feelings make for popularity. Real popularity-not the professional politician variety-brine the votes of members, the approbation of brethren when a Master appoints the smiling brother.