

DISTRICT 23 AD HOC VISITING COMMITTEE (2018)

The Mandate of the Committee

The committee agreed that its mandate would be to come up with creative ways to increase visiting about the district, with the support of the District Deputy Grand Master and the six lodges comprising District 23.

The members of the committee either confirmed that their lodge and their Worshipful Master supported the initiative, or that they would confirm that support prior to the next meeting.

The Goals

The committee agreed that a good goal would be to have at least one visitor from each of the other five lodges at every meeting of each lodge in the district, and that another good goal would be to have all the brethren from each lodge commit to visiting the other five lodges at least once each year.

Specific Proposals

The Committee came up with six specific proposals to increase visiting:

1. Focus on the Travelling Gavels and new Brethren

This initiative would involve placing an enhanced focus on the Travelling Gavels (District Gavel and Joppa Gavel).

- A monthly report could be made to the district ensuring that every lodge knew where the gavels were in the hopes of creating a “buzz”.
- Younger members would be encouraged to build a tradition of visiting early by changing the rules of the Joppa Gavel (subject to approval by Joppa Lodge) so that each EA and FC who visited counted for two members towards the total required to obtain the gavel.

2. Visiting Contest

This initiative would involve having a yearly contest to recognize the lodge that visited the most throughout the year with a prize and a trophy (bragging rights).

- Each member of the Visiting Committee would track the visitors to their Lodge from the Porch book and report the details.
- At the end of the year, the lodge that had visited the most would be recognized with an excellent bottle of Scotch and a trophy with a yearly plaque.

3. Visiting Passports

This initiative would involve expanding on VW Bro. Andsten’s very popular programme from Dogwood Lodge.

- Each lodge would obtain the visiting passports and issue them to their members.
- Each lodge secretary would either stamp (would have to obtain stamps) or sign the brother’s passport.

- At the end of the year, each lodge could recognize their most prolific visitor in whatever way they chose.

4. Greater use of Technology.

Langley and Dogwood use a phone app called "What's App" as a real-time communication option. For the brethren who want to use it, it has proven to be a very helpful tool. Eureka Lodge uses a Facebook page and Messenger for a similar purpose.

Communication in this fashion could easily be used to increase visitation.

It was determined that the other three lodges would set up a similar system for the brethren who wanted to use it, (created/maintained by a tech savvy volunteer) and that the goal would be to increase use and familiarity in each lodge, and ultimately create a district-wide communication tool.

5. Creation of a District-wide Email and Phone Number Book

Will assist in the brethren communicating plans and invitations, which should increase visitation. For privacy reasons, a brother would have to give permission to have his contact information added to the list, and the lodge secretary will need to be involved in this process.

Each member of the visitation committee will take this to their lodge and their secretary, and whatever contact information comes from it will be collated by W Bro. Whitelaw.

6. Shared Degrees

Shared degrees encourages visitation both for the shared degree and beyond. A number of lodges in our district have conferred shared or joint degrees for a significant period of time.