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Mark Twain Award
For Excellence in Masonic Awareness
2012

Summary

The Fun Has Just Begun!

All We Do!

Byron Masonic Lodge #80 is now in the second year of a multi-year plan of Masonic Awareness. After an exceptional year in 2011 we took off in high gear at the get-go in 2012. Our lodge chose to continue with the 2012 Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award entry.

In 2012, our lodge continued and refined activities from 2011, and added many new things that would make our lodge one that would increase knowledge of masonry to our members, our community, other District 18 lodges, and community groups.

We have been able this year to dramatically increase our Masonic charity, increase our community involvement, and become a model lodge for others in our district and beyond.

In our small community it is now rare to hear questions about "what" we do. Instead, we hear comments about "all" we do.

With all this in mind, we realize that Masonic awareness is not a one year commitment. It is a continuing, evolving process that showcases to all the rich traditions, expanding charity, and faithful compassion within and outside our community.

2012 has been an exciting year for Byron Lodge #80, but the fun has just begun!





Byron Lodge #80 F & A M

Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award 2012

I. **PLANNING** for the 2012 Mark Twain Award began with the District 18 Multi-Lodge Open Installation of Officers with six (6) lodges participating (Appendix 1) This event was a great kick-off to both Masonic awareness and officer excitement.

At our January officers meeting we discussed goals for the coming year and how we would continue and expand Masonic awareness from within our lodge and outward. From this discussion, goals were established and programs planned for the coming year.

Our first goal was to maintain our commitment to the wants and needs of our members. We chose to mentor our new officers with a veteran mason to help with ritual. We also decided to gather more member input regarding potential charitable donations to individuals or organizations that might benefit from our Masonic charity in the coming year. Finally, we agreed to meet with members individually and see that their involvement with masonry met their expectations of the craft.

Our second goal, in line with the ideals of masonry, was to increase our community partnerships with local organizations. We wanted to become the place the community could turn to in times of need. This meant becoming both identifiable and accessible to the public.

A third goal was to increase connections with other lodges in the district. This goal was one that would help us to unify the district and expand the Masonic ideal of brotherhood. Of the many suggestions the most important was to get other lodges involved in the planning of district activities that would increase the public's awareness of Masonic activities across the entire district.

Our final goal was to increase our Masonic charity. First, to increase our contributions to various community charities. Second, to become a facilitator for community groups to help raise funds for their charities. Finally, to recognize people in our organization, or out, for their positive contributions to the community.

After these goals were set, we proceeded to create a calendar of activities that would help us achieve these goals. The calendar was established with meetings and discussion within our lodge and with members from other district lodges.

II. **IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION** to achieve our four broad goals. Starred (*) items are new activities this year.

A. Commitment to the members



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1. Monday Euchre Party (every Monday at 7 PM)
 2. Festive Board
 3. Past Masters Night
 4. 30th Annual Pig Roast (Appendix 2)
 5. Newsletters (every other month – examples attached)
 6. Annual Grand Lodge
 7. *Assisted Masonic Business owner effected by fire
 8. *Casino Bus Trip to Greektown Casino (Appendix 3)
 9. *Casino Bus Trip to FireKeepers Casino
- B. Community Partnerships
10. *Byron Fireworks Committee - Euchre Tournament
 11. Byron Fireworks Committee – MI Child ID Event
 12. Byron Chamber of Commerce – Memorial Day Parade
 13. Byron Chamber of Commerce – Santa arrives Friday PM lodge is used for treats and warmth
 14. *Community – Hall rented several times
 15. Community – Businessmen’s Dinner and Honors Night (Appendix 4)
 16. *Community – lodge opened during the night that Byron’s main street of businesses burned down (Appendix 5)
 17. *Community – lodge became base of operations for police as arson investigations ensued that week
 18. Argentine Twnshp Fire Dept – Open House with MI Child ID Program (Appendix 6)
 19. *Argentine Twnshp Fire Dept – 1st Casino Bus Trip
 20. *Argentine Twnshp Fire Dept – 2nd Casio Bus Trip
 21. Local Firefighters - Chili Cook-off (Appendix 7)
 22. Boy Scouts - meet at lodge every week (Thursday)
 23. Boy Scouts – Fun Fair & MI Child ID Event (Appendix 6)
 24. Byron Elementary School - Open House & MI Child ID
 25. *Byron Elementary School – Bikes for Books Program (Appendix 8)
 26. Byron High School - Scholarship Golf Outing (Appendix 9)
 27. Byron High School – Varsity Football Breakfast (Appendix 10)
 28. *Byron High School – FFA Cancer Victim Fund raiser (Appendix 11)
 29. *Byron High School – Masonic Model Student Asst. Prog.
- C. Connect with other lodges in District 18
30. *District 18 Installation of Officers (Appendix 1)
 31. *District 18 Website [www.masonsdistrict18.webs.com]
 32. District 18 Mason of the Year Dinner at Gracies



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33. District 18 Shiawassee County Fair MI Child ID Event
34. *District 18 Home Depot MI Child ID (Appendix 6)
35. *District 18 Lodge Renewal
36. District 18 Annual Lodge Memorial
37. *District 18 BGP Rep. Installed (Neil Braden)
38. *District 18 Masonic Awareness Open Installation of Officers planned for December 15, 2012.
39. *District 18 Masonic Advertisement in the Varsity Monthly Magazine (Appendix 12)

D. Increase Masonic Charity

40. *Millionaire Party Fundraisers, Poker Palace (Appendix 13)
41. *Policeman's Unity Tour Ride (Appendix 3)
42. Breakfast with Santa Saturday
43. Breakfast with the Easter Bunny (Appendix 14)
44. *Veterans Dinner on Election Day (Appendix 15)
45. *10 Bikes donated to Bikes for Books Program (Appendix 8)
46. *Sponsored Little League Baseball Team (Appendix 16)
47. *Halloween Trick-or-Treating (candy/cocoa/coffee)
48. *United Methodist Church Halloween Party Donation
49. *Lodge became a member of Byron Chamber of Commerce
50. Shiawassee Health Dept. Immunization Clinic Donation (Appendix 17)
51. *Eagle Riders Donation (Appendix 17)
52. *Sponsored the Miss American Speech at Byron High School

III. EVALUATION

We set four lofty goals in January 2012. Based on activities, community support and cooperation, and district 18 involvement, this was a fun and successful year. As we did this evaluation, we looked at evidence from newspapers, community leaders, and fellow masons to determine our successes.

Byron Lodge #80 increased in all areas of our influence and public awareness of our lodge. We increased our community scholarships and grants from \$6,500 in 2011, to over \$12,000 in 2012. Leaders from the Chamber of Commerce, schools, churches, and community groups sought us out to help raise money or provide needed support. A red-letter day was when the school, Chamber of Commerce, and Fireworks Committee all called seeking help and we gave it. With all these activities going (Appendix 19 - Calendar), we also took care of our "home." We re-sided the lodge, remodeled the bathrooms, spruced up the entryway, and lodge room. Before the end of the year we will add a new flat screen TV with DVD and hookups for outside programming for member enjoyment.



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Acknowledgement for all our efforts came when we were selected for various Masonic awards. First we were named a recipient of the “2011 Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award” (Appendix 18). Then we received an award from Grand Lodge as a “Lodge of the Year” (Appendix 18). This awards really motivated our members to do even more. A very humbling moment occurred when a new master was elected in Perry Lodge #350. Two members of our lodge were named as honorary members, and the new master pledged to get his lodge active, “Like Byron Lodge #80.” That placed a lump in all our throats!

An exciting event occurred in September when District 18 began an advertising campaign in the “Varsity Monthly” (Appendix 12), a local high school sports magazine published each month. This was a huge step in spreading Masonic awareness throughout our district, and made it possible for us to reach young men and their parents.

Moving beyond our local lodge, we now have a district website [www.masonsdistrict18.webs.com]. What a great way to move the district forward together. Another huge step to promoting brotherhood and cooperation between lodges.

From the beginning, with the District 18 Open Installation of six lodges (Appendix 1), to a better and well planned district installation this coming December, IT HAS BEEN A FUN RIDE!

Thank you for your consideration.

Members of Byron Lodge #80 F & A M
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