HAVING DECORUM PROBLEMS?

ANSWERS FOR THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

How do you treat situations when members act ungentlemanly, unladylike or disorderly in the social quarters or during social sessions of the lodge? We have created the following scenario for you to follow step by step.

Joe Smith, an officer of your lodge, is in the social quarters late one evening and is cursing and shouting obscenities at several members. Brother Jones, a member, comes up to the bar to order a drink and asks Joe Smith to keep his comments to himself. Joe Smith throws a punch at Brother Jones. It is obvious that Joe is disorderly and members of your lodge are complaining to the administrator about his behavior. What should you do?

It is the responsibility of the House Committee of your lodge to prepare and formulate rules and regulations to govern the operation of the social quarters. It is a violation of Section 48.9 of the General Laws of the Supreme Lodge to engage in vulgar, profane, indecent or disorderly conduct. Therefore, Joe Smith has violated the General Laws and must be dealt with according to the General Laws. However, proper procedures must be followed. Listed below are the procedures the lodge should follow to properly comply with the General Laws.

1. Joe Smith may and should be suspended by the House Committee from all social activities pending a hearing. He can attend no social events of the lodge, including lodge social events off premises. The only activity Joe Smith can attend is an official lodge meeting, arriving no earlier than 10 minutes before the meeting, and leaving no later than 10 minutes after the conclusion of the meeting.

2. The House Committee must schedule a hearing, notifying Joe Smith in writing of the date, time and place of the hearing at least five (5) actual days in advance of the hearing (not counting the day of mailing or the day of the hearing). Notices must include specific details of the ungentlemanly, unladylike, or disorderly conduct, such as when and where the conduct occurred, who was involved and the rule violated, etc. (See attached sample letter)

3. The House Committee must conduct an investigation into the incident, which may include written statements from those involved and witnesses. If it is a very serious matter which could possibly lead to a criminal or civil proceeding, written and signed statements are highly recommended.

4. Joe Smith must appear at the hearing and be afforded an opportunity to present any witnesses or evidence to refute the charge(s). If Joe Smith does not appear at the hearing, his suspension is continued until such time as he appears at a hearing. At the hearing, he should be allowed to present his side of the incident. This is not a disciplinary proceeding. Joe is not entitled to be represented by counsel or cross-examine witnesses. Decisions are in the “discretion” of the House Committee but must be fair, just, equitable and consistent.

5. If Joe Smith disagrees with the decision of the House Committee, he can submit an appeal in writing to the General Governor, Steven F. Greene. This appeal should be sent to the General Governor’s office, Moose International, Mooseheart, IL 60539. With his letter of appeal, he should send the notice of the hearing that was sent to him by the House Committee and any other pertinent Information. The General Governor will investigate his appeal and inform him in writing of his decision. House Committee decisions are never overturned except when proper procedures weren’t followed or there was an abuse of discretion.

6. This procedure is for violations of Section 48.9 only. It does not apply to charges preferred under the chapters entitled, “Disciplinary Proceedings”. For more information on filing disciplinary charges, call the General Governor’s office for assistance.

The following is an “example” of a notice that could be sent to Joe Smith:

Date

Mr. Joe Smith
123 Main Street
Anytown, USA 12345

Re: House Committee Hearing

Dear Brother Smith:

You are hereby notified that a hearing has been scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on _____ (insert date of hearing at least 5 days plus day of mailing and day of hearing) at Anytown Lodge #0000 for the purpose of hearing House Committee charges against you. You are charged with a violation of Section 48.9 of the General Laws of the Supreme Lodge in that on _____(date)_____ while in the social quarters of the lodge, at approximately 10:00 p.m., you allegedly used profanity against several members in the social quarters and physically assaulted Brother Jones when he asked you to be quiet. Your conduct is alleged to be ungentlemanly and disorderly.

You are suspended from all social activities of the lodge pending your appearance before the House Committee and a decision has been made. You are not entitled to counsel or to confront witnesses. However, you may testify on your own behalf and present such evidence or witnesses you may have to refute the charge(s). You will be notified in writing of the decision of the House Committee after it has concluded its investigation into this matter.

Sincerely,

House Committee of Anytown Lodge #0000

By: _____

The following is a sample letter that could be sent to Brother Smith following the hearing:

Date

Brother Joe Smith
123 Main Street
Anytown, USA 12345

Re: Violation of Section 48.9 of the General Laws

Dear Brother Smith:

The House Committee has determined that your conduct in the lodge social quarters on _____ was ungentlemanly and disorderly. It is the decision of the House Committee that you be suspended for a period of sixty (60) days from all social activities of the lodge. You have been suspended since _____, therefore, your suspension will terminate on _____.

During your suspension you may attend all official meetings of the lodge, but must arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before the meeting and must leave within 10 minutes following adjournment. This suspension only applies to your social privileges in Anytown Lodge #0000 and does not affect your privilege to enter the social quarters of any other lodge or your rights of membership in the Loyal Order of Moose.

Sincerely,

House Committee of Anytown Lodge #0000

By:_____