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#### **HOW DO MEN SPEND THEIR LEISURE TIME?**

by

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#### Introduction

The information we will discuss is contained in the findings of a research study commissioned from Louis Harris and Associates, a well known polling and research firm. The need for this research has been prompted by some concerns which we have about the decline in membership in the Shrine of North America, "caused by the decline in membership in the Craft and a general world wide apathy toward Masonic involvement" The research sought to explore the values and attitudes of North American men toward the use of leisure time, and in particular their feelings about belonging to organizations like ours. As we are sure you know, we are not crying wolf Recent decline in membership of the Shrine caused the Imperial Council to examine critically the role of our organization in today's society. We are asking some tough questions. We must face the answers unflinchingly and take appropriate steps to restore the prestige which the Craft and the Shrine have enjoyed over the years. With the help of research like this, we have a good shot at it. It will not be easy, however, and will need the concentrated efforts of all of us to get it done.

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In this survey, the Shrine was not mentioned by name at any time. In other words, we have sought to explore men's experiences and opinions without introducing a possible bias which could be attached to fraternal or Masonic groups. Secondly, the vast majority of men surveyed are neither Masons nor members of fraternal organizations. As a result they may not be aware of the strong commitments you have made to become Freemasons and Shriners. Their views on organizations are, nonetheless, valid in the context of what to be important about uses of their time. The findings are striking if not easy to view! View them impartially and with thought.

#### Context

##### Who Did We Interview?

The focus of this interview is on men aged thirty-five to fifty-five. This bracket being considered most amenable to considering new ventures like joining an organization. Men younger than this are felt to have other preoccupations; men older than fifty-five are less likely to embark on anything as different or challenging as becoming Freemasons and Shriners if they have not already done so.

The findings are based on interviews with a nationwide sample of 1009 men with the results being weighed to reflect current Census Bureau figures for age, race and education. In other words, the survey can be said to represent fairly the views of men in that given age bracket.

Over six hundred men were kind enough to be interviewed twice! The first survey addressed the broader subject of leisure time whereas the second interview

explored attitudes toward organizations, including fraternal organizations. Each telephone interview lasted about twenty minutes.

#### Objectives of the Research

The research objectives set out were to:

- Develop a comprehensive, current picture of values, attitudes, goals and behaviour of men between 35 and 55 as regards to their leisure time.
- Determine whether or not, how and to whom an organization like the Craft or Shrine appeals within this group.
- Determine whether or not and how the Shrine could restore growth.

#### What Did the Interviewers Cover?

Each of the first wave of 1009 interviews addressed the following range of topics:

- What do American men aged 35-55 value in the allocation of their leisure time: learning, networking, relaxing, exercising, doing philanthropic work, having fun, making friendships, developing craft, team and group activities or other objectives?
- How much time and money do men have to pursue leisure activities?
- What organizations and opportunities compete for attention: public service, private hobbies, civic organizations, church, friends and family, clubs, schools and the like?
- How do men actually allocate leisure time? How would they ideally do so?
- Are men joiners or loners? Would they rather include wives, girlfriends and close friends or sometimes exclude them?
- What types of organizations seem most understanding of and responsive to leisure time values of men?
- What is the extent of involvement in such organizations today? Would men like to be more or less involved?

Each of the second wave of 617 interviews examined the following:

- The appeal of certain descriptive variations of eleven characteristics belonging to an organization which men might join.

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- The relative importance men place on these eleven characteristics in their decision to join.
- Whether or not men currently belong to any civic or fraternal organizations. The likelihood of men joining several hypothetical organizations.

#### The Major Findings of the Survey

##### Part 1: The Use of Leisure Time

This first part of the survey corresponds to the first interview and the first set of objectives which concern experiences of and attitudes towards leisure

time. of course, all discussions of leisure time must be seen in the light of busy lives. Most men in the age group of 35-55 are employed and are family men or have other immediate, ongoing commitments. Leisure time has to be fitted in somehow to hectic schedules and is precious. Men value their choice of leisure activities and, presumably, would need persuasion to change their choice significantly.

#### Participation in Sports and Outdoor Activities

North American men are very active! Overall, just over half (52%) participate in active sports and/or outdoor activities.

-Of this 52%, over a third (38%) take part in hunting, fishing, camping or hiking. In aggregate, these are the most popular outdoor activities, considerably more so than formal sports.

-Golf is the most popular sport and is played by 9% of these men.

-The only other sports or outdoor activities in which at least one in ten of these men takes part

in on a regular basis are baseball and softball (14%) and basketball (11%).

-The mean time devoted by men to these activities is over six hours per week - a considerable

and real commitment. Probably most of this time is devoted on week-ends.

Men take part in active sports or outdoor activities for three reasons: to have a good time with people closest to them (83%), to keep in good physical shape and to spend time outdoors (71%).

#### Leisure Time at Home

Men in this age group use their leisure time at home to relax. Over three-quarters watch TV (many of them three hours per day) while a similar number listen to radio or music (71%) or read books or magazines (69%) on a regular basis. About a third pursue hobbies, twenty-one per cent play cards while only nine per cent are involved in art or sculpting.

-TV watching is the most time-consuming at home leisure pastime. It takes up two and a half hours

per night while radio/music/CDs takes 2.2 hours, reading 1.4 hours, card playing one hour and fixing things around the house one hour.

-Men are about evenly matched in doing things alone (39%) or with the family (43%). Men in this age

group do not entertain friends at home a great deal. Only about one third (35%) entertain friends

monthly or more often, one quarter or (25%) do not entertain and the balance entertain at home less

than once a month.

#### Entertainment and Going Out

American men eat out a lot!

Over four in ten visit a restaurant at least once a week with their families.

Over three quarters (77%) of these do so at least monthly.

Over twenty-five per cent visit a cafe at least once a week with colleagues or clients.

Apart from their visits to restaurants, not many men interviewed take part in entertainment which

involves going out.

Fewer than one in ten men participate weekly in spectator sports.

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Four per cent manage a weekly party while six per cent visit movies.

Two per cent go to theatres, concerts or dance performances. In fact well over half of the men interviewed say that they rarely or never do these things.

#### Participation in Voluntary Community Activities, Clubs, Civic Organizations and Societies

It may surprise you to discover that well over half (57%) of the age group of 35-55 are not involved in non-paid volunteer, community affairs or activities. Among those who do get involved, the most common activities are those associated with church (15%) and youth related work (13%). A few men volunteer for charity fund-raisers (5%), ambulance driving or fire fighting (4%), assisting in the hospital/medical field (2%) or helping with social counseling (2%). Among those who participate in community affairs, the mean weekly time men spend is 3.6 hours, a considerable commitment from their busy schedules.

#### Availability and Use of Leisure Time

When asked, "Where do you have most problems having enough time? Work? chores? leisure for you? only eight per cent said that there was no problem or that the question didn't apply". Even allowing for the fact that this is a leading question, this is a remarkable admission of busy lives. -Nearly half (47%) have problems finding enough leisure time for themselves or to be with their families. -Just under a third (29%) say that the pressing problem is finding enough time for work.

Men regard three attributes of leisure time as very important: that they are able to relax or wind down, to keep physically fit and to do philanthropic work or good for others. Additional aspects are also important, namely: networking in one way or another, learning new skills or crafts and socializing for fun.

Very few men (5%) regard "spending time with other men" as a very important component of leisure time. This, of course, is a critically important finding given its implications for fraternal organizations. It is quite clear that men in the 35-55 age group are strongly oriented to spending time with family and friends, not with other men. While these men acknowledge that "men only" organizations have their place, they tend to think that such organizations are for other men, not themselves.

#### Part 2: Appeal of Attributes of Organizations Introduction

This part of the survey summarizes men's attitudes towards organizations. First, men describe what characteristics they would consider appealing in an organization (Whether or not they would join is another matter). Second, men assess the likelihood of their joining specific kinds of organizations although none of them actual ones but all designed to have some of the attributes of the Shrine.

It is obvious that the overall goal of an organization is important to men 35 to 55. Other goals they say they find 'very appealing' include an educational goal (48%); self-improvement or self-enhancement (43%); to socialize and have fun (38%) and philanthropic or charitable activities (38%). The men interviewed regard the opportunity to make new friends as an important attribute of an organization (44%) as well as fellowship with people like themselves (38%). A

fraternity-type atmosphere is not considered as a vital benefit gained from membership in an organization or club for it is considered very appealing by only one in ten. To counter this, the men surveyed especially support charitable activities that are oriented towards children. Also the men polled find it appealing that these charitable activities are directed to a specific cause such as a finding a cure for a disease or medical condition or supporting a hospital. Men do not want policies for membership that are exclusionary in any way or that hint at elitism. In particular men in this age group are not interested in belonging to an organization which accepts only

30. male members. The only membership "scenarios" for organizations which men find appealing are those which include family members in some way, particularly spouses or partners. Men 35 - 55 would want fees to join and costs associated with membership to be modest, making it easy for many to join. Those surveyed are unequivocal in expressing their belief that any organization they belonged to would have to be open to all races, ethnic or cultural groups and religions and would have a dress code which is left unspecified or open so that "You wear what you want."

The major goal of an organization is the most prominent factor in deciding whether or not to join. This is especially significant for the Shrine because the second most important attribute is that the association has a focus on charitable activities. The Shrine exhibits many characteristics which are most appealing to men 35-55:

- The Shrine's male only membership is a drawback to men in this age group.
- Some of the Shrine's other requirements: the distinctive headdress or Fez and elaborate uniforms
  - as well as the challenging membership requirements of Freemasonry clearly have little appeal
  - or may actually discourage joining.
- The Shrine's involvement in children's hospitals, charity, socializing and having fun is generally acceptable but probably not sufficient enough as "drivers" for men to join such a fraternity.

#### Participation in and Attitudes toward Civic and Fraternal Organizations

-About a quarter of men 35 to 55 currently belong to some kind of civic or community organization but very few belong to a fraternity.

- Only one in ten says that he is "very likely" to join a civic or fraternal association in the future
- Only six per cent said that they would be very likely to join an organization closely matching the Shrine even without Masonic association. However, very likely membership more than doubles (14%) with the inclusion of spouses and / or family members.

- The research explored the appeal of specific characteristics of organizations. Many of the attributes are descriptive of the Shrine but of course without naming it. Some men found many of these characteristics attractive. Those men aged 35 to 55 who found most (10 of the 13) qualities attractive were "profiled" as a group. These men are slightly younger, lower

in income, less educated and more ethnically diverse  
than the average American male  
aged 35 to 55.

In Conclusion

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to you to plan  
your future and that of  
the Fraternity.

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