

The Assigner

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The Assigner is a software program written to assist with the assignment of Kingdom Hall cleaning, yard maintenance, and meeting attendants.

Introduction

It was never my intention to write such software for a number of reasons. The main one being that not all congregations schedule in the same manner, thus making the usefulness of a fixed schedule format useless to many.

As said, it was not my intention, however, one of our elders who had used *The Scheduler* for public talk scheduling and now has the responsibility for scheduling Kingdom Hall tasks asked for a simple program to help him with the chore. He was using Word and the manual input was becoming overly tedious.

What started out as a simple program has developed into one that is much more full and very flexible.

Will *The Assigner* be expanded upon? *Probably ...* but not for a while. In the meantime, if it helps you and your congregation, please use it.

Purpose

The authorized schedule for rotation of all congregations is usually originated by the Kingdom Hall Operating Committee. This schedule is not meant to replace that schedule. But it is incorporated into a congregation schedule so that members can keep track of which congregation is scheduled for cleaning or yard duty.

Registration of *The Assigner*

Please do not register this software. Registration is **not** necessary. However, if you ask for help it would be nice to know who you are and what part of the world you're living in.

KH Cleaning, Yard & Attendants

The Assigner is a free software program designed to make easier the chore of assigning service groups to Kingdom Hall cleaning and yard maintenance and brothers for meeting attendant responsibilities.

- A feature of the software is that you can manually enter all assignments, thus making the software report the way you want it to.
- **Or** you can turn this tedious chore over to the software and let it schedule all groups and brothers.
- **Or** you can allow it to first do the scheduling and then manually modify the schedule to suit your special conditions.

Data Entry Required

Very little! What must be entered are the names of congregations that share your Kingdom Hall, the names of your service groups and names of your attendant brothers.

This will enable mouse clicked drop down lists for manual entry and will provide the resource data for automatic assigning.

System Configuration

Several system options which are discussed below can be chosen to “shape” the report in the direction you'd like it to be.

Start Up Process Description

- The software first creates dated blank records for many weeks beginning on the day your congregation starts its week. (Back in the “good old days” weeks always started on a Sunday. But somehow that got changed when I wasn't looking. 😞)
- After the weekly records are created, congregations, service groups, and brothers can be entered into them manually or automatically.

- A schedule suitable for posting or distribution can then be printed.

Date Format

The Assigner has been written to be compatible with USA, Euro, & International date formats. They all seem to work but if you are having difficulty, please let me know.

Other Languages

Sorry, but there are no plans to release this program in other languages. Don't have the skill, the time, or the patience.

Windows Operating System Software

The Assigner software requires a computer with either **Windows XP** or **Vista** operating system installed.

Important Notice about Monitors

The minimum screen resolution necessary is 1024 x 768 but 1280 x 1024 is much more desirable. A 17 inch screen is adequate but a 19 inch screen is better.

Access 2007 Software Required

- Access 2007 with Microsoft's Service Pack 1 (SP1) or the free Access 2007 runtime software compatible with SP1 is necessary.
- **Note:** If you haven't yet updated your version of Access 2007 with the SP1 software you can download it from Microsoft at:
<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=9EC51594-992C-4165-A997-25DA01F388F5&displaylang=en>
- **Note:** If you're going to use the free runtime software it must be Access SP1 compatible. A compatible free copy can be downloaded directly from Microsoft at:
<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=d9ae78d9-9dc6-4b38-9fa6-2c745a175aed&displaylang=en>

Start Up Procedure & Miscellaneous Features

Don't be in a Hurry!

Most will want a quick look at how the report will look without taking time to enter the resource information. Kind'a like wanting to see the scene from the top of a new bridge without waiting for the bridge to be built!

Be patient; follow the start up procedure and save yourself from irritation. The following files must have information entered into them and dated records must be created before attempting to print a report. There's not that much information to enter, so please don't short cut!

System Configuration

1. Enter the name of your congregation. Spell it the exact same way it'll be entered in the "Congregations Names List".
2. Do not add the word "**Congregation**".
3. Enter the name of the day your week starts.
4. Enter the number of weeks you want to create at one time. Choice is 24 or 48. (24 recommended)
5. Enter the number of consecutive weeks each congregation will be assigned to the KH cleaning and maintenance. Number of weeks permitted are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6. (4 recommended)
6. If your congregation does a light cleaning after each meeting, check the box.

Enter Group Names

1. Enter names of your congregation's service groups.
2. Entering a sort number is not necessary unless you want the order of groups scheduled to appear non-alphabetically.
3. Any number of group names can be entered.

4. You can delete names as they change. Follow the delete instruction on the screen.

Enter Attendant Names

1. Enter first and last names of brothers in any order you wish. The software will alphabetize them by last name.
2. If you have a preference to their order, number them.
3. They can be deleted should that become necessary. Follow the instruction on the screen.

Enter Congregation Names

1. Enter up to eight congregations that will share in the KH cleaning and maintenance.
2. The name of **your** congregation must be spelled exactly as it appears in the System Configuration screen.
3. If you want the congregation names to appear alphabetically, leave the "Sort" column blank. If you have preference in their order, number them.

Create Dated Blank Records

1. When you first begin using the software, there will be no dates showing in boxes 1 & 2 of this screen.
2. Plan carefully when you want the schedule to begin and enter that date.
3. The date you enter should be a date that is on the same week day you entered in the System Configuration record.
4. You may have previously been listing congregations and wish to continue the same order of rotation. If this is your situation, choose the date which will accomplish an orderly continuation.
5. *The Assigner* will quickly create 24 or 48 weeks of dated blank records.
6. You can repeat step #4 if you want to create more dated blank records.

Start Up Procedure & Miscellaneous Features

7. Why 24 or 48? Works best for multiple congregations and various consecutive week cycles.
8. Later, you can add more dates. At that time *The Assigner* will find the last date that was entered and enter more. Create as many dated blank records as you like.
5. If adjustments in assignments are necessary, they can be manually made **after** the automatic process.
6. **CAUTION:** The AutoFill feature will rotate congregation assignments in the order of their sort number as determined in the Congregations Names list. Make sure the sort order is as you want it to be.

Sort Order of Names

1. If you don't use the sort order feature, *The Assigner* will alphabetize the entries.
2. If you plan to do all assignments manually, revising the sort order of names is not important.
3. Carefully configuring the sort order feature makes it possible for the AutoFill program to follow the same rotational cycle you may have been using in the past.

Suggestion:

Before you start learning how the software works, make a copy of the empty data file. You can then try many of the features and options. When ready to begin full use of the software, copy the empty data file over the one used while practicing.

Automatic Assignments – (AutoFill)

1. **Caution:** If you use this feature, it's best to assign only 24 weeks at a time in case a change needs to be made. You can always assign another batch of 24 weeks.
2. This feature will automatically fill the created week records by rotating and making all assignments. Using it is **optional**.
3. If the steps before this one have been followed, this AutoFill option will save you much time.
4. When given a start date (must fall on the same day name as entered in the system configuration), the program will make all assignments for 24 or 48 weeks.

Remove Assignments

From time to time you may need to remove some assignments and redo them. Perhaps a congregation, or a service group, or a brother has changed.

This portion of the AutoFill screen will remove assignments made beginning with the date you enter to the end of the file.

Note: it does not remove the record, just the assignments within the record.

There is no recovery from this action!

Manual Entry of Assignments

Manual entry of all assignments gives you complete freedom to arrange the assignment schedule any way you wish.

1. There are two screen designs that permit manual assignment entry – a wide and narrow version. Which one you use will depend on your monitor's capability or your personal preference. They both create the same result.
2. You can use the mouse actuated drop down lists. Clicking your choice enters names of congregations, service groups, or attendant.
3. **Wide Version:** This screen displays all assignments for the week on one continuous line.
4. **Narrow Version:** The narrow version is the wide version split into two separate screens. Each can be viewed by clicking the applicable tab. This is provided so those users with less capable monitors can still use the software.

Start Up Procedure & Miscellaneous Features

Print Schedule for Posting

- Two landscape style reports are available. One has the date column in the center and the other has it in a left column. Otherwise all else is identical.
- The printed report will always begin two or three weeks before the actual date. This helps readers follow the flow of the schedule.
- If the option in the light cleaning option in the System Configuration has been chosen, the light cleaning column will show, otherwise it will not.

Overwrite or Delete Assignments

- It's possible to replace any assignment by overwriting it with another.

Phasing in this Schedule

If possible, follow the same rotational order of your present schedule. It's important to phase this new schedule in as smoothly as possible so that no congregation is called upon to do "double duty". Please note that a smooth transition may not be possible if the schedule you've been using doesn't follow a logical rotational pattern.

The Assigner's two patterns of scheduling are diagrammed on the **next page**.

Sort Order of Congregations

Said earlier, and worth repeating, was that the default sort order of rotation is alphabetical. However, if you wish to revise the sort order, simply enter a number next to each one.

Important: If you enter a sort number for one congregation, it's best that all congregations receive a sort number.

Report Pattern

The following chart shows the order of scheduling for one to eight congregations covering the first 8 cycles. *The Assigner* can handle more than eight congregations but the coloring of the posted schedule loses its capability and the number of congregations even in a double Kingdom Hall is rarely more than eight, anyhow.

You'll note that in addition to multiple congregations, a single congregation is shown. The reason is that if your KH is a single congregation KH, listing only your congregation will allow the software to rotate assignments to groups within your congregation.

The number of congregations at the top of each rotation pattern is colored **green** or **red**, meaning that the assignment pattern is either suitable for that number of congregations, or it is not.

The two columns under the green or red colored number show numbers representing congregations 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. The left number represents the congregation assigned for cleaning the KH and the right number represents the congregation assigned for yard maintenance.

Within each cycle is the number of consecutive weeks you've chosen to assign congregations to cleaning or yard responsibilities.

Odd/Even rotation pattern. Good for odd & even number of congregations.

Cycle	Number of Congregations															
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y
1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
2	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
3	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
4	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	1	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5
5	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	5	1	5	6	5	6	5	6
6	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	3	1	2	6	1	6	7	6	7
7	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	2	3	1	2	7	1	7	8
8	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	1	3	4	2	3	1	2	8	1

Odd Only rotation pattern. Good for only odd number of congregations.

Cycle	Number of Congregations															
	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y	C	Y
1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
2	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
3	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	5	1	5	6	5	6	5	6
4	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	2	3	1	2	7	1	7	8
5	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	4	5	3	4	2	3	1	2
6	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	1	2	5	6	4	5	3	4
7	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	3	4	1	2	6	7	5	6
8	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	4	5	1	3	4	1	2	7	8

C = Cleaning Y = Yard

Report Sample

East Congregation Cleaning, Yard, & Attendant Assignments

Kingdom Hall Light Cleaning	Kingdom Hall Heavy Cleaning	Grounds & Yard Maintenance	Week Beginning Monday	Service Meeting Attendants		Public Meeting Attendants	
				Entrance	Auditorium	Entrance	Auditorium
Abbott	Abbott – Benny	North	07/06/2009	C Bar Jr	C Bar Sr	J Bean	M Benz
Benny	Costello – Curly	North	07/13/2009	P Butter	C Caramel	H Depot	S Jelly
Costello	Groucho – Harpo	North	07/20/2009	B Mac	O Marmalade	B Marx	H Marx
Curly	Laurel – Skelton	North	07/27/2009	L Mover	D Queen	T Soup	H Spade
Groucho	West	Abbott – Benny	08/03/2009	T Thumb	P Wiggily	B Works	C Bar Jr
Harpo	West	Costello – Curly	08/10/2009	C Bar Sr	J Bean	M Benz	P Butter
Laurel	West	Groucho – Harpo	08/17/2009	C Caramel	H Depot	S Jelly	B Mac
Skelton	West	Laurel – Skelton	08/24/2009	O Marmalade	B Marx	H Marx	L Mover
Abbott	North	West	08/31/2009	D Queen	T Soup	H Spade	T Thumb
Benny	North	West	09/07/2009	P Wiggily	B Works	C Bar Jr	C Bar Sr
Costello	North	West	09/14/2009	J Bean	M Benz	P Butter	C Caramel
Curly	North	West	09/21/2009	H Depot	S Jelly	B Mac	O Marmalade
Groucho	Abbott – Benny	North	09/28/2009	B Marx	H Marx	L Mover	D Queen
Harpo	Costello – Curly	North	10/05/2009	T Soup	H Spade	T Thumb	P Wiggily
Laurel	Groucho – Harpo	North	10/12/2009	B Works	C Bar Jr	C Bar Sr	J Bean
Skelton	Laurel – Skelton	North	10/19/2009	M Benz	P Butter	C Caramel	H Depot
Abbott	West	Abbott – Benny	10/26/2009	S Jelly	B Mac	O Marmalade	B Marx
Benny	West	Costello – Curly	11/02/2009	H Marx	L Mover	D Queen	T Soup
Costello	West	Groucho – Harpo	11/09/2009	H Spade	T Thumb	P Wiggily	B Works
Curly	West	Laurel – Skelton	11/16/2009	C Bar Jr	C Bar Sr	J Bean	M Benz
Groucho	North	West	11/23/2009	P Butter	C Caramel	H Depot	S Jelly
Harpo	North	West	11/30/2009	B Mac	O Marmalade	B Marx	H Marx
Laurel	North	West	12/07/2009	L Mover	D Queen	T Soup	H Spade
Skelton	North	West	12/14/2009	T Thumb	P Wiggily	B Works	C Bar Jr
Abbott	Abbott – Benny	North	12/21/2009	C Bar Sr	J Bean	M Benz	P Butter
Benny	Costello – Curly	North	12/28/2009	C Caramel	H Depot	S Jelly	B Mac
Costello	Groucho – Harpo	North	01/04/2010	O Marmalade	B Marx	H Marx	L Mover
Curly	Laurel – Skelton	North	01/11/2010	D Queen	T Soup	H Spade	T Thumb
Groucho	West	Abbott – Benny	01/18/2010	P Wiggily	B Works	C Bar Jr	C Bar Sr
Harpo	West	Costello – Curly	01/25/2010	J Bean	M Benz	P Butter	C Caramel

rptClnAttCombo-Land-Ctr

Report begins 15 days before the current date.

Thursday, June 25, 2009

This is a sample layout (smaller than actual size) of congregations assigned to Kingdom Hall heavy cleaning and yard maintenance. When the date is assigned to your congregation, specific service groups are assigned to do light & heavy cleaning of the Kingdom Hall, yard maintenance, and brothers assigned to serve as meeting attendants. If your congregation does not clean after each meeting, the light cleaning column will not show. The names can be:

- entered manually, giving you complete control over the method of scheduling
- or they can be automatically entered by the software
- or after they are entered by the software they can be adjusted manually

You determine the sort order of congregations, of service groups, and of the brothers.

Colors are determined by the software and are dependent upon the column or the data in the column.

When Help is Needed

Help with *The Assigner* is available at any time. Please understand that help offered is restricted to operational difficulties associated only with *JwSoftworks* software products.

Please be Specific

Several items of information are needed before any help can be given. General statements such as the program is “**not working**”, or that you’re “**getting error messages**”, or you “**can’t print a report**”, or asking “**what am I doing wrong?**” is not enough information. Please elaborate!

Descriptive Information Needed

The following is a basic list of necessary information needed at the beginning of each **new** problem you ask for help with.

1. **Your Name & E-mail Address.**
Please put your full name and e-mail address in the body of the message so I don’t have to dig for it. **There is no need to register the software.**
2. Your computer’s **Operating System** (Windows XP or Vista)
3. *The Assigner’s* **release date** (found at the very top of the menu system)
4. The applicable **menu selection description** (found on the menu. You can copy and paste it into your e-mail message)
5. **The program or report name** having the problem (found at the top of the display or the bottom of the report)
6. The **difficulty you’re experiencing.**
7. If you’re receiving any **pop-up error messages**, describe what they say, or copy and paste them into your e-mail, or screen print them and attach them to your e-mail.

Free Print Screen Utility Program

You can download a free print screen utility program called “Gadwin PrintScreen” that will capture screen information and save it as a jpg to your hard drive. It’s much easier to use than using the standard Windows method and it’s perfect for sending examples of reports, error messages, or programs you may have questions about. You can find and download it at

<http://www.gadwin.com/download/>

Follow Up Questions

If the difficulty cannot be duplicated, some follow up questions will be asked. Please try your best to reply to each question with **direct** answers.

The Thread

It would help considerably if you would **include** the sequence of our messages having to do with the same question or a request for help in your e-mails. This is called a thread – please don’t “**break**” the thread.

But please do start a **new** thread with each **new** question or comment. Thanks for doing this.

Telephone

In rare occasions you may have to be phoned to find out more specific information. If you’re located in the USA or Canada, your phone number will be asked for.

Response Time

Our response time, in most cases, has been very short. Please check your e-mail often until your questions are resolved.

When Making Programming Suggestions

Suggestions are welcome – especially those that describe something that can be used by many brothers. Please understand that it’s not possible to use all suggestions.