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MASONIC EDUCATION PROGRAM



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Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario

March 2009

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SECTION 8 – MASONIC EDUCATION

8.1 Purpose

“An Education Program of Short Talks, Skits and Plays” - Summary

This “Education Program” has been created by Masons, for Masons, to enable all of us to learn more about this great fraternity to which we belong and perhaps to have some ‘fun’ while we are doing it.

We know that you constantly hear of new ideas, new articles, updates to old writings, and different thoughts for bringing Masonic education into the new era. It is intended that the “Education Program” be continuously added to by the Grand Lodge Masonic Education Committee. Revisions and updates will be published periodically as new material is received. That new material can only come from brethren like you. When you find something you would like to share please send it along. Information on how to share this information is contained in the "Education Program".

Fraternally,
The Masonic Education Committee

8.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Introduction

The Masonic Education Committee of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario is dedicated to improving the masonic knowledge of each and every brother in our Grand Jurisdiction, thereby enabling each one to enjoy the fraternity to which they belong, and to become better ambassadors for the craft as a whole.

As part of that mandate to foster and promote the continuing masonic education of the brethren, the Committee has developed "An Education Program of Short Talks, Skits and Plays" for use within the lodges.

Masonic education can and does take many shapes and forms. Masonic education means different things to different brethren. Masonic education can be 'light' or 'heavy', 'serious' or 'lighthearted', 'presented' and 'performed', 'written' and 'verbal'. Masonic education can be about almost any topic imaginable! Most importantly, Masonic education does NOT have to be boring!

What is the "Education Program"?

The "Education Program" is a package of educational material that contains a variety of articles, essays, plays, skits, games and whatever else could be collected. It is designed to be a vehicle by which Masons across Ontario can share their thoughts and ideas about things they have learned in masonry, and the many different ways in which that knowledge can be communicated to a wide variety of audiences.

Where did we get the contents?

We asked for submissions from Masons throughout the Province. From the Ottawa Valley in the East, to Kenora in the far West, from Point Pelee in the South to Sudbury, North Bay and Temiskaming in the North. We wanted to hear about the things that you have seen and heard that contributed to your Masonic education; things 'Masonic' that you liked and found interesting and things that you would like to share with your brethren.

How is the "Education Program" intended to be used?

Every Worshipful Master wants to convene worthwhile meetings and try something innovative but may lack the time to be creative. Education chairmen are continuously looking for new topics and ideas. Why re-invent the wheel when such ideas already exist in files of individual Masons? Creative Masons have developed some great ideas that need to be shared.

The "Education Program" can also be used to get more of your members involved in your meetings. Not all brethren are great speakers and not all of us like speaking before a crowd. However, because of its varied nature and content, the "Education

Program” can enable many other masons with their own unique skills and talents to become involved.

The "Education Program" - Summary

The “Education Program” has been created by Masons, for Masons, to enable all of us to learn more about this great fraternity to which we belong and perhaps to have some ‘fun’ while we are doing it.

We know that you constantly hear of new ideas, new articles, and updates to old writings, and different thoughts for bringing Masonic education into the new era. It is intended that the "Education Program" be continuously updated by the Grand Lodge Education Committee. Revisions and updates will be published periodically as new material is received. That new material can only come from brethren like you. When you find something you would like to share please send it along. We have but one requirement for submissions. That is, all articles must be given the proper accreditation.

Submissions can be sent to:
Chairman, Masonic Education Committee
The Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario
363 King Street West, Hamilton, ON L8P 1B4

We look forward to your contribution.

We suggest that your Lodge keep a log of dates/times and topics that you use from the "Education Program" so that its contents can be shared by the brethren, without duplication. We also ask that whenever you make a presentation, you give proper credit to the Brother or Brethren who were kind enough to share it with you through this publication.

8.3 EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS

8.3.1 Introduction

This section contains articles of approximately one to two pages in length. They are designed primarily as topics of Masonic education for use within the lodge. They can be presented or delivered by officers or non-officers alike. They should take no more than three to five minutes of time. Some are factual in nature, while others represent an author's personal opinion on a specific Masonic topic. They require little or no advance preparation.

We emphasize that presenters must recognize the author.

8.3.2 “Leisure without study is death” - Lucius Annaeus Seneca

“... to devote your leisure hours more especially to the study of such liberal arts and sciences as may lie within the compass of your attainment, and without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station to consider yourself called on to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.” - The Work

A lofty goal but how do we achieve it?

“Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs.” - Albert Einstein

Visiting other lodges is an excellent way to advance in Masonic knowledge, although it may be impractical for a daily advancement. But visit as often as you can.

“You affect your subconscious mind by verbal repetition.” - Bro. W. Clement Stone
Volunteer to do some ritual in your lodge, and repeat the work until you can say it as if they are your own words. They will *become* your own words.

“Get over the idea that only children should spend their time in study. Be a student so long as you still have something to learn, and this will mean all your life.” - Henry L. Doherty

The College of Freemasonry runs a [correspondence course](#) that leads you to explore the work we do, our history, our protocol and leadership development. It was originally envisioned that every Junior Deacon would start the course and do one part a year. By the time he was Worshipful Master, he would have completed the course and be fully prepared for his year in the East. Of course many diligent graduates have completed the course in a much shorter period, often within the year. (Graduates also get to add FCF to their names)

“There are more men ennobled by study than by nature.” – Cicero

“No man ever reached to excellence in any one art or profession without having passed through the slow and painful process of study and preparation” - Horace

The College of Freemasonry also runs a [correspondence course for past masters](#) which will prepare them for becoming more active in their districts, such as running for DDGM.

“I once tried thinking for an entire day, but I found it less valuable than one moment of study.” - Xun Zi

[The Newsletter](#) is a quarterly publication which prints short articles by Ontario Masons for Ontario Masons. They can be read out in lodge, or enjoyed in your comfortable

chair at home. The volumes are of such a size that they can even be carried in your pocket to be read in a quiet moment waiting for a bus.

“Study from new books but from old teachers” - Turkish Proverb

Grand Lodge publishes several books and keeps a stock of others for sale. These are available at the book table at the Annual Communication, but are also available through the year from the [Grand Lodge office](#) and at Lodges of Instruction. We search publishers from around the world to bring us the best in interesting new Masonic books.

“The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure.” - Bro. Edward Gibbon

[The Library](#) upstairs at the Grand Lodge building in Hamilton has a vast array of books, dating back to the beginning of Masonry in this country. Many are available for borrowing either in person or by mail. Heritage Lodge has enabled the [Sankey Collection](#) to be housed at Brock University. Many rare Masonic texts are available for study there.

“Study detains the mind by the perpetual occurrence of something new, which may gratefully strike the imagination.” - Isaac Watts

There are many thought-provoking sites and blogs on the internet, and our own [Grand Lodge](#) has an extensive website with much to explore.

“A single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years mere study of books.” - Bro. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

[Lodges of Discussion](#) and Salons are becoming regular occurrences. They are events where Masons gather to discuss those issues which are most important to us.

“Iron sharpens iron; scholar, the scholar.” - The Talmud

Masonic Study Circles and small discussion groups have sprung up around the province. They are a great place to explore ideas with other like-minded men. If there isn't one in your area, start one!

“A boy will learn more true wisdom in a public school in a year than by a private education in five. It is not from masters, but from their equals, that youth learn a knowledge of the world.” - Bro. Oliver Goldsmith

Impromptu discussions after lodge are a time-honoured place of discussion. Perhaps your conversations have fallen into mundane talk of the weather. Rejuvenate them by bringing up a Masonic topic while you snack.

“But how shall I get ideas? “Keep your wits open! Observe! Observe! Study! Study! But above all, Think! Think! And when a noble image is indelibly impressed upon the mind - Act!” - Orison Swett Marden

Write those ideas down, present them to your lodge, or your district, and send them into [The Newsletter](#) to share with others.

“If you employed study, thinking, and planning time daily, you could develop and use the power that can change the course of your destiny.” - Bro. W. Clement Stone

(Berowne:) *What is the end of study, let me know?*

(Ferdinand:) *What, that to know which else we should not know.*

(Berowne:) *Things hid and barred, you mean, from common sense?*

(Ferdinand:) *Ay, that is study's godlike recompense.*

- *Bro. William Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost*

(Links to the items discussed, as well as much other education material, can be found on the Masonic Education page of the Grand Lodge website <http://www.grandlodge.on.ca/framesgleducation.htm>)

By. R.W. Bro. David Cameron
for the Curriculum Group
The Committee on Masonic Education
April 2008

8.3.3 Initiation

Initiation – what does that word really mean? The OED defines it as “Admit a person into a society, an office, a secret especially with a ritual”. In Masonry we often refer rather obliquely to the Eleusinian Mystery cult. This cult originated in Greece and here, briefly, is the story.

In 547 BCE, Peisistratos constructed a new cult hall in the city of Eleusis, twenty miles west of Athens where it was said, the goddess Demeter had stayed while searching for her daughter Persephone. The Eleusinian mystery cult now became an integral part of the religious life of the Athenians. It was an initiation in which participants experienced a transformed state of mind. Because the rites were shrouded in secrecy, we have an incomplete idea of what went on, but it seems that initiates followed in the footsteps of Demeter; they shared her suffering - her grief, desperation fear and rage - at the loss of her daughter. By participating in her pain and, finally, the joy of her reunion with Persephone some of them found that, having looked into the heart of darkness, they did not fear death in the same way again.

The candidates (*mystai*) fasted for two days; they stood in the sea and sacrificed a piglet in honour of Persephone; and then in a huge throng set off on foot for Eleusis. By this time they were weakened by their fast and apprehensive, because they had no idea what was going to happen to them. The ones who had been initiated the previous year made the journey with them and their behavior was threatening and aggressive. The crowds called rhythmically and hypnotically upon Dionysus, god of transformation, driving themselves into a frenzy of excitement so that when the *mystai* finally arrived in Eleusis, they were exhausted, frightened and elated. By this time the sun was setting; torches were lit and in the unearthly flickering light the *mystai* were herded to and fro through the streets until they lost their bearings and were thoroughly disoriented. Then they plunged into the pitch darkness of the initiation hall. After this the picture becomes very confused. Animals were sacrificed, there was a terrible “unspeakable” event, which may have involved the sacrifice of a child who was reprieved only at the eleventh hour. There was a “revelation”; something was lifted out of a sacred basket. But finally the reunion of Kore and Demeter was reenacted and the mystery was concluded with rhapsodic scenes and sacred tableaux that filled the initiates with joy and relief. At Eleusis they had achieved an *ekstasis*, stepping outside their normal workaday selves and experienced new insight*.

Initiation means a whole lot more than simply admitting a person into a society – if it did not, then simply paying a fee would suffice. As in Eleusis, the idea of Masonic initiation is that the candidate is in some way transformed by the experience, entering a higher plane of awareness, especially of himself. He is expected to feel uplifted as though he was in some way purged of his old bad habits and renewed as a better man. He enters the lodge in the first degree with personality traits developed over many years, many of which may be unpleasant or antisocial. His initiation is intended to drive home the need to rise above that former personality, leaving it at the door and adopting

a new one, more gentle and considerate of others. In the first degree he enters in darkness and is

perambulated about the lodge thus inducing in him confusion and apprehension, before the bright revelation at the altar when his hoodwink is removed. In the third degree he is again in darkness and indeed, dies metaphorically which is symbolic of killing his old personality and rising with a new one.

Masonry serves a twofold purpose. Firstly it attempts to help a man improve his own character by giving him the tools to do so, if he will only use them. Secondly, it gives him the opportunity to make contact with that part of the eternal being that resides within him, the sanctum sanctorum in his head. Throughout the ages men have tried to make contact with the Supreme Being through contemplation and self-denial. This has been as true in China as it has in India, Israel and Greece: and now in Canada, Freemasonry offers the same opportunity to those who are willing to undertake the journey. The ritual, which we practice and the symbols we use are all directed to these two ends. The Eleusinian mystery cult had a system designed to achieve *ekstasis* (ecstasy) and we do also. Let us try to understand our system and take advantage of the many opportunities it puts in our way.

* Karen Armstrong "The Great Transformation

By V.W. Bro. Iain Bruce Mackenzie
of the Curriculum Group
The Committee on Masonic Education
May 2008

8.3.4 THE NUMBER “3”

In the J. W. Lecture, we are told that our usages and customs have ever corresponded with those of the Egyptian philosophers who concealed their particular tenets and principles under certain hieroglyphical figures and expressed their notions of government by signs and symbols. The Pythagorean system was established from a similar plan, a theory that numbers were the basis of all human activities and possessed magical powers. We have nothing in modern times similar to it, except perhaps the number 13 superstition. The only correspondence between Freemasonry and the Pythagorean system is the extensive use we make of numbers, but only in a symbolic sense. We are taught that Masonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Numbers figure extensively among those symbols, especially the number 3 that signifies completeness.

It is the symbol of the three dimensions, length, width and depth: the 3 primary colours, red, blue and yellow. To the Christian, it is the symbol of God, and the Trinity. To the Jew, its geometrical equivalent, the equilateral triangle, is the symbol of Jehovah. In nearly all of the Oriental religions, it is the symbol of the Deity. As Freemasons, the number 3 should ever be a reminder of that great Landmark to which I have referred. It is extensively used in our rites and ceremonies and I shall direct your attention to its frequent use in the First Degree.

Before you were admitted to the lodge room you were interviewed by a committee of 3, who asked 3 questions, each one relating to that great landmark, your belief in God. You were lead to the door of the lodge room when 3 raps were given, which were answered by 3 from the inside. The I. G. addressed the J. D. 3 times. As you were admitted the J. D. spoke 3 times. While you were in the kneeling position the WM spoke 3 times. In the perambulation the J. W. addressed you 3 times, and the S. W. also addressed you 3 times. The W. M. then asked you 3 questions. You were conducted to the altar by 3 steps. Each measured in inches was a multiple of 3. In your obligation there were 3 alliterating descriptions of the Lodge (Worthy, Worshipful and Warranted.) In assuring you of the regularity of the meetings 3 references were made (held, assembled and p. d.). In the oath of secrecy there are 3 parts (always h., ever c. and never r.). The secrecy relates to 3 periods of communication: past, present and future (have been, shall now, or may hereafter). Only under one of 3 conditions may those secrets be communicated outside a Lodge (due t., strict e., or sure i.). And only in the body of a Lodge if it possess 3 essential characteristics (just, p. and r.). All the points you promised to observe without 3 elements (evasion, e., or m. r.). The penalty is of a 3-fold character.

After the obligation and before the light the W. M. spoke 3 times. Your attention was directed to the 3 Great Lights, then the 3 Lesser Lights. You were warned of the 3 great dangers: 3 true and proper signs were explained to you by whom you were to know a ... (Ss., G. or T. and a W.) After taking a S. P., *etc.* you were told that there were 3 S's. (H., P., Salutation). There were 3 reasons given for the trial in the N.E. corner. 3 working tools were presented to you. A moral is deduced from these, *viz.* :

that knowledge subjected to 3 influences (grounded on accuracy, aided by labour and promoted by perseverance) will produce 3 results (overcome all difficulties, raise ignorance from despair and establish happiness in the paths of science).

In the J. W.'s lecture your attention was directed to the 3 dimensions of a L. The standing of a L. on holy ground brings to our mind 3 great offerings (Obedience of Abraham to the will of God, pious p. and e. of K. D., and thanksgivings, burnt sacrifices, and costly offerings of K. S.). Our L's are situated due E. and W. for 3 reasons (sun, learning, and tabernacle of M. and temple of S.). They are supported by 3 pillars (W., S. and B.). These are emblems of the 3 divine attributes and further represent 3 famous characters in Freemasonry (S. K. I., H. K. T., and H. A.). There are 3 principal rounds in the ladder (F., H., and C.). The interior of a L is composed of 3 sets of articles (O., F., and J.). There are 3 kinds of ornaments (M. P., I. S., and S.). There are 3 items of furniture (V. S. L., S., and C.) There are 3 movable jewels (S., L., and P. R.) and 3 immovable jewels (T. B., R. A., and P. A.) There are 3 distinguishing characteristics of every F. and A... (V., H., and M.) and there are 3 fundamental principles (B. L., R., and T.)

We thus see that at every turn in our ceremony we are confronted with the number 3, as in the L. no matter where we sit, we are confronted with the letter G. The frequent recurrence of this number 3 is to remind us that His all-seeing eye beholds us and that we should always discharge our duty towards Him with fervency and zeal.

Reference: "Manual for Masonic Instructors and Students", M.W. Bro. W. S. Herrington", 1955.

By W. Bro. Bill Graham
of the Curriculum Group
The Committee on Masonic Education
March 2008

8.3.5 THE ARK

(Electrocution in the Bible)

A bible story, combining physics, theology and medicine - and the objects of research in three degrees.

All good bible stories start: “**AND IT CAME TO PASS**”, So that is how this story will start.

And it came to pass that the Chicago Science Museum published the results of a project they had undertaken regarding the Ark Of the Covenant. This project consisted of constructing the Ark from wood and metal foil to the same dimensions as those delineated in the biblical description.

They found that the resulting container was a capacitor of great magnitude.

The physics properties of this reconstructed Ark included the potential to hold and discharge very high voltage with considerable current. The English language newspapers of Montreal carried the story noting that “It blew a hole in the wall of the building” as it discharged to a grounded wall outlet.

Like any capacitor, it could be charged by friction with cotton or silk and an opposite charge could be generated by linen.

A residual charge, if present, could be grounded. This might be accomplished by touching with wet hands and feet and a garment with a metal thread would facilitate this.

To understand the significance of this information, it is necessary to refer to the Book of Exodus.

Starting with Exodus 25:10.

After returning from the mount Moses is instructed to make the Ark and the first description appears.

Aaron and his sons were charged with looking after all aspects of the Ark and the rituals to be followed. They were to wash their hands and feet in the laver; a basin for ceremonial ablution. The clothing to be worn by them when entering the tent is described. Linen tunics are to cover the loin and thighs, with an ephod on top. (Exodus 28, 30, 40, 42, 43.) *That they die not!*

Exodus 37: In response to the instructions Bezalel makes the Ark ... the dimensions being: 2 ½ cubits long, 1 ½ cubits high. The materials to be used were: Acacia wood

with gold inlay inside and out. The ark cover was pure gold fitted on top. The table to support the Ark is here described and is also made of wood and gold foil.

The Ephods (a type of vest worn in Biblical times) were to be of fine linen with gold. Strict instructions are given regarding the washing of hands and feet on entering the tent. This was to be done in the laver inside the tent. These two sets of instructions end with the phrase *That they die not!*

Advancing to Leviticus 10. 1&2, the death of Aaron's sons Nadab & Abihu is described. The strictly straight translation is not totally explicit. However, the commentary suggests that they were under the influence of drink when they entered the sanctuary; they did not bathe their hands and feet nor did they change their clothing.

The fire that consumed them was "different". It consumed their inner souls and left them outwardly unchanged .“like a lightning bolt”.

This is the biblical description of an electrical burn.

For an explanation of this, one must look at the results of electric burns. A limb so burned has minimal damage on the outside but the bone may be completely burned on the inside. Bone offers a higher resistance to electrical current than soft tissue and the higher the resistance, the greater is the heat generated.

CONCLUSION:

The Ark of the Covenant, an inanimate object, could electrocute anyone disobeying those instructions and commandments regarding its care. Aaron's sons disregarded those commandments. They got a little drunk. They washed neither their hands nor feet, thus failing to ground any residual charge on the ark and finally, they failed to change their garments. So, instead of performing those tasks which would reduce any residual charge, they generated a higher and higher static charge by dancing round the ark with garments which would rub against it. When that charge got high enough to overcome the resistance of their bodies, it electrocuted them on its way to the ground.

By R.W. Bro. Michael J. Diamond, F.C.F.
of The Curriculum Group
Committee on Masonic Education
January 2008

From his book *Pillars and Steps, A Selection of Masonic Education Presentations*, 3rd Ed., London Ontario 2006

8.3.6 "The Golden Rule"

HM Queen Elizabeth II in her Christmas message 2005 said

"There may be an instinct in all of us to help those in distress. But in many cases I believe this has been inspired by religious faith. Christianity is not the only religion to teach its followers to help others and to treat your neighbour as you would want to be treated yourself."

The Buddha said "Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."

Lao Tzu wrote "Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain and your neighbour's loss as your own loss."

The Baha'u'llah wrote "Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself."

Masonry is inter-faith. We have members of many creeds. All that is required of a man in this respect is that he can answer in the affirmative the three questions:

Do you believe in the existence of a Supreme Being?

Do you believe that that Supreme Being will punish vice and reward virtue?

Do you believe that that Supreme Being has revealed His will to man?

"Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself." - Muhammad

Some say Masonry was originally a Christian rite that had the references to Christ expurgated to make it universal. Others say it predates Christianity, and yet others, that it was set up relatively recently with an aim to being inclusive. This would make a good topic for a Lodge of Discussion.

"Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself. " - The Shayast-na-Shayast

Discussion of religious or political topics is disallowed in lodge. - An odd thing for an organization that calls upon its members to practice their own religion with vigour and piety. And all members must have their own religion because a belief in a supreme being is a requirement for admission. What it does is bring together men of different faiths to interact in an environment where they can become friends even if hostility reigns outside the door of the lodge.

"I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all." - Guru Granth Sahib

The tradition in lodges in India and other places is to have five or more volumes of the sacred law on the altar. The one opened in the centre is that of whoever the Master is at the time.

"This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you." - The Mahabharata

Some would say that Masonic events like District Divine Services or Holiday Celebrations should have no references to any religion - much like the Masonic Ritual. But that would leave a gaping hole in our experience.

A passage in *Gates of Prayer*, a prayer book of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, says it nicely:

"I cannot be religious without belonging to a particular religion any more than I can talk without using a particular language."

The Canadian Council of Churches has written guidelines for religious ceremonies involving more than one faith tradition. Basically, they suggest that introductory prayers be inclusive but that each participating leader should be free to pray from within his or her own tradition, and to read texts that are considered sacred in his or her own tradition. We as Masons could ask those among us of various faiths to participate in our Divine Services in this way.

A Unitarian principle says "We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Douglas John Hall, a prominent Christian theologian, said "Hospitality towards and dialogue with other traditions does not diminish but can in fact enhance one's knowledge and appreciation of one's own tradition." "The presence and testimony of 'the other' demands of us a better knowledge of our own faith as well as theirs. This is perhaps the most important lesson to be learned in inter-faith discourse."

"What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it ." - Hillel

Freemasonry is one of the original inter-faith movements. And the ability of good men of different faiths to gather together in peace and harmony has always been one of our strongest assets. At this time of the year let us continue to act in a spirit of universal tolerance which distinguishes our institution.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Good holidays to all
From the Curriculum Group
Committee on Masonic Education
December 2007

Source for Golden Rule texts: Scarboro Missions

8.3.7 Know Thyself

by Bro. Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744)
 member of the Lodge held at the Goat, Haymarket, London

*Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
 The proper study of mankind is Man.
 Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A being darkly wise and rudely great:
 With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
 With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act or rest,
 In doubt to deem himself a God or Beast,
 In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
 Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
 Alike in ignorance, his reason such
 Whether he thinks too little or too much:
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
 Still by himself abused, or disabused;
 Created half to rise and half to fall;
 Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!*

Centuries later, Neo is led into the kitchen of an apartment. A woman is baking cookies. He breaks a vase. Above the door is a sign that reads *Temet Nosce*.

“You know what that means? It’s Latin. Means, Know Thyself”

So the Oracle in the movie “The Matrix” explains to the young hero the words which can also be found in Masonic Temples around the world. Sometimes written *Nosce te ipsum*, they are Latin translations of a Greek phrase inscribed on the Temple of Apollo, the god of Truth, at Delphi.

It is not known for sure who originated this maxim. It has been attributed to Socrates, Pythagoras and at least three of the Seven Sages of Ancient Greece: Chilon of Sparta, Thales of Miletos, and Solon of Athens. And yet what better advice could be given the learner?

According to Thales of Miletos (c. 624 - 546 BCE) , a happy man is one “Who is healthy in body, resourceful in soul and of a readily teachable nature”

Solon of Athens (c. 638 - 558 BCE) wished in his poems that he "Each day grew older, and learnt something new".

Pythagoras of Samos (c. 580 - 500 BCE) who, although he wasn't one of the famed seven sages did found a secret school of Mysteries in Crotona, in what is now Sicily, also placed a high value on the learner's self: "Above the cloud with its shadow is the star with its light. Above all things reverence thyself."

And thousands of miles away, also in the 6th century BCE, the Chinese sage Lao-tzu wrote in the Tao Te Ching:

"He who knows others is learned;
He who knows himself is wise."

The Seven Sages were professional teachers; they dispensed wisdom. This was the standard way to teach until Socrates (c. 470 - 399 BCE) shattered it by his method in which the learner and teacher ask questions and discuss together.

However, even his pupil, Plato (427 - 347 BCE), echoes the Oracle:

"I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self would be ridiculous."

And so by the sheer weight of ancient advice, the Mason is enjoined to "Know Thyself"

But how does one start? M.W. Bro. Benjamin Franklin summed it up in 1740 in Poor Richard's Almanac: "Observe all men; thy self most."

Bro. Philip D. Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield, advised his son in a letter of June 6, 1751: "Study the heart and the mind of man, and begin with your own. Meditation and reflection must lay the foundation of that knowledge, but experience and practice must, and alone can, complete it."

R.W. Bro. W. L. Wilmshurst (1867 - 1939) elaborates in "Masonic Initiation":

"It has already been shown that the structure and appointments of the Lodge are symbolic; that the Lodge is a representation both of the Universe and of man himself as a Microcosm or the Universe in miniature; that it is an image of his own complex constitution, his heavens and his earth (his spirituality and materiality) and all that therein is."

"By contemplating that image, therefore, the Mason learns to visualize himself; he is given a first lesson in that self-knowledge in the full attainment of which is promised the understanding of all things. "Know thyself," we have said, was written over the portals of the ancient temples of Initiation, self-knowledge being the aim of their intention and the goal of their purpose. Masonry perpetuates this maxim by recommending self-knowledge as "the most interesting of all human studies." It is the tersest, wisest of instructions, yet little heeded nowadays, and it is incapable of fulfillment unless undertaken in accordance with the ancient science and with a concentration of one's whole energies upon the task."

“It involves the deepest introspection into oneself and perfect discrimination between what is real and permanent, and what is unreal and evanescent in ourselves. As aspirants to the Mysteries could not learn the secrets of the Temple without entering it, learning its lessons, undergoing its disciplines, and receiving its graduated initiations, so no one can attain self-knowledge save by entering into himself, distinguishing the false from the true, the unreal from the real, the base metal from the fine gold, sublimating the former into the latter, and ignoring what is negligible or superfluous.”

“Self-knowledge is the beginning of self-improvement.”

Baltasar Gracián (1601-1658)

By. R.W. Bro. David Cameron
for the Curriculum Group
Committee on Masonic Education
September 2007

8.3.8 The Queen and the Flag - Symbols of Canada.

True patriot love in all thy sons command

On February 15th 2008 we will celebrate the 43rd Anniversary of the first raising of the Maple Leaf, Canada's National Flag. Later this year, on July 1st 2008, Canadians will celebrate the 141st anniversary of Confederation which united the four British provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario under the terms of the British North America Act passed in Westminster in March 1867. The Dominion of Canada came into being. While we may be considered 'a young country' we are, in fact, the second-oldest federation after the American federation formed between 1776 and 1792.

The 'Chief Architect' and 'Father of Confederation,' R.W. Bro. Sir John A. Macdonald was the first Prime Minister. Five of his successors in office were Freemasons: Sir John J. C. Abbott (1891-1892), Sir Mackenzie Bowell (1894-1896), Sir Robert Laird Borden (1911-1920), Richard Bedford Bennett (1930-1935), and John George Diefenbaker (1957-1963).

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, in an address to the nation delivered in 1976, said: "*Our forefathers willed this country into being. Times, circumstances and pure will cemented us together in a unique national enterprise, by flying in the face of all expectations, of all experiences, of all conventional wisdom, that enterprise provides the world with a lesson in fraternity.*"

The perennial question, What is a Canadian? is formally answered and legally defined in the Oath of Citizenship: "*I swear (affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, according to law, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen.*" (Secretary of State, 1977) Every Freemason is charged at his Initiation to "*fulfil the duties of a good citizen, and thereby set an example for others to emulate.*"

'The Maple Leaf, our emblem dear ...'

When the Flag of Canada is displayed in a Masonic Lodge, it is a symbol of patriotism - love of and loyalty to one's country. There is a difference between 'patriotism' and 'nationalism.' Although related, the terms are not synonymous. Nationalism, when carried to an extreme degree, is the prime cause of wars between nations. In a speech delivered on the day Canada's Flag was officially proclaimed and inaugurated in 1965, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson noted this difference. He expressed the hopes and ideals of all Canadians embodied in the Flag: "*Under this flag may our youth find new inspiration for loyalty to Canada, for a patriotism based not on any mean or narrow nationalism, but on the deep and equal pride that all Canadians will feel for every part of this great land.*"

This prayer was offered at the flag raising ceremony on Parliament Hill, February 15th 1965 by Georges P. Vanier, Governor General: *“Bless, O Merciful Father, this Flag and grant that this banner of our nationhood may proudly fly over a people devoted to the pursuit of righteousness, justice, and unity; whose faith and hopes are grounded in Thee, who art the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”*

Bro. John Ross Matheson, as Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister Pearson, played a formative role in the design of the Maple Leaf Flag and, after heated debate, was instrumental in its adoption. Bro. Matheson was initiated in Queen’s Lodge No. 578 at Kingston in 1940 and was passed and raised in lodges in England while serving on active duty during World War II. He was awarded the William Mercer Wilson Medal in 1988. In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Ill. Bro. Matheson was coroneted an Honorary Inspector General, 33° and is a member of the Royal Order of Scotland. In his book, Canada’s Flag: A Search for a Country (1980,1986) we read these inspiring lines: *“May the maple leaf, our emblem dear, continue to fly so long as the wind shall blow. May it be seen by all those on this spaceship Earth, as a signal from a kindly, caring, considerate people. For is it not written that the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”* (The reference here is to the verse in the VOSL - Revelation 22:2)

O Canada, we stand on guard for thee

Today, the National Flag reminds us of those Canadians serving in the Armed Forces, many of whom are our Masonic Brethren, engaged in deadly combat in Afghanistan, defending the peace and security of their homeland. Who among us cannot be moved by the sight of the flag-draped coffin of repatriation containing the body of a young man or woman, *Valiant hearts* that beat no more, each of whom has sacrificed life for Canadians. *“They shall not grow old - age shall not weary them - we will remember them.”*

In the Address delivered by M.W. Bro. William R. Pellow at the 133rd Annual Communication (1988), the Grand Master *“recommended that each lodge display, on standards, at least two flags in the lodge room. (a) The Canadian Flag (b) The Ontario Ensign. If the lodge is located within 100 km of the United States border and/or reciprocal visits with a United States lodge are a regular occurrence, then the flag of the United States of America should also be displayed. It is further recommended that at least one flag pole be erected on the grounds of each lodge. If one flag is present it should be the Canadian Flag.”* (Proceedings 1988, p. 26)

M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew, made reference to the singing of the National Anthem *“at many of our meetings”* in his Address to Grand Lodge in 1994. The Grand Master said: *“I encourage all Worshipful Masters to consider the singing of our National Anthem at **all** meetings.”* (Proceedings 1994, p. 34) The music of the anthem was composed by Calixa Lavallée (1842-1891) for a concert in Quebec City celebrating St-Jean-Baptiste Day, June 24th 1880, when it was first played by a band. The English words were written by Robert Stanley Weir (1856-1926) and modified when Parliament

passed the National Anthem Act on June 27th 1980 as the official national anthem and proclaimed on July 1st 1980. At the same time 'God Save the Queen' was designated the Royal Anthem.

Protocol dictates that the Flag of Canada is placed to the right of the presiding officer - in the East to the right of the Worshipful Master. When the National Anthem is sung at the conclusion of a lodge meeting, the National Flag should be the focus of the Brethren. Many lodges display a formal picture of Queen Elizabeth II, our Sovereign Lady. If possible, it should be mounted on the east wall in close proximity to the flag, When the Royal Anthem is sung or a Toast is proposed to the Queen and the Craft, in lodge, at the festive board, or at banquets and receptions, it is proper to face the portrait of Her Majesty as the Queen of Canada.

Maple Leaf Pin

The maple leaf was considered the emblem of Canada as early as the 1830s. The distinctive lapel pin with the red Canadian Maple Leaf and the gold square and compasses superimposed was introduced and authorized to be worn by all Masons in this Grand Jurisdiction in 1994.

Charge to the Flag

This Charge was given by the R.C.M.P. Degree Team which was under the direction of V.W. Bro. Donald H. Mumby, subsequently M.W. Bro., the Grand Master 2003 - 2004.

*I present our Flag, our symbol of Unity and Sovereignty -
Between bars of red, and on a field of white
It blazons forth in its full Autumnal glory.*

THE CANADIAN MAPLE LEAF

Whose points represent the Provinces and Territories.

To Freemasons,

*The red symbolizes the dauntless courage of our forefathers,
which we strive to emulate;
The white, that blameless purity of life and conduct
to which we aspire;
And the points, the eleven knightly virtues, of which Patriotism is the greatest,
and to which we are ever dedicated;
And finally, it inspires in us a reverence to Him, to Whom we fervently pray ...*

God Save the Queen and Heaven bless the Maple Leaf Forever

(quoted by M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew, Grand Master's Address, Proceedings 1995, p. 34)

FURTHER READING

I Stand For Canada: The Story of the Maple Leaf Flag. Rick Archbold (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 2002)

Guest author - R.W. Bro. Raymond S. J. Daniels, Deputy Grand Master
Curriculum Group
Committee on Masonic Education
2008.02.01

8.3.9 We Remember Them

*Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.
Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power:
Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge:
Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing;*

*All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times.
And some there be which have no memorial;
who are perished as though they had never been.
Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.*

Ecclesiasticus 44

We as Masons honour our elders and those who have gone before us. The most poignant time for this is at a Memorial or Funeral Service; a time when we gather to honour the memory of our departed brethren.

It is truly an amazing thing to see Masons gathered at a funeral service, especially one for a brother who was very old. Of course, there are his cronies, if any of them are left alive. But also the active officers and members. And the members of other lodges who come to pay their respects. But most notable are the young brethren who attend. If the departed brother had been in a nursing home for some time, some of these young Masons may never have met him; but they come to pay their respects, and to support his family, because they too were his brothers.

The effect on his family cannot be underestimated. They truly appreciate our presence. Such is the importance, that if a family asks for a funeral service, we do one. No matter if the brother had demitted or even been suspended years ago, no matter if he hadn't attended lodge for decades. When I was Master a man died who had been upset at our lodge and demitted long before I had joined. The family did not ask for a Masonic funeral but I went to the visitation anyway. They told me that they had been expecting someone from the lodge to show up; then they regaled me with stories about how important Masonry had been to their dad during the time they were children. And they appreciated that the lodge remembered him.

For us the importance of these events is driven home by the deviations from our normal practices. We generally don't place anything on the volume of the sacred law except a square and compasses, and perhaps another volume of the sacred law. But at a memorial service we sometime place flowers on the altar.

While we normally proceed in a clockwise fashion there are two major occasions when we proceed otherwise. The first is when ascending the winding stair in the second degree, uncertain of what we will find around that corner. The other time is approaching the casket to deposit a sprig of evergreen to dispel uncertainty.

And we make an unprecedented use of the sign of fidelity at a memorial service. We use the sign for prayers in open lodge, but not outside of it, not even during grace at the festive board. But at a funeral service we use the sign, in plain view of all the relatives and friends, as a mark of respect.

Freemasonry keeps alive the memory of men in other ways too. By passing on regalia and Past Master's jewels to new generations, by recalling the wisdom taught you by your sponsors and mentors of long ago, by the ever important Historian keeping records and regaling the exploits of yesteryear during the time in the meeting reserved for Masonic Education.

We Remember Them
by *Rabbis Sylvan Kamens and Jack Riemer*

At the rising of the sun and at its going down,
We remember them.
At the blowing of the wind and the chill of the winter,
We remember them.
At the opening of the Buds and in the rebirth of spring,
We remember them.
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of Autumn,
We remember them.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends,
We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live,
for they are now part of us as we remember them.

When lost and sick at heart,
We remember them.
When we have joy we crave to share,
We remember them.
When we have decisions that are difficult to make,
We remember them.
When we have achievements that are based on theirs,
We remember them.
As long as we live, they too will live,
For they are now a part of us as we remember them.

The Curriculum Group
Committee on Masonic Education
November 2007

8.3.10 The Letter G

*In the Midst of Solomon's Temple there stands a G,
A letter for all to read and see;
But few there be that understand
What means the letter G.*

- from *Masonry Dissected* by Samuel Pritchard, 1730

The letter G hangs in the centre of all our lodges. It is said to denote God, the Grand Geometrician of the Universe. But have you ever wondered what letter hangs in the centre of a lodge where English is not the language used?

Is there a D in a French speaking lodge? A Theta in a Greek lodge? An A in an Arabic one?

Does the G refer to God, Grand or Geometrician? Or is it something else?

Although God starts with various letters, Geometry starts with a G in many languages. Perhaps the G stands for Geometry.

An early catechism goes:

Q. Why was you made a Mason?

A. For the sake of the Letter G.

Q. What does it signify?

A. GEOMETRY.

Q. Why GEOMETRY?

A. Because it is the Root and foundation of all Arts and Sciences.

Another catechism, from 1766, says:

Q. Why was you made a Fellow-Craft?

A. For the sake of the Letter G, which is inclosed in a Great Light.

Q. What does the G denote?

A. Glory, Grandeur and Geometry, or the fifth Science - Glory for God, Grandeur for the Master of the Lodge, and Geometry for the Brothers.

Bro. W.L. Wilmshurst echoes this in *Masonic Initiation*:

"In the Instruction-lecture of a Degree outside our present constitutions, the 'G' is explained as having a three-fold reference; (i) the Glory of God, or glory in the centre; (2) Grandeur, or the greatness of perfection to which man may become raised by initiation into union with God at his centre; (3) Gom-El, a Hebrew word of praise for the Divine power and goodness in designing that perfection and that union between the Creator and the creature. There is also a Hebrew tradition that Gom-El was the word uttered by Adam on first beholding the beauty of Eve and perceiving the ultimate destiny of humanity."

The letter G is intricately associated with the Fellowcraft degree. Indeed at one time it was only displayed when the lodge was at work in that degree. A Fellow Craft was referred to "a letter-G man."

In May 1742 there was a public procession lead by two renegade Masons which was reported in the newspaper. The report said that the letter G signified Geometry and "this letter G is the essence of the Fellow-Craft's lodge." It also told that when the lodge was raised from the First to the Second Degree a square was placed in the centre of the blazing star, so that the brethren could tell in which degree they were working.

There are those such as Bro. J.S.M. Ward who maintained that the original tradition was to have a square hung in the centre of the lodge.

The kind of uneven square Freemasons use is called a gnomon in Greek. Gnomon also starts with G or Gamma. The Greek letter Gamma is written thus: Γ , looking like an upside down L, or a square standing on end. This form is also called a gallows square. Thus a gallows square hanging in the centre of a lodge would be indistinguishable from a Gamma.

The gnomon had two unequal limbs, the usual ratio of the lengths being 3:4, exactly the lengths of two sides of Pythagoras' triangle.

The third letter of the Phoenician alphabet was also in the shape of a gallows square. From it is descended the Hebrew letter Gimel. This letter is said to look like a camel, which some have said marks the Fellow Craft as a traveller. Kabalistic sources say this letter symbolizes a rich man running after a poor man (Dalet, the next letter in the alphabet) in order to give him charity. The word Gimel is derived from Gemul, which means both the giving of reward as well as the giving of punishment. Reward and punishment imply that man is free to choose between good and evil.

In Hebrew they use letters to represent numbers. Gimel, being the third letter, represents the number three whose significance in Masonry does not need further mention.

The cypher for G on the Harris Tracing Board for the third degree also has the form of a gallows square, albeit with equal arm lengths.

Bro. Albert Mackey read the G as a substitute for the Hebrew Yod, which in turn is a symbol of the tetragrammaton, or four-letter name of God. He may have been close to the mark, because if we parse that part of the Ritual it can be read as saying that the certain Hebrew characters denote God, and that those characters are represented by the letter G.

Bro. Bernard Jones wrote: "a sound old masonic writer once said that much of what has been written concerning the letter 'G' in freemasonry is far more imaginative than useful. A wise view is that God Himself and Geometry have much in common, and that

to-day we may regard the symbol as standing for each and both of them. Then we shall not be far wrong when we teach the Fellow Craft that the letter 'G' denotes God who is the Great Geometrician of the Universe. We can quote great authorities. Sir Thomas Browne in *Religion Medici* (1643) said, 'God is like a skilful geometrician.' Plato, four centuries B.C., said that God is a geometer, that is one versed in geometry, a geometrician. Bertrand Russell, in our own day, says that the influence of geometry upon philosophy has been profound, and that mathematical objects, which are eternal and not in time, can be conceived as God's thoughts."

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By R.W. Bro. David Cameron
for the Curriculum Group
The Committee on Masonic Education
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8.3.11 Symbolism

One of the first things a candidate learns about Freemasonry is that it is "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." He learns that this is the answer to the question "What is Freemasonry?" But this is not a good answer for him to give to his friends when they ask him what Freemasonry is. How many of you have given this answer only to be greeted with blank stares? No, he is not told this in order to be able to answer the questions of those around him; he learns this answer in order that he may know to interpret what he has experienced, and what is to come, as allegory, and to look for the symbolism in Masonry.

What is symbolism? The Concise Oxford Dictionary says it is "the use of symbols to represent ideas" Well, that's helpful!

So what is a symbol? The same dictionary says it is "a thing conventionally regarded as typifying, representing, or recalling something, especially an idea or quality."

The word comes from the Greek "ballo" meaning "throw" and "syn", meaning "together". And so Bernard Jones says "A symbol, literally, is two things thrown together; one of them stands for or calls to mind a moral or spiritual truth."

Using symbols to teach ideas has been used since the earliest of times. The pictures wrought in stained glass in the great cathedrals was a way to teach religious lessons to the illiterate, likewise the carvings on the ancient Hindu temples. Indeed hieroglyphs were originally pictures meant to record meaning. Only later did they come to represent certain sounds. The Hebrew alphabet had a similar origin. The Hebrew letter "beth" looks like a house, and that is what "beth" means. Only later did it come to represent the sound "b".

But even a letter can come to have a meaning that is not a sound. What does it mean to see an "B" on the top of your paper? Does it mean your teacher was thinking of his house? What about an "X" beside an answer? By convention, certain letters have certain meanings.

Specialized groups develop symbols that mean something only to them. Mathematicians use certain Greek letters to mean certain things. They understand them, but the non-Mathematician does not.

So too with Masonry. We have developed certain symbols which mean something more to the Mason than to the non-Mason.

The ancient mystery cults used symbols to hide their secrets in the plain view of others. If you did not know the code, you would not get the message. But Masons do not use symbols to exclude knowledge from others. We do it to make it more accessible to ourselves. How can this be?

As Albert Pike says in *Morals and Dogma*, "The method of indirect suggestion, by allegory or symbol, is a more efficacious instrument of instruction than plain didactic language; since we are habitually indifferent to that which is acquired without effort." If you have to work to find the meaning, you are more likely to remember it than if it is handed to you. And so we must work to figure out what the Masonic symbols mean.

But don't work too hard.

M. W. Bro. David C. Bradley writes in *Penetrating The Veil*: "The words of the ceremonies often adequately reveal the symbolism, and these explanations should be accepted as the correct definition. In many instances, however, the member is left to wrestle with his own interpretation. A word of caution is necessary. A member must not indulge in flights of fancy or travel to mystical extremes when interpreting symbolism. The simplest and most direct explanation is usually the best. The wise member does not permit his imagination to carry him into unreasonable fantasy, nor into wild aberrations. It is this freedom of individual thought that provides the ritual with its vitality, because everyone has an opportunity to draw the conclusions that suit his individual needs. And this freedom to understand, transcends barriers of language and allows members of any country to interpret a symbol. The ritual has a fascination for the member, who is sincerely trying to increase his knowledge of masonic philosophy by concentrating less on things that can be seen and touched, and more on higher values and the quality of life."

"Symbols are a means to an end. It is not the purpose of Freemasonry to teach the meaning of symbols; **the sole purpose of symbolism is to teach Freemasonry**. The importance of Masonic symbols is **what these symbols teach**. The symbolism of Freemasonry is inseparable from the philosophy of Freemasonry." - R.W. Bro. Raymond S. J. Daniels

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By R.W. Bro. David Cameron
for the Curriculum Group of
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8.3.12 Freemasonry... A System of Living

“True self-esteem must come from within; all else is temporary patchwork”

Brethren:

Every once in a while, in our life’s journey, we get involved with people whose behaviour is an endless exercise in grandiosity. In every area and interaction, they go to great lengths to show that they are superior – more knowledgeable, more successful, and more deserving than just about anybody. Sometimes they use the device of comparison; sometimes they exaggerate. Most of the time they boast unabashedly about one or another of their dubious achievements.

We’re uncomfortable when we’re around such people, mainly because they put us down – subtly or even openly – to make themselves look good. Because of our Masonic upbringing however, our annoyance gives way to sympathy, as we feel they are completely unaware of what they are doing. We are reminded of the times when our low self-esteem manifested itself in grandiosity and similar disguises.

What did we uncover when we finally peeled away the camouflage? We wish that somehow we could quickly convey to such people what we have had to gradually learn through experience. For we’re truly grateful that we’ve found more meaningful and lasting ways to feel good about ourselves.

As you know Brethren, “Freemasonry is a system of living; it seeks nothing for itself but to make its members wiser, better and consequently happier. Freemasonry makes good men better.”

Message from the East: Appeared in the Summons of Wexford Lodge No. 683, March 1999

W. Bro. Stephen Hanuman, W.M.

8.3.13 The Junior Warden's Toast

The Junior Warden's toast is often, if not always, very awkward. The reasons for this are:

- it comes at a time when many members are anxious to leave
- it usually follows a direct request from the W.M. (or Chairman) to the J.W. and some members react early in anticipation
- immediately upon the J.W.'s call for the toasts, the members create an irritating disturbance as they push their chairs back and stand, thereby drowning out the J.W. entirely

These problems detract from the significance and solemnity of the J.W.'s toast. As a suggested cure, the following is recommended:

When the W.M. (or Chairman) is ready to call upon the J.W., he first asks the brethren to rise. At a banquet, this act is facilitated by the fact that the J.W.'s toast usually follows the 'thanks' to those who have served the meal. Thus the members are already standing and the W.M. (or Chairman) only has to request that they remain standing.

The W.M. (or Chairman) then says, "Finally, Brethren, are your glasses charged in the West and the South?"

The S.W. replies, "They are charged in the West"

The J.W. replies "They are charged in the South"

The W.M. (or Chairman) says, "Then to our final toast tonight, our glasses freely drain; Brethren of the mystic art repeat the farewell strain."

At this point, he merely gestures to the J.W. in order to direct everyone's attention to the J.W.

The J.W. continues, with all brethren joining in, "Happy to meet, sorry to part, Happy to meet again."

This small piece of banquet ritual will smoothly introduce the J.W.'s toast. If done on a regular basis, the members will know what to expect and the whole process will be very smooth.

Addendum:

Should the W.M. be one who enjoys a bit of 'ceremony', he could replace number 5 above (the 4-line poem) with the following poem:

Brethren of the mystic art
The night is waning fast
Our feast is o'er, our work is done,
This song must be our last;
Good night, good night,
Once more, once more
Repeat the farewell strain.

Submitted by W. Bro. Ronald Brooks, Tuscan Lodge No. 99, G.R.C.

8.3.14 The Altar

In some English Lodges, as in the French and Scottish Rites, the Altar is in the East directly in front of the Master. In the York Rite, it is placed in the center --- more properly, a little to the East of the center ---- about which all Masonic activities revolve. It is not simply a necessary piece of furniture, a kind of table to support the Volume of the Sacred Law, Square and Compasses. The position of the Altar is not accidental, but profoundly significant. It is a symbol of what Masonry believes the Altar should be in actual life, a center of union and fellowship; not a cause of division as is so often the case with sectarian religion. It does not seek uniformity of opinion, but it does seek fraternity of spirit, leaving each one to fashion his own philosophy of the ultimate truth.

Finally, one can often find in a church, people sitting quietly, each without reference to the other, seeking to communicate with their God on their own. But no one ever goes to a Masonic Altar alone. It is an Altar of fellowship, as if to teach us that no one can learn the truth for another and no one can learn it alone.

Masonry brings men together in mutual respect, sympathy and good will that we may learn in love the truth that is hidden by apathy and lost by hate.

Source: Joseph Fort Newton, Short talks on Masonry
Submitted by W. Bro. Ronald Brooks, Tuscan Lodge No. 99 G.R.C

8.3.15 It Is Lodge Night!

I'm Going Out To Lodge:

Brethren, I thought I would reflect on some of my own feelings and personal observations on lodge night, which might coincide with your thoughts. At one time or another I'm sure we have experienced these happy events.

Before Lodge in the Ante Room:

We meet and greet the members of our lodge and all visitors. We extend the hand of friendship, fraternity and fellowship. We look forward to this night; in this place of friendship and brotherly love. We anticipate the degree to be performed and the response of our candidates in each of the three degrees.

In the Lodge Room:

Our lodge is a respite from the busy world in which we live. Work and play. It is a safe haven, to use a mariners' expression. We practice harmony in our temples, we experience the warmth of our time honoured ritual. To each other, we speak the words of friendship as if our life were made fuller by that greeting.

Comfort Level:

We find a comfortable place in lodge with friends and new brothers alike. Before the lodge is opened, we acknowledge other brothers across the room with a wink, nod or hand sign. We look about the lodge room and perhaps moralize or review some of the many symbols which are near and dear to us. The Volume of the Sacred Law; the Square and Compasses; the Altar, the sun, the moon, the all seeing eye; the four tassels, the ashlar, the tracing boards, and I could go on and on. In any event, the symbols relax us, as we know through our rituals, they will be used to illustrate our moral teachings.

Lodge Experiences:

Perhaps our thoughts go back many years to a brother Mason who has passed to the Grand Lodge above, just fleetingly. Not with remorse, but with a masonic memory of a life well spent. Soon our minds are drawn to one of our own experiences in lodge – our own initiation – or that of a friend or relative. During the 25 or 50 year pin presentations we rejoice with the recipient as he recalls his experiences in lodge over the years. Pin presentations bring out latent fond memories from the past of lives lived and respected.

Lodge is Opened:

The lodge is opened, the business conducted and we wait in anticipation of the work of the evening. The degree is completed, the presenters and candidate are complimented, we close and we give thanks to the Great Architect of the Universe for all favours received.

Closing – At the Altar:

At the Altar, we say: “Brethren, we are now about to quit this retreat (a safe haven to us all) of friendship and brotherly love. Nothing remains (we have completed our Masonic task this evening) but to lock up our secrets, in the safe and sacred repository of our hearts with fidelity (we tuck away our secrets until next time)”.

We file out of the lodge room, we continue to greet brethren who we missed at the beginning. We are satisfied – we have attended our lodge. We move from labour to refreshment.

In the Banquet Room:

During the festive board, we again sit with our Brothers for a repast and good conversation. We await the head table – all seated in good Masonic order. It is time to begin – we thank the world’s Great Architect for the good food and sustenance we are about to receive.

Time Honoured Toasts:

We toast the Queen and the Craft. We are told to enjoy our meal. And we do. Again, our time honoured toasts are like our Masonic landmarks – they sustain us, they are comfortable. The toast to our Grand Master and Grand Lodge; the toast to the Visitors; the toast to the Candidate; we look forward to the various responses. Finally, my brethren, it is time to call it an evening.

The Senior Warden gives his toast to absent brethren – our link with all lodge members wherever they may be (this world and the next). Then finally the Junior Warden gives his toast, “Happy to meet; Sorry to part; Happy to meet again”

Summing Up:

Have we received anything in attending lodge? You bet. No matter whether lodge is a well attended meeting or if the numbers are sparse, whether it is a great event like an installation or official visit or an emergent meeting, the result is the same.

We feel good; we have attended lodge; we have experienced the warmth that our great fraternity bestows upon us – peace, harmony and brotherly love. We go home refreshed.

Submitted by R.W. Bro. Bev C. Alexander, St. Andrew’s Lodge No. 593
PDDGM, Hamilton “B” District

8.3.16 Gloves in Masonry... How Important Are They?

“Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart”

The apron may be said to refer to the pure heart and the gloves to the clean hands.

The role of both apron and glove has been documented during both operative and speculative Masonry. These roles have been curiously similar and parallel. We know from the ritual that operative Masons wore aprons “to protect their garments from spot and stain.” Operative Masons also wore gloves to protect their hands from the effects of limestone and the lime used in cement.

The origin of gloves dates back to at least the fourth century B.C.. Linen gloves were found in the tomb of Tutankhamen. Literature of the Roman Empire refers to gloves with fingers. Frenchmen started wearing them in the eighth or ninth century and Englishmen in the tenth century. In Europe in the middle ages, gloves became an emblem of rank and power. They were a symbol of chivalry, high rank and church position. A knight who struck another with a glove, challenged him to a duel. Rulers conferred honours and privileges using the glove. High priests and emperors wore silk gloves to indicate their rank. The wearing of gloves was however, restricted even among the upper class. Others had to make do with fingerless mittens or a cloth wrapped around the hand.

However, despite their use to distinguish nobility, it would appear that Masons were allowed to use gloves to protect their hands. There is supporting evidence for this statement: Numerous early records show that their employers supplied them. An illustrated manuscript, “The Book of St. Alban” dated C. 1220, shows Mason-hewers wearing a gauntlet type glove, presumably as a protective measure.

M. Didron, in his “Annales Archeologiques” cites examples of Masons wearing gloves. There is a stained glass window in the Cathedral at Chartres (dated 13th century) depicting Masons at work. Three are wearing laurel crowns... the three officers of the Lodge, and all of them are wearing gloves.

In 1381, the Chatelan of Villaines bought a considerable quantity of gloves for the workmen – “to shield their hands from the stone and the lime”. In 1383, three dozen gloves were given to the Masons building at the Chartreuse of Dijon. In 1486, at Amiens, twenty-two pairs of gloves were given to the Masons. At Ely, in 1322, the Sacristy bought gloves for the Masons engaged on the “new work” and, at Eaton College, in 1456, five pairs of gloves were provided for the “layers” of the walls, “as custom may have required” (Knoop and Jones, *The Medieval Mason*, 1949, pg. 69). At York in 1423, ten pairs of gloves were supplied to the Mason “setters” at a total cost of eighteen pence (Salzman, *Building in England*, pg. 80). At Ayr, Edinburgh and St. Andrews, there are many records of gloves supplied to “hewers” and “layers” from 1398 to 1688 (Knoop, *The Scottish Mason*, pp.42-3). All these records relate to

Masons “on the job”. But for the Masons in their lodges there was another source of supply.

The privilege of wearing gloves by operative Masons might have understandably lead to a tradition later on among speculative Masons. In considering the use of gloves in speculative masonry, we need to remember the age in which the formal customs of the craft were developing. It was an age of formality; formality in speech, in dress and in manners; the age of courtly elegance; the age of the beaux and fops (and beneath this we must remember it was also an age that was coarse, brutal and depraved). Gloves were an item of formal male attire and indeed they persisted as such into modern times in formal evening and court dress. So there were two influences for the adoption of gloves as part of Masonic clothing; as symbolic (like the apron) of the operative tradition and as part of the formal dress of polite society.

In England, in 1686, Dr. Robert Plot in his “Natural History of Staffordshire” notes that the candidate was to “present or be presented with two pairs of gloves... one for himself and one for his wife”. This practice still continues in France and Germany. In 17th century Scotland, fellowcrafts were required by a statute of 1598, to provide the lodge with ten shillings worth of gloves in the ceremony of Initiation. The symbolism associated with this was “To teach him that the acts of a Freemason shall be as pure and spotless as the gloves given him”. This of course is very similar to the apron charge and depicts the parallel attitudes to gloves and apron.

The protocol of wearing gloves by speculative Masons.

The removal of gloves when receiving a grip or shaking a brother’s hand was considered an insult in the Lodges of our ancient brethren. It was also considered a disgrace for a gentleman to remove his gloves when shaking hands with a lady. A Master would remove his glove for obligations, but to touch the Volume of the Sacred Law with naked flesh was to defile it. “According to Isrealitish law, all flesh was deemed unclean”. It would seem that there is abundant evidence that gloves are a part of the proper dress of masons and also to remove them is improper.

The comparison is drawn between taking off the gloves and removing the apron when giving a grip. The lesson being: should the apron not be removed, neither should the glove. However, in the 14th century, it was the custom to remove gloves when entering the presence of a stranger or when greeting a superior. A dagger could be concealed in the glove. This explains illustrations showing Master Masons without gloves in the presence of the King.

In closing, let me enjoin you to consider the great privilege our ancient brethren enjoyed and to note how carefully Grand Lodge retains it. Should we not, in lodges of the jurisdiction, also retain and enjoy that privilege lest we lose this well documented part of operative and speculative masonry?

Submitted by W. Bro. Michael Diamond, Oakridge Lodge No. 708, London

8.3.17 Supplementary Apron Charge - Initiation

(To be given only after completion of the ceremony)

It may be in the years to come, on your head may rest the laurel leaves of victory, and on your breast may hang jewels fit to grace the diadem of an eastern potentate. Nay, more than these with light added to the coming light, your ambitious feet may tread round after round of the ladder that leads to the fame in our mystic circle, and even the purple of our fraternity may rest upon your honoured shoulders, but never again through mortal hands, no, never again, until your franchised soul shall have passed upwards and inwards through the pearly gates, shall an honour so distinguished and so emblematic of purity and innocence be conferred upon you as that which we have already bestowed.

You will observe that this badge is made of lambskin, as the lamb in all ages has been the acknowledged emblem of all purity and innocence. It will remind you of that purity of life and action which should at all times characterize Freemasons. I trust that you will live many years to wear this badge with a credit to yourself, usefulness to mankind and an honour to this lodge which you have this night been admitted a member. I would further exhort you never to disgrace this badge for you may rest assured that it will never disgrace you. It is yours to wear through an honoured life, and at your death to be placed upon the casket which shall contain your earthly remains, and with them laid to rest beneath the silent sod of the valley. Let its pure and spotless surface be to you, an ever present reminder of rectitude of life and purity of conduct. A never failing argument of higher thoughts, nobler deeds or greater achievements.

And when at length, your wearied feet shall have come to the end of life's toilsome journey, and from your nerveless grasp you shall have dropped forever the working tools of life, may the record of your conduct be as pure and as spotless as this fair surface.

And when at last, your naked soul shall stand, trembling and alone before the great white throne, may it then be your portion to hear from him who sits as judge supreme those welcome words:

“well done thy good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the lord.”

Submitted By: W. Bro. Brian Baldwin, Morningstar Lodge No. 309, Carlow

8.3.18 Address on Presentation of Grand Lodge Master Mason's Certificate

Having attained the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, you are entitled to receive a certificate issued by the Most Worshipful the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario. I have much pleasure in presenting this certificate to you here in open lodge. Please examine it while I call your attention to its most conspicuous features.

You will observe that this design is divided vertically by a Pillar. It is of the Corinthian order, symbolizing beauty, and refers to Hiram Abif, whose exquisite work in beautifying the temple was, as we are told, beyond all imagination. Flanking this central column are two others. That on the left is of the Ionic order and signifies wisdom, alluding to the wisdom of King Solomon in building and dedicating the Temple at Jerusalem to the service of the Great Architect of the Universe. That on the right is of the Doric order, which denotes strength, and alludes to the wisdom of Hiram, King of Tyre, in supporting King Solomon with men and materials.

The black and white tasselled flooring symbolizes the light and darkness, and the joys and sorrows, of our checkered career here on earth. On the floor are the three great emblematic lights in Freemasonry: the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses. You will also observe most of the working tools, and the rough and perfect ashlar. There are also the celestial and terrestrial globes, indicating that Freemasonry is spread over every part of the world.

As regards the wording of the document, you will observe in the left-hand panel a declaration in English, and in the right, a translation of it in Latin: "To all our Worshipful loving brethren... that the Brother referred to in the text has been regularly received into Freemasonry."

The date of initiation is recorded not only in Anno Domini (in the year of our Lord), but Anno Lucis, that is to say, the number of years that have elapsed since the hypothetical era of Masonic light, which, it is calculated, preceded the Christian era by 4,000 years.

In testimony that the Brother's name has been duly recorded in the books of Grand Lodge, the Grand Secretary has subscribed his signature and affixed the seal of Grand Lodge. On this seal is the well-known motto of Freemasonry: "Audi, Vide, Tace": "Listen, Observe, and Be Silent."

Possession of this certificate does not entitle a brother to admission to any lodge without due examination: neither does examination alone give entrance without the production of the certificate, should it be demanded.

To the Brother to whom it was issued, this document is of unique value, and immense importance. It is a means of Masonic identification, a proof of membership in case of accident, calamity, or misfortune, and a passport when visiting a foreign lodge.

I feel confident, therefore, that it will lead you to proving yourself worthy of the greatest brotherhood that has ever adorned the annals of the world's history. But, Brother _____, your certificate is at present incomplete. You are required to add your usual signature in the margin, from which there must be no subsequent deviation. This you will do at your earliest convenience.

On behalf of the brethren of _____ lodge, I heartily congratulate you!

Submitted By: V.W. Bro. Clifford Coultres, Blyth Lodge No. 303, Blyth

8.3.19 The Importance of Our Ritual

One of the great appeals of Freemasonry, both to the profane and to the Mason, is its antiquity. The Order can trace an unbroken history of more than two hundred years in its present form (the Mother Grand Lodge was formed in 1717), and has irrefutable documentary evidence of a much longer existence in simpler forms. Our present rituals -- the plural is used advisedly, as no two jurisdictions are as one on what is correct in ritual -- are the source books from which we prove just where we came from and, to some extent, just when.

If we alter our ritual, either intentionally or by poor memorization, we gradually lose the many references concealed in the old, old phrases which tell the story of whence we came and when. Time is relative to the observer; what is very slow to the man may be very rapid to nature. Nature has all the time there is. To drop out a word here, put in a new one there, eliminate this sentence and add another one to our ritual seems to be a minor matter in a man's lifetime. Yet, if it continues long enough, in a very few score years, the old ritual will be entirely altered and become something new.

We have confirmation of this. Most parts of the ritual are printed. These printed paragraphs are practically the same in most jurisdictions. Occasionally, there is a variation, showing where some committee on work has not been afraid to change the work of our fathers. But, as a whole, the printed portion of our work is substantially what it was when it was first brought to this country more than two hundred years ago. The secret work is very difficult in many of our jurisdictions. Some of the differences in ritual are accounted for by different original sources, yet even in two jurisdictions which sprang from the same source of Freemasonry, and originally had the same work, we find variations. These variations show that mouth-to-ear instruction, no matter how diligent it may be, is not wholly an accurate way of transmitting words. In spite of us, alterations creep in by the slow process of time and human fallibility, how much faster will the ritual change if we are careless or indifferent?

The farther away we get from our original source, the more meticulously careful must trustworthy Masons be to pass on the work to posterity as we receive it. The Mason of olden times could go to his source for re-inspiration -- we can not. Ritual is the thread which binds us to those who immediately preceded us, as their ritual bound them to their fathers, our grandfathers. The ritual that we hand down to our children's children will be their bond with us, and through us the historic dead. To alter that bond intentionally is to wrong those who come after us, even as we have been wronged when those who preceded us were careless or inefficient in their memorization of the ritual.

The Entered Apprentice, then, should not be discouraged if the ritual 'comes hard'. He should fail not in the task, nor question that it is worth while, for on what he does and on the way he does it depends in some measure the Freemasonry of the future. As he does well or ill, so will those who come after him do well or ill.

But, we must not leave him to solve all his problems by himself, we, his mentor, his sponsor, his Brother, we must ensure that he knows that we will proceed with him along his Masonic travels.

Submitted by R.W. Bro. David Bruce, St. Aidan's Lodge No. 567

8.4 GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BROTHER

8.4.1 Introduction

This section contains articles that can be used to help you to get to know your Brother better. They provide the vehicle by which we can obtain some information about a Brother for use on a special occasion or simply for archiving in the lodge records.

Also included are topics that can be used as 'mixers'. These 'mixers' can be used with masonic and non-masonic audiences alike. They are the 'ice-breakers' that get everyone 'warmed up'!

Please recognize the authors of the pieces that you use.

8.4.2 Presentation of a Fifty Year Pin

Brethren, it is our privilege tonight to pay tribute of respect and esteem to an honoured member of _____ Lodge No. _____. Freemasonry has always taught proper reverence and veneration for those whose years have brought them to places of eminence in the Craft. Happy indeed is the occasion when years of age stand united with years of service, and when an honour may be conferred upon a Brother who is both worthy and esteemed.

Masons have learned that we progress through life in three principal states - Youth, Manhood and Age. In youth we occupy our minds in the attainment of useful knowledge: in Manhood we apply that knowledge to the discharge of our duties to God, our neighbours and ourselves; so that in Age we may enjoy happy memories of a life well spent.

Our present gathering affords an opportunity to reflect upon the past. From the experiences of the past, the present receives useful counsel and guidance which enables us to erect a more glorious future. To those of mature years, we look for wisdom, and upon wisdom Freemasonry builds each laudable enterprise.

With great pride and pleasure, therefore, we welcome our honoured Brother on an occasion, which we trust will be the crowning moment of his Masonic life.

Will the Secretary please read the Masonic record of ___ Brother _____?

Bro. D.of C., please conduct ___ Brother _____ to the Altar.

My Brother, with pleasure we behold you before the Altar of Freemasonry - that Altar which you were taught to approach fifty years ago. There you assumed obligations designed to make a lasting impression on your mind and to serve as an uplifting and ennobling influence upon your life and character. Again you have approached the Altar of Freemasonry, this time to receive a recognition that comes only to those fortunate Brethren who have laboured in the Temple faithfully for half a century.

Early in your Masonic career you were taught never to enter upon any great or important undertaking without first invoking the blessing of the Deity. It, therefore, behoves us with the utmost reverence and humility, to offer our supplication to the God and Father of us all, that our labours may in all things meet with his approval.

Brother Chaplain will lead us in prayer. (W.M. gives three knocks before prayer and one knock after)

(D. of C. places the Brother north of the Altar facing east)

Fifty years ago you remembered your Creator in the days of your youth. Tonight we commemorate the completion of your half-century of Masonic fellowship. In the span of fifty years each Mason gives of his substance; many also give of their time; others add

loyalty and steadfast devotion. But to all of us, our gentle Craft gives far more than we could give to it in a lifetime of service. Thus when we pay tribute to you on your golden anniversary, we pay tribute also to the Fraternity which opened its portals to you and which made it possible for you to build your life on the sublime principles it indicates.
(D. of C. conducts Brother to the east)

You are about to be presented with an award of Gold. May you wear this emblem in health, happiness and prosperity, and may your days be long upon the land which the Lord our God hath given us. On a memorable occasion fifty years ago you were invested with the distinguishing badge of a Mason, and you were admonished to wear that spotless apron with pleasure to yourself and honour to the Fraternity. Thus, I trust, will you wear the Award of Gold. May the joy of this moment abide with you always and may you ever stand as you once stood in the northeast angle - a just and upright Mason.

_____ will now make the presentation.

___ Brother _____ would you care to speak?

This ceremony was brought to Brussels by R.W.Bro. Bruce McCall, Thistle Lodge No. 250, Embro, Wilson District.

8.4.3 Special Presentation Profile

How nice it is when we honour a Brother, no matter what the occasion, to be able to say a few words about him other than the date of his initiation, passing and raising.

Purpose: To be used to gather information about a Brother you and your lodge intends to honour at some special occasion. These special presentations could include the presentation of a long service pin, a masonic birthday, devoted lodge service, recognition of community volunteering or simply an evening in his honour.

The Brother chosen to make the presentation should take the opportunity to meet with the honouree before the occasion and use this form as a guideline to the gathering of information.

The information can also be used to assist the DDGM if he is asked to take part in the presentation.

After the evening, the information can become a permanent record in the Lodge or District Historian’s archives.

Name of Brother: _____

Reason for the presentation: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Brother’s Lodge History:

Initiated: _____ Passed: _____ Raised: _____

Worshipful Master: _____ Grand Lodge Officer: _____

Contributions to Lodge Work:

Most Memorable Lodge Experience:

Occupation:

Family:

Highlights of Community Service:

Submitted by M.W. Bro. Robert J. McKibbon, King Solomon's Lodge No. 378, London

8.4.4 Masonic Bingo

Masonic Bingo is an 'Ice breaker' that can be used during a lodge meeting or at the social hour. It is intended to get all the brethren moving about the room, meeting and talking to each other. It can be run for any length of time, but approximately 15-20 minutes seems to work best.

Equipment needed:

One copy of 'Masonic Bingo' for each member in attendance and a sufficient supply of pencils or pens.

Object of the game:

Participation

For each square, collect the signature of one brother who fits the square's description.

Use a name only once on your 'card'.

Declaration of Winner:

Many options, such as any two intersecting lines wins, but a full house beats two intersecting lines: most squares completed.

A prize can be awarded for the brother filling in the most 'squares', but is not necessary.

Modifications:

The contents of the squares are up to your imagination. This sample provides only the beginning. Tailor the questions to suit your lodge or district (local masonic items, local community knowledge). Tailor the questions to suit the occasion (fun night, masonic quiz, lodge history, etc).

	B	I	N	G	O
1	Owens a pickup truck	Knows what a 'bogey' is	Has had a broken nose	Has a pet	Has lived outside of Ontario
2	Has NOT seen the movie 'Titanic'	Likes liver and Broccoli	Is a V.W. Bro.	Has a birthday this month	Has never owned a black car
3	Knows what an 'Outturn' is	Owens a computer	Free  Mason	Can play a musical instrument	Has grand children
4	Has flown in a single engine plane	Has been on a cruise	Has a food allergy	First and Last name begins with the same letter	Has personalized license plates
5	Runs, walks or exercises regularly	Is left handed	Is self employed	Has never had a speeding ticket	Knows the difference between a Kubota and a Red Door

Submitted by: R.W. Bro. Bruce Whitmore, Britannia Lodge No. 170, Seaforth

8.5 TOPICS FOR THE NEW MASON

8.5.1 Introduction

Included in this section are articles that can be used for Masonic education anytime, but may be more effective when presented to newer Masons soon after their initiation. They all, in their own way, give a new member a chance to 'review' what he was exposed to in his initiation. They also provide him with the opportunity to expand his knowledge of the workings of the lodge.

The article titled "My First Visit To The Lodge" is a presentation which can be used to remind us all, of the responsibilities we have to our new members. These are also short articles requiring little or no advance preparation. However, "My First Visit To The Lodge" does have more impact if rehearsed and presented with the proper dialect.

When using any of these articles, please recognize the authors.

8.5.2 An Introduction to the New Initiate

(This presentation is most effective if given shortly after the meeting when the candidate received his first degree. The Candidate may be lead around the lodge room during this presentation)

Good evening Bro. _____. I'm _____, also a member of this lodge.

If either one of us is asked how old our mother is, we both answer ____ because that is the number of our mother lodge.

Welcome to the largest and oldest fraternity of men in the world. You have already made some progress. When you entered the lodge, you were called Mr. _____. Now, each one of us will call you Brother.

The ceremony of your initiation is the first of three degrees that you will take in this lodge. All of the parts were memorized and you can almost be sure that there is a Brother somewhere in the lodge who knows the lines being delivered in the degree. When the ritual is well known and delivered well, it is very meaningful and has a serious message. Some of these parts you will learn and deliver at your second degree ceremony.

It was likely quite disconcerting to arrive here this evening in a perfectly good suit, only to be asked to exchange it for a pair of pyjamas. Did you notice that nobody laughed as you entered the lodge in that garb? That's because we have all been there and done that! Speaking of clothes, notice that every one has at least a jacket and tie. Some have a suit, a tux or even tails (if the DDGM or other Grand Lodge Officer is present). This is a dignified place.

Before you entered you were asked three questions regarding the Supreme Being. This was no accident, as in the centre of the lodge is the centre of our lodge work, as well as of the universe. Let me hasten to clarify that we are NOT a religion. We admit all cultures, creeds, races and ages. In this particular lodge, we are Christians, so our Volume of the Sacred Law is the Bible.

As you hear the ritual again and again, you will hear the great lessons for living. The lessons are conveyed in symbols and allegory, much like the parables in the Bible. Everything you see in this lodge has some meaning as it relates to our ritual.

When you were prepared to enter the lodge, all metals were taken away from you. This assures us that you had no weapons to force your way into the lodge, nor money to buy your way into our midst. And as for the pyjamas, these garments teach humility and regardless of rank or fortune, every Brother here entered the lodge in the same way, as equals and as Brothers.

You will recall that your right arm was bare. That is because the right arm was traditionally the weapon carrying arm. The bare left breast proves your gender and shows your heart to be open to our teachings. You were touched with a sword to prove that your conscience was alive, while the slippers, half on and half off, complete the picture of reverence and humility.

The hoodwink as a word in the dictionary, means to trick. Be assured there are no tricks here, which is not to say that we do not enjoy ourselves. Symbolically, your state of darkness becomes one of light as you learn. In this case, the blindfold allows you to hear and understand with your heart before you see with your eyes. The cable tow shows us that we are slaves to our emotions and to our ignorance. As we learn, this slavery dissipates.

As the ceremony progressed, you were lead around the lodge to hear the lectures on the history, the obligation, the charges and the secrets. Here I want to emphasize another NOT. We are NOT a secret society. Our lodge sign on the front of our building clearly advertises our presence. Members wear rings and lapel pins, and even have decals on their cars. Not much of a secret! Beside, our presence on the Internet keeps any secrets to a bare minimum.

But, no technology can compare with the elegant, descriptive prose in which our ritual is written. This prose should capture your attention, but surely there is no feeling that catches your attention so clearly as the feeling of helplessness when the charity plate is presented.

Your plain white apron symbolizes purity. That is not to say that all other colourful aprons are worn by sinners! Quite the contrary, some have two rosettes; some have three squares; some are celestial blue; some royal blue; and some have a lot of gold braid to designate different accomplishments.

The working tools cause us to reflect back to our origins in the stone-mason trade. Just as these tools were used for hammering, measuring and smoothing, so we are expected to chip away at our ignorance and rough edges to perfect our character and to improve society. These Ashlars, the rough and the perfect, symbolize that process.

Our tenets, as you heard, are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. These beliefs bind us together and make us dependent on one another. Thus the golden rule is very much our common goal. Furthermore, we come into the world with nothing and leave the same way. Thus we are all equal and dedicated to being happy and conveying happiness to others.

Although I have said that we are all equals, there is an orderly hierarchy to our organization. That hierarchy is symbolized by the aprons, the collars and the braid.

Let me introduce you to our officers.

- District Deputy Grand Master – the Grand Master’s Representative; like the Governor General is to the Queen
- Immediate Past Master – the coach to the Worshipful Master
- Worshipful Master – the head of the lodge
- Wardens – in training to be Worshipful Master
- Deacons – the Master’s messengers; Parliamentary pages
- Inner Guard – takes the password to allow you to enter
- Tyler – determines if you may enter
- Chaplain, Treasurer and Director of Ceremonies – self-explanatory
- Secretary – rudder of the lodge, makes the Worshipful Master look good when they plan together
- Stewards – preparation of the candidate, the lodge and the food (get to know them)

In conclusion, I welcome you to Freemasonry. Joining this fraternity is not a frivolous decision. Besides every man in this place, your Brother’s include members of Royalty, Presidents and Prime Ministers and famous names such as Winston Churchill, Henry Ford and Red Skelton.

Tonight Bro. _____, you have laid the cornerstone for a new dimension in your life and we wish you enjoyment as you grow and learn and share your talents in the brotherhood of Freemasons.

Contributed By: R.W.Bro. Bruce Whitmore, Britannia Lodge No. 170, P.D.D.G.M., South Huron District

8.5.3 Explanation of the Formation of the Lodge in the First Degree

This explanation is most meaningful if presented to the new mason shortly after the meeting where he received his Entered Apprentice Degree. It is a general explanation of the lodge room and the officers' chairs.

(With the newly initiated Mason on your left arm, commence an informal walk around the Lodge commencing in the east.)

NOTE: When referring to the officer's jewels, have the appropriate jewel held up in order that the new brother may see what is being explained.

Keep the entire procedure in a "light" vein and introduce some humour where possible.

When I first became a Mason, it was a good number of months before I understood the function of each officer and the various furnishings about the Lodge. So, tonight, we are going to show you around, so to speak, in the hope that when you come to the Lodge next month, you will feel comfortable and more at home amongst your Brethren.

This area of the Lodge is known as the "East" and it will come as no surprise to you that our Master sits in the east, since all learning emanated from the east. The Master is elected by the brethren of the Lodge for a period of one year. He is the "boss", and the well ruling of the Lodge is in his hands. You will notice that the Master's jewel is the Square and, as you have already learned, the Square and the Compasses represent the whole Craft.

To his right is the Immediate Past Master; he was the Master last year. He has an important function in that, since he made all the usual mistakes that a Master can make during his year as Master, he is now in the position of being able to correct the Master, give him his opinions and advice and prompt him as necessary. The IPM's jewel is the square from which is suspended a geometrical design of historical significance to the Mason.

To the Master's left is a chair which is reserved for any dignitary who might visit, or anyone else within the Lodge of Master rank or higher, whom the Master might invite to sit beside him.

The area to the right of the Master is reserved for Past Masters or visiting Masters from other Lodges, while the area to his left is reserved for Grand Lodge Officers.

Masonry, like any business, has a Head Office and a President. Our Head Office is in Hamilton, and our President is the Grand Master, M.W. Bro._____. The brethren who are responsible for Masonry, in each jurisdiction across the country, are what we refer to as Grand Lodge Officers and they are either elected or appointed to Grand Lodge. You will notice that they wear very colourful regalia and they are the wise men of Masonry. They keep a close eye on proceedings, and when I get finished

this evening they will not be reticent in pointing out any errors which I may have made during this presentation.

Here we have the Secretary and no business or organization could get along without a secretary and, it is certainly no different in Masonry. The Lodge Secretary performs a myriad of duties and is critical to the success and the well running of the Lodge. His jewel is the crossed goose quills, which, in early times, were used to transcribe the proceedings. It is one of his duties to keep a written record of all meetings. As a matter of fact, the first meeting ever held in my Lodge in _____ was duly recorded by the Secretary of that day and is available in the archives. In like manner, the events of this evening are being recorded, together with your name, and will go down in the minutes as part of our Lodge history.

Next to the Secretary is the Treasurer. It is his responsibility to look after the accounts of the Lodge and to record all receipts and expenditures. For example, he will record the amount of dollars of which you were relieved this evening. His jewel is the crossed keys, which have reference to the coffers, or strong box in which the resources of the Lodge were kept in years gone by.

Here we have the Junior Warden. The Junior Warden and the Senior Warden (point to him), along with the Master, are the principal officers of the Lodge and they will normally progress from one chair to the next. In this way then, the Junior Warden, if he behaves himself and keeps his nose clean, will probably be elected Senior Warden next year and the Senior Warden will likewise be elected to the Masters chair. The Junior Warden's jewel is the plumb rule, which is the emblem of uprightness.

On each side of the Junior Warden sit the Stewards. Their jewel is the cornucopia or the "Horn of Plenty". It is the emblem assigned to the Stewards because of their function in administering to the brethren at the hours of refreshment. The Junior Steward's chair is the first chair as one proceeds upwards to the Master's Chair.

Here we now have the Senior Warden, whom I have already referred to. He has a similar function to the Junior Warden in assisting the Master in the well ruling of the Lodge. His jewel is the level, the emblem of equality.

You are already well acquainted with the Junior Deacon, as he was the Mason who guided you around the Lodge room tonight during your degree. We have both a Junior Deacon and a Senior Deacon (point to him), and they have similar functions in the various degrees as they assist the Wardens and the Master in the actual duties of the Lodge. Their jewels depict a dove and allude to the dove, which was released by Noah and returned to the Ark with an olive branch.

You also know something about the Outer Guard and the Inner Guard, since they were the first people you met when you were about to enter the Lodge. The Outer Guard is responsible to see that none but Masons get into the Lodge room and the Inner Guard has a similar function. The Inner Guard's jewel is the crossed swords and the Outer Guard's jewel sports a single sword. They recall the "flaming sword" placed, after

Adam's fall, at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to keep all intruders away from the "tree of life".

The Director of Ceremonies is responsible for seeing that the ceremonies and degrees are well rehearsed and that the brethren know their work to the credit of the Lodge. You will often see him with a furrowed brow and a sweaty palm as he watches the degree work and probably sees things which you wouldn't notice, but which, in his desire to achieve perfection, keeps his worry level high. His emblem or jewel is the crossed rods, depicting the marshal's baton, originally the officer in charge of the King's horses, but which has come to have certain ceremonial duties in respect to the marshalling of processions. The Director of Ceremonies also attends to any ceremony in which the Lodge might be involved.

The Organist is responsible for the music of the Lodge and his jewel is the lyre.

The Chaplain looks after the spiritual side of our meetings and his jewel is the Volume of the Sacred Law mounted on a triangle.

This is the Altar, which you will find in every Masonic Lodge. It is the center of the building. On the Altar lies the Volume of the Sacred Law. This book can be different depending upon where the Lodge is situated in the world, and will always allude to the beliefs of the brethren in that particular area. It is not uncommon for more than one book to be on the Altar, depending on where you are. For example, if you were to go to Lodge in Jerusalem, you would find four books upon the Altar, alluding to the various beliefs in that city. It is important to know that everything that we do in Masonry emanates from the V.O.S.L. lying here on the Altar, and it is the focal point of Masonry. Here we have what we refer to as the rough and the perfect ashlar (point to them). Now, as you begin your Masonic journey, you have been likened to the rough ashlar, which, you will notice, has some form, but it is still very rough. This alludes to the fact that you have been investigated and your brethren have determined that you are a fit and proper person to become a Mason. Now begins the work, using our Masonic tools, of chipping away all that you do not need to be a Mason among men. Eventually, this rough ashlar will become more like the one we see across the Lodge room, and which we refer to as the perfect ashlar. Masonry does not add anything to you as a man, but rather takes away anything that you do not need. Masonry then, is a journey, which you have begun tonight. A journey, if you like, that takes you from the "rough Ashlar" to the "perfect Ashlar". Masonry is not something that you arrive at, but rather, Masonry is something that is ongoing and in which you will spend the rest of your life aspiring to perfection. However, if you look closely at the "perfect Ashlar", you will notice that it is not "perfect", because nothing in this mortal world is perfect. We spend our lifetime as Masons, as I have said, aspiring to perfection until, eventually, we leave this world and go to the Grand Lodge Above.

You will get out of your Masonic journey in relationship to what you are prepared to give of yourself and your talent. It is my hope, and the hope of the brethren here assembled tonight, that you will continue your Masonic journey, that you will take your

obligations seriously and that you, with the help of your brethren, will make a place for yourself in Masonic circles.

Congratulations and best wishes to you, brother.

Contributed By: R.W.Bro. Edward Peters, The Tuscan Lodge No. 195, P.D.D.G.M.
London West District

8.5.4 My First Visit to the Lodge

(The presenter should attempt to use the appropriate dialect during this presentation)

The following is presented in a humorous vein. Yet, it points out that very often the candidate is not sufficiently instructed and assisted in grasping the basics of Masonry. This omission on our part may prevent him from really enjoying the lessons that are being taught and the fellowship that is his of right as a brother Mason.

It was just three weeks ago that I became a member of the Deep Hollow Lodge, No. 111. That night, I was so mixed up about what happened, that I decided to go to the meeting tonight to see just how things are done there.

I got through with the milking early, fed the hens, saw that the pigs were penned up, went to shave, and once again, put on my blue suit that Uncle Josh gave me for Confirmation. I cranked up old Henry and started out on the twenty-nine mile trip to the Lodge.

A little while after I got there, the men all came in, sat down on the benches and looked kind of quiet. Then a feller at the end of the room, sitting a bit higher than me, hit a hammer on something; said that everybody should watch how the're clothed. I knew he meant me, so I fixed my tie and took off my rubbers. Seems he must be the boss of the outfit, cause he gave orders to a lot of men. There was a father and a son there who had something to do with it. I know one was the junior and the other was the senior. I can't remember their first names, but I think the last name was Warden.

Then along comes a feller with a long stick in his hand. He shook hands with everybody, and then they would stand up and blow in his ear. When he got to me, I shook his hand and blew in his ear too, but he didn't like it much. He called me Confusion. Then the feller, I think they call him Master, asked if anyone knew me, and they did, so that was all right.

After that, an old man got up and said some nice prayers, and we all sang a song, which was pretty good. While we were still standing, everybody started moving their hands in different ways, so I did the same. Then along comes a feller, guess he belongs to the church, cause I heard him called 'Deacon'. He lit some candles; can't figure out why, cause it was plenty light in the room. Then the Master told someone to tell the feller outside that the lodge was open, but he didn't seem to care, cause he didn't come in anyway.

Then the boss called the feller at the desk the Secretary and told him to do some reading. This was the first time I saw a real Secretary. I once read a story in a magazine where a married man ran away with his Secretary; couldn't imagine who would run away with the old man and what for.

The Master got up and said the Lodge was open and that he was looking for business.

Don't think anybody gave him any, though a few of the men did some talking about sickness and other things. After a while, the Master told the son of the father that we was to have some refreshments; then the junior one hit his hammer and we stood up, and he told us also about getting some refreshments. I waited around a bit to see what we would get to eat and drink, but seems they plumb forgot about it all, cause I didn't see anybody get anything, so I got my hat and coat and went home. Guess I won't go anymore, cause everybody's all mixed up, just like myself.

Submitted by V.W. Bro. Horace H. Ransom

8.6 SKITS & PLAYS

8.6.1 Introduction

This section contains an assortment of ice-breakers, games, skits and short plays. These presentations could be given in lodge or at the banquet hour. Some may also be used for non-masonic audiences. They are generally of a 'lighter' nature. They are designed for use when you wish to involve multiple brethren in your presentation. Therefore, some advance preparation is necessary and some staging, props or costumes may be needed.

Recognize your Brethren by giving credit to the authors of any material that we use.

8.6.2 Bryce and Florence A Masonic Skit

(Some advance preparation is necessary to present this skit effectively. Appropriate clothing, in addition to that listed, will assist. Substitution of names as appropriate will give a 'local' flavour. The role of 'Florence' is obviously played by a male if the presentation is made in Lodge)

Props needed: table, set for dinner with tablecloth; candles on table; music stand; tea-pot; envelope; an old motor; a shop apron

Costuming: wig, dress, beads, earrings, glasses, laundry basket, slippers, newspaper, Chatelaine magazine, scissors, Masonic apron.

Scene opens in the kitchen of Bryce and Florence's house, with Flo appearing wearing the Masonic apron over her dress.

(Flo) "Yoohoo! Bryce, Yoohoo Bryce. Oh dear, if he has that radial saw running he'll never hear me. *(shouts louder)* **B**ryce, supper."

(Bryce enters carrying an old motor and wearing a shop apron).

(Bryce) " I'm coming, I'm coming. I just had to close up the shop, been workin' on my antique motor."

(Flo) "Oh Bryce, I'm so glad to see you. Now you sit over here. I'll get your paper. The tea's ready and I'll get your slippers, I hung them out on the clothes line Friday. You just get nice and comfy." *(Flo pats Bryce on the head and blows him a kiss).*

(Bryce) " OK, OK, just let me take off my ap-p-p-p! Wait a minute!!! That's my Masonic apron you're wearing. What do you think you're doing?"

(Flo) "Well, I was desperate. All my aprons are in the wash and I wanted to make you a special supper."

(Bryce) " I still don't want you wearing----- wait a minute, special supper? Newspaper? Slippers? Tea? Oh yeah ! Let me guess. You've been shopping, right?"

(Flo) "Well-I-I yes, but didn't you know that a woman's place is in the mall?"

(Bryce sighing) "How much?"

(Flo) " I needed a new dress for your retirement banquet. Don't you like it?"

(Bryce) " It's OK. How much?"

(Flo) "It was on sale, really cheap, and anyway, you never buy me anything."

(Bryce) “ Oh come on! I just bought you some new clothes.”

(Flo) “Those gardening overalls and rubber boots you got me at the Co-op? They can hardly count as clothes.”

(Bryce) “How much?”

(Flo) “Oh by the way, I brought in the mail. You got a lodge notice.”

(Bryce) “Don’t change the...wait a minute! You’ve already opened it! It’s supposed to be confidential.”

(Flo) “Isn’t it exciting! You haven’t had a lodge notice in the mail for 16 years. Haven’t you been paying your dues?”

(Bryce) “I was the secretary. The secretary doesn’t send himself a summons and waste a stamp. Now that I’m back on the mailing list, you’re not supposed to open my mail!”

(Flo) “Well, I wanted to know if you’d be sitting over in your chair with your little black book mumbling all those big secrets, or maybe you’d be doing Masonic education again, now that you’ve retired as secretary.”

(Bryce) “Well if you’ve already looked at the notice, you already know I’m doing Masonic education.”

(Flo) “You’re so dedicated. I still remember the night you took the tractor and snow blower to get to the lodge for installation. They can’t do without you!”

(Bryce) “Besides you, masonry has been my life.”

(Flo) “You say the sweetest things. But, I do hope you have started making some notes for your Masonic education. Don’t leave it to the last minute.”

(Bryce) “I make notes when I think of them, out in the shop.”

(Flo) “How on earth can you get ideas for a speech from your tools in the shop?”

(Bryce) “Well, it’s true, and I’ll have you know that the last time I gave Masonic education I had the brethren glued right to their seats.”

(Flo) “That was clever of you. Imagine, taking glue from your shop and putting it on their seats before they sat down.”

(Bryce) “C’mon Flo, don’t tease and be nice. Show some respect. Please take off my apron.”

(Flo) “You don’t wear this one anymore anyway, ever since you got that fancy one with all the gold braid.”

(Bryce) “It’s still special, please take it off.”

(Flo) “I’ll take it off, if you promise to do something useful with it, like do the dishes!”

(Bryce) “It’s not for doing dishes. It’s supposed to be symbolic.”

(Flo) “Symbolic? If you want symbolic..., I’ll give you symbolic, where’s my Chatelaine magazine? Give me the scissors. *(she cuts out a picture)* That’s a picture of your supper..., how’s that for symbolic? Chew on that if you want symbolic.”

(Bryce) “Alright, alright. You can wear it just this once, but please be careful.”

(Flo) “Oh Bryce, it will keep my new dress clean and I want to look good for my honey. My dear, if you’d like I’ll even say grace. *(recites quietly)* Heavenly Father we ask that you be here with us now. Bless this food to our use and us to thy service. Amen.”

(Bryce) “I could hardly hear you.”

(Flo) “Well Bryce, I guess it doesn’t matter that much. I really wasn’t talking to you. *(she uncovers a dish)* anyway, I’ve made your favourite supper. Chili con carne, and lemon pie.” *(puts plate in front of him)*.

(Bryce) “Oh boy! Chili and lemon pie. OK, which one’s this?”

(Flo) “Aw Bryce, be nice. Now you’re teasing me. Oh well I guess we’re even now.”

(Bryce) “I couldn’t resist.”

(Flo) “Well, one thing is for sure. You won’t smell as bad as when you eat that awful spanish onion and limburger cheese at lodge meetings.”

(Bryce) “Well at least you know where I’ve been. I could be out ‘chasin’ other women.”

(Flo) “Why you old goat! If you did chase another woman, by the time you caught her, you’d forget why you were chasin’ her in the first place.”

(Bryce) “I’ll have you know that we Masons have strong principles, and besides, there are no women in the lodge.”

(Flo) “If you want my advice, I’d say it would be a big improvement if women were in your lodge.”

(Bryce) “Heaven forbid.”

(Flo) “Since you Masons believe in heaven and a creator, does your ritual say anything about the fact that God made Adam only as a rough draft, then he made woman..., to improve on the original model?”

(Bryce) “Actually my dear. The reason God made woman second, was because he didn’t want any advice.”

(Flo) “Well, as long as it’s a man’s world, then women have a long way to go to have equality.”

(Bryce) “Why would women want to take a backward step like that?”

(Flo) “Well I’ll just tell you. If there was equality, Tudor lodge would have made me honorary past assistant secretary. Then I’d feel a whole lot better about the whole thing!
I still say it’s a man’s world.”

(Bryce) “Then how come when a man gets married they say...what a lovely bride..., then when he dies they ask how much money he left his wife?”

(Flo) “Well, you must be leaving me a whole bundle, considering how little you spend on clothes for me.”

(Bryce) “I can see it all now. When I’m gone, you’ll spend the whole lot the first year. But at least I could rest in peace knowing that the Brethren will never see you go hungry.”

(Flo) “The real question is, do you think you’re Brethren will still want to support me after they’ve heard you’re Masonic education.”

(Bryce) “I think they will. I’ve got a brand new idea. Charlie _____ and I haven’t been singing in the _____(Fullerton) church choir for fifty years for nothing you know. Listen to this.” *(reads the first verse of the ‘Mockingbird Hill’ at end of page)*

(Flo) “Oh Bryce, I always knew you were clever. It even rhymes. It gives me goose bumps all over!”

(Bryce) “Now you be Charlie.”

(Flo) “OK, I’m Charlie. Oh good, I’ve got his apron on already to go. See I told you I needed an apron.”

(Bryce) “Are you ready? Ok together now. Find the note.”

(Flo) “ 0-0-0-e-e-e-a-a-a I think I’ve got it now. Ok you start, I’ve never sung in the choir you know.”

both sing to the tune of mockingbird hill**(verse 1)**

*When the sun in the morning peeps over the hill
I get on my tractor and oh what a thrill
I learn my black book while I scuffle the corn
That's where my greatest of speeches are born*

(sing chorus)

(chorus – repeat last line twice, slower the second time)

*Tra la twittle dee dee it gives me a thrill
To learn a few lines as I drive o'er the hill
Tra la twittle dee dee there's peace and goodwill
As I learn a few lines on my way to the mill (verse 2)
Had a speech to prepare, I remember it still
And my dues they took all of a fifty dollar bill
Was elected as D.D., then secretary did try
It takes a lot of practice but I learned by and by*

(sing chorus)**(verse 3)**

*When it's late in the evening and the master talks still
I survey my apron and consider the thrill
Of learning and reciting and doing the drill
Of learning and reciting tho' I'm way o'er the hill*

Author: R.W. Bro. Bruce Whitmore, Britannia Lodge NO. 170, PDDGM, South Huron District

8.6.3 The Can Opener Masonic Skit

The Forgotten Working Tool?

(This skit is intended to illustrate that humour can be used as a teaching tool. This is a skit based on the lessons of the working tools. It will be more effective if the two brethren involved have rehearsed their roles. Some costuming will add effect. Our 'salesman' could have a loud, checkered sport coat and suitable hat. Our customer perhaps not entirely fashion conscious, could be a 'trend' setter in his own right. As you read the material, you will see references to certain articles of his clothing that can be effective and 'get a laugh'. If performed in Lodge, both must remain properly attired in their aprons).

Brethren, Masonic education can be fun. We can both 'learn' and 'laugh' at the same time. Far too often, we forget that there can be a 'lighter' side of our meetings and that at times, it is perfectly acceptable to laugh and it should be encouraged. Tonight we have a presentation that, while hopefully making you laugh, will also remind you of the 'moral' lessons taught to us by the working tools.

Please note that what follows does **not** make fun of our ritual. It does however take some phrases well known to Masons and adds a bit humour by putting them into a different context. The goal is to remind us of those phrases, and how we can apply them to our daily lives.

Have you ever noticed that we often find ourselves using certain **phrases from our ritual** in day to day conversation? Listen for some of those phrases in what follows. I sincerely hope you will find it entertaining.

Let your imagination go as we leave the tiled recesses and travel to the Fall Fair.

(Presenter puts on 'salesman's jacket and hat).

Here we are then, setting up in our booth at fall fair. It's a good crowd tonight. I see there are all kinds here – people selling food, people trying to get your money on games of chance, even people trying to sell you something. You'll notice the sign on our booth - we're GHI (Grand Hodge Industries). *(A cardboard 'blue' GHI sign can be displayed).* A truly Canadian firm selling only products made right here in Canada.

Sir..., yes you..., over there with the glasses, com'on over here for a minute. I've got something to show you! Do you recognize this little item? *(displays the can opener to customer and crowd).* No, of course you don't recognize this Sir; that's because it's brand new. Never been on the market before. Oh, you may have seen what looked like cheap imitations, but nothing like this. No, no, don't back off now, all these people are watching you! You're their hero. Oh, my goodness, did you see these? *(points to customers bright coloured socks – customer pulls up pant leg and shows off socks to crowd)* Nice socks you're wearing today Sir.

Now, where were we; Ah, yes, this little gadget I have in the palm of my hand. In the next few minutes, I'm going to tell you enough about this little gem, that you, Sir, (by the way, what is your name, Dave, great name Dave, short for David is it? doesn't he just look like a Davey folks?) anyway, Dave, I'm going to tell you enough about this little gem, that you are not going to want to leave here without one! Now Dave, I know exactly what you're thinking - here comes the sales pitch about good quality tools to work with - not from me Dave. *(customer looks at crowd like he is being 'taken in')* Look into my face. Is this an honest face? *(customer displays look of uncertainty)* I'm **not here to trifle with your affections** Dave, I know this product will sell itself.

Dave, you didn't recognize this little tool. Just so you and all your friends out there will know exactly what it is, I'm going to tell you. Dave, this little baby, is called the Blue Hodge Manual Can Opener! Manual what? Blue Hodge Manual Can Opener, Dave. In the next millennium Dave, this will come to **be known by many appellations**, but you heard it first here, by its true and proper name. Once again, from GHI, the Blue Hodge Manual Can Opener.

You take hold of this beauty now, *(hands can opener over)*.... no, no not upside down Dave.... that's better. How does it feel? A **small instrument, solid in it's form, but of such exquisite temper as to compensate for its size**. I have to tell you right now that it is designed to take on the mightiest of cans! Each one of these is hand made by expert craftsmen. It's hard to believe this beautiful instrument began life as a lowly piece of lead. *(Customer has look of disbelief)*. (Don't give me that look Dave, it's true. Each piece of roughly poured lead is shaped, moulded and bent using mallets or **common gavels** (as we call them), into the shape you see before you. In the final step of processing, this perfectly shaped little tool gets a coating of enamel, and **after repeated efforts alone**, it receives its fine silver finish, making it a tool to be treasured in the hand of the expert kitchen craftsman, like yourself, Dave.

(Customer begins to back off, as if feeling intimidated) Dave, come back, you keep moving away. Isn't this just a great tie Dave's wearing tonight folks? *(Show off Dave's bright, 'gaudy' tie)*. Great lines in that tie Dave! But, take a look at the lines in this baby, Dave. An Architects delight. First, look at this. *(Make sure audience can see)* That line across the top, ending with the formation of the front edge.... **square** as can be! In the closed position, here you are, the two handles perfectly **level**, and yet when in the opened position, **plumb and upright** for easy attachment to the base of the can itself. It is these square, level and plumb lines that distinguish it from many so called look-a-likes. Let me tell you Dave, the guy that designed this was no stooge. His **wisdom is obvious** in this design. I think I mentioned it's **strength**, but look here at the **beauty** of this end rivet and the size of the gauge on these teeth. **Wisdom, strength and beauty**; Doesn't it just ooze power! Come on now folks, isn't that just a tool to behold!

Say Dave, what is it you do anyway? A teacher.... great... doesn't he look just like a teacher folks. And you teach.... electrical.... perfect!! Dave, I know, and I'm sure these good people out here know, that in your field, **with its' branches so widely extended**

across the province, there must be thousands of students who have **graduated from under your banner**, that are daily wondering how to get into a can without electricity. For them..., Dave, **before they sink into the lowest levels of despair**, you can be the champion. Embrace this sweet little tool and show them it “can” be done!

(Dave again is backing away) Stay with me now Dave. I don't want to lose you. Sure he says, a tool like this is simple in design and good looking in the package. But, he's just showing us the basic model. There's probably a lot of expensive extras needed to make it work. Dave, Dave, my good friend, (can I call you a friend, Dave? - *Dave has doubtful look*) that's the best part. With the Blue Hodge Manual Can Opener, there are no extras, none at all. Everything on this baby is standard, factory delivered, NC to you the customer. Let's take another look.

These replaceable rubberized covers and this completely reversible handle. **From the very first position in which your hands are placed** when you pick up this tool to the grip you use during its operation, it's smooth and efficient. **You have to be cautious** about this next feature Dave. See this little bottle hook, down below here - specifically designed for the brown bottle the little woman doesn't have to know about, eh...Dave! Does it have anything further? Yes, Sir. See this razor sharp cutting wheel..., **what does it demand Dave?** Respect, ...yes respect. You won't want to quickly rush forward with your finger in the wrong place on this little tool. Finally, this little indent over here; **to what does it allude?** Dave, this is the real garbber. I know you'll love this. The monogram! Your name, engraved right here on the **north side**. When it's done on the **north** side like this, it makes you feel like you're closer to heaven. (I said, ...when it's done.....*repeat last sentence to audience to make sure they 'get' the North side reference – i.e. the Chaplain's chair*). Dave, I'd like you to give it a test run. Admire it, hold it, **do which ever you please and begin**. (*Hands can opener over to Dave*).

Well then Dave; What do you think? Impressed? Does he look impressed folks! Dave, **now I'm going to put your principles to the test!** This is a little gem of a tool. It is a functional, flexible, indeed fabulous little tool that will always lift your spirits and warm the cockles of your heart when the power is out. Dave, how much would you say this beauty is worth? \$30, \$50, what if we **add \$20 to the former \$50**, that would make it **perfect?** How about it Dave? \$50? Folks, Dave says \$50.

Dave, Dave, Dave...**Do you have a sister Dave?** You do..., great. What's her name Dave? **Mercy**, mercy? (Folks - I don't believe this guy... did I say 'huckster's delight'). Ok Dave, here's what I'm going to do. **For you and your sister mercy**, I'm going to do this. I can't do this for everyone Dave. But..., I can tell by the way you're dressed that you make a habit of giving your good clothes away and **that Charity has often been practised by you**. So, bless me,... bless me..... Dave, I'm going to give you this remarkable tool for just \$19.95, AND, AND, I'm going to throw in another one for your sister Mercy for free!

Sold folks, sold. Now don't go away out there. How many of you are like my friend Dave here and know a good deal when you see it? (*Dave pulls out \$20 and hands it over*) Just a minute. \$19.95 for \$20, Dave? What? Keep the change? Dave, I really **must congratulate you on such honorable sentiments!** Let's give him a big hand folks! Now, while Dave **returns to his personal comforts**, who's next out there for GHI's Blue Hodge Manual Can Opener?

The Moral of the Story:

Brethren, what in our great Masonic order is like this little manual can opener ? Can you think of anything? Think hard my Brethren! Using this tool to open a can is like the process of using our Masonic working tools to open the doors of Masonry to the new initiate. The can opener opens the can of food to provide nourishment. The working tools of masonry, put into the hands of the craftsman, allow us to provide nourishment to the candidate by teaching him **of our beliefs, of our principles, indeed of Brotherly love, relief, and truth!** The can opener we see here is a manual one. It is bright and shiny on the surface, but it takes manual effort to make it work. When not used, it's shiny surface will soon tarnish and rust. Our Masonic working tools are also shiny and bright. If we do not put them to use in our daily lives, they too will soon tarnish and rust. But, like this little can opener with all its features, our Masonic working tools, when placed **into the hand and guided by the heart** of a devoted Brother... really can be used to make a good man better! My Brethren, to rejuvenate and revitalize our craft, we must strive, with manual labor and a love for our great fraternity, to keep our working tools active for all the world to see!

Author: R.W. Bro. Garry Dowling, Kilwinning Lodge No. 64, PDDGM, London East District

8.7 EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS: OUR CEREMONIES

8.7.1 Introduction

You will find that the articles in this section are of a more factual nature. They relate to the rites and ceremonies of our Lodges and our Grand Lodge. They are short topics that can be presented on short notice. They are both educational and informative and can be delivered by officers or members alike.

Credit where credit is due! Please recognize the authors.

8.7.2 Dedication of a Lodge Room

Before a Lodge is ready for dedication it must be inspected by the Advisory Committee on Lodge Buildings to ensure that it conforms to Masonic guidelines. This committee is of great importance and those who have accepted the responsibility for construction of a building should constantly seek the advice of its members. A Masonic building is not dedicated until this committee gives its approval of the construction and of compliance with building codes.

The actual ceremony of dedication of a lodge room is conducted in accordance with the ancient customs and traditions of the Craft. The ceremony relates first to the building and secondly to the men who will make their Masonic home in it.

The first part of the ceremony includes the approval of the lodge records, presentation of the petitioners and the reading of the warrant. Next, officers of Grand Lodge symbolically examine the building to satisfy themselves of its readiness for dedication. During this inspection, the tools of the second degree are used to verify that the building is square and well built. It is only after they have reported favourably that the actual ceremony of dedication can take place.

The second part of the ceremony deals with dedicating the lodge room to Masonic ideals. The lodge room itself is consecrated by the pouring of corn, wine and oil on the floor of the lodge.

Corn, wine and oil were the wages given to the entered apprentices at the building of King Solomon's Temple. Fittingly, as the lodge begins its journey into the future, symbolically it receives its wages of corn, wine and oil to signify the beginning of a new adventure.

Corn, wine and oil played a big part in everyday life in Biblical times and the Volume of the Sacred Law contains many references to them. Corn referred to any type of grain and was the major food of the people. Wine was refreshment to the spirit after a day of hard labour. Oil was an essential element of life for it used in food preparation, provided fuel for lamps and was used as a means of exchange. Oil was also used to anoint the King and to consecrate the priests and their ceremonial utensils. Psalm 104 provides a good idea of their value: "And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, an oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart".

Corn, wine and oil constituted the wealth of the people and were esteemed as the supports of life. In the Consecration Ceremony, therefore, corn, while signifying plenty, teaches us to remember the lessons taught in our Masonic ritual. Wine, symbolizing joy and cheerfulness, reminds us to practice the four cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice. And finally, the oil which represents peace and unanimity or universal benevolence, reminds us of our obligations of charity and kindness towards our fellow man, whether Mason or non-mason.

The emphasis on the working tools and corn, wine and oil draws attention to the fact that, while we dedicate a physical structure, Masons are also renewing all their Masonic pledges to strengthen their own hearts by supporting the principles of Masonry.

Those in attendance at a Consecration Ceremony wish that the new lodge will enjoy the rewards of corn, wine and oil – a full measure of success, joy in association and unanimity and concord throughout its future.

Submitted by M.W. Bro. David C. Bradley, P.G.M. Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario

8.8 LODGE OF DISCUSSION

8.8.1 How to Hold a Lodge of Discussion - Getting The Ball Rolling

Holding a Lodge of Discussion requires only three things:

- One moderator
- Two or three willing participants (plants or starters)
- An idea

If a Worshipful Master is willing to try out a Lodge of Discussion, the rest of the items will fall quite easily into place. The concept is not a complicated one, nor is the execution.

Once the Worshipful Master has agreed to host a LOD (Lodge of Discussion) then the moderator need only find a couple more people to attend and assist him in getting things started. Some discussion on the topics prior to the meeting would be of great benefit as the plants can also serve to keep the conversation going should it start to lag.

The last item on the list is an idea, and here, the sky's the limit. Topics for discussion are most effective if they run a little closer to the edge. Care should, of course, be taken not to offend any brother, nor cause disharmony in the lodge, but topics that are somewhat controversial in nature tend to generate more lively discussion than those based on the merits of, say, Saltine crackers over Ritz. The following is a list of suggested topics for discussion, though the brethren are free to choose anything they may feel is relevant to their lodge depending on interest levels, demographics and location:

- Why not discuss religion in Freemasonry?
- Why not discuss politics in Freemasonry?
- Why are women not admitted to Freemasonry?
- How is Masonry a part of your everyday life?
- Why not eliminate the investigating committee and the ballot?
- “All The Way In One Day” -- Yes or no?
- Is Freemasonry part of the occult?
- What are the true origins of Freemasonry?
- Why not extend time between degrees?
- What are our lodge traditions?
- Should Masonry change with the times?
- Why Masonry?
- Are we failing our newly made Masons?
- What is the role of Masonry in today's society?
- Is our dues structure too low?
- Do we have to believe in the Hiram Legend?

The Big Night – Implementation In Lodge

There are a few things to keep in mind when holding a lodge of discussion. These are guidelines rather than rules, but they have been developed over the course of a year of trial runs within lodges and come from what has worked best in that time.

1. The Moderator has the most important job of the night. It is his job to introduce the concept, to engage the brethren with the topic and to not only keep the conversation lively and active, but to diffuse any tensions that may arise from differences of opinion. It is absolutely vital that the discussions are conducted in peace and harmony.
2. The topic can make or break the evening and it is a delicate balance between a topic that can be summed up in a few motherhood statements (hockey and apple pie) and one that will divide the brethren.
3. There is no time limit. The Moderator is at liberty to use his judgment based on the agenda for the evening. If the LOD is the only item after General Business, then an hour is not unreasonable. That being said, 10 minutes while the candidate resumes his personal comforts on a degree night may also be sufficient to get the brethren thinking and talking in the banquet room after the meeting.
4. Keep the atmosphere relaxed. The Worshipful Master may grant permission to suspend the use of signs and titles for the duration of the discussion, if he sees fit. Likewise, gentle humour is also a great means of making people comfortable with one another and lessens the distance across the lodge room.
5. Be flexible. Stay on topic as much as possible, but if the general consensus seems to lead down other avenues, don't be afraid to follow where it leads. It's a great way to find the pulse of the lodge and that information can be used to structure future discussions.
6. Have fun! Be creative and make the evening one the brethren will tell their friends about.

Keeping The Ball Rolling – Feedback and Follow-Ups

It is suggested that the Moderator provide feedback forms or questionnaires to the brethren in the anteroom after the meeting. This is an excellent means of gauging the success of the meeting and for plotting the future of LOD's. Submission of these forms to your District Education Chair (or even a simple email detailing what you have done and how it went) will also assist in better ascertaining what works and what doesn't.

In A Nutshell...

So there it is in a few simple words. For all of the guidelines above, the greatest is this. Keep it simple! Be conscious of those things which need to be done to make the evening a success, but don't over-complicate things. It is, after all, simply a conversation amongst the brethren.

So get out there, have fun, get them thinking, and "Let's Talk Masonry!"

By W. Bro. Robert W. Gray, Waverley Lodge No.361, Guelph

Running a Lodge of Discussion

(in 50 words or less)

- Select a topic.
- In advance, ask two men to think about the topic, so they can be "plants" and when the conversation flags, say something outrageous.
- Have one moderator who presents the topic, gives members permission to talk without formalities (signs, W. Sir,) and keeps order.
- Watch the miracle.

By R. W. Bro. David J. Cameron

Learning by Participation

No pleasure, no learning.

No learning, no pleasure.

Wang Ken, Chinese philosopher

The scene is familiar. We have all been there. The business of the lodge has been completed, minutes read and approved, accounts passed, reports heard, a ballot taken, when the Worshipful Master, trying his best to sound enthusiastic, announces, "Brethren, this evening R.W. Bro. Good Chump (...it is always a senior Past Master or Past Grand Lodge Officer...) will give us some Masonic Education." The groans from the side benches are scarcely disguised as audible sighs, postures slump, arms are folded, and legs are crossed as the members prepare to endure another lengthy discourse. Heads begin to nod as the well-intentioned Brother reads his carefully prepared script with the same animated verve as the minutes of the last meeting. Little wonder that the traditional approach to "Masonic Education" gets a bad name in the Lodge.

Yet, Grand Masters tell us that "Masonry and Education are synonymous terms" and Grand Lodge Committees on Masonic Education continue to emphasize the crucial role that learning plays in the life of the lodge, the mentoring of candidates, and the retention of active members.

Bergen Evans once defined a College professor as “one who talks in other people’s sleep.” There is a better way. It is suggested in an old Chinese proverb:

What I hear, I forget.

What I see, I remember.

What I do, I know.

Learning is a participation sport. Real understanding requires participation on the part of the learner. We only truly know something when we have applied it, manipulated it, or added to it. Surely there is a lesson to be learned from operative masonry – the rough ashlar requires “hands on” work to polish and perfect it.

Do we not tell every Fellow Craft that he is privileged to express his ‘sentiments and opinions on such subjects as are regularly introduced in the lecture, under the superintendence of an experienced Master ... that he may improve his intellectual powers’? That injunction implies that opportunities will be afforded to ask questions and enter into free and open discussion of the meaning of the symbols and allegories embodied in the Rites and Ceremonies we perform, to explore the philosophy of Masonry.

Nothing focuses our attention quicker and clarifies thought better than a pointed question. Socrates, the Athenian philosopher (469-399 BCE), used this method of teaching to question his students. The Socratic method or dialectic question and answer remains a most useful pedagogical tool.

Examine the old rituals. They were cast in the form of questions and answers, remnants of which are found in the Openings and Closing of the three Degrees. Over time, these catechisms evolved into the lecture forms used today – the Junior Warden’s Lecture in the First Degree and the Senior Warden’s Lecture in the Second Degree.

The basic concept embodied in Let’s Talk Masonry in Masonic Nights at the Round Table is learning through participation. At a Round Table all places are equal, and all are equidistant from the centre, where Truth may be found. There are no inappropriate questions, and there is no one right answer. All opinions are valid, and there is always more than one interpretation to be considered. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Is there risk in inviting questions? Of course, one must be confident in one’s ability to admit that one may not have the answer. That, however, is the essence and value of putting these questions on the floor, and sharing the benefit of the collective knowledge of all participants. Remember, risk and reward travel side by side. Avoid one and the other will also pass you by. There is truth in the questions posed by Frank Skully: “Why not go out on a limb? Isn’t that where the fruit is?” What are we afraid of?

What we discover for ourselves through conversation and discussion, reading and research is always more significant and permanent. To debate the validity of ideas expressed, to test the truthfulness of what we read, to make up one's own mind what is true – these are the most effective means of enlightening the mind. "To repeat what others have said, requires education; to challenge it, requires brains." – Mary Pettibone Poole, *A Glass Eye in a Keyhole* (1938)

Of course it's easier to stand up and read a paper that has been prepared. There is no question that there is a place for lectures, addresses and papers. Much can be learned from eloquent scholars and skilled orators. We do not all learn in the same way. Astute and capable Worshipful Masters will employ a variety of means to instruct their Brethren in Masonry. A well-conducted Lodge of Discussion when pertinent questions are posed and considered will never be a boring night at Lodge.

From The Curriculum Group of The Committee on Masonic Education