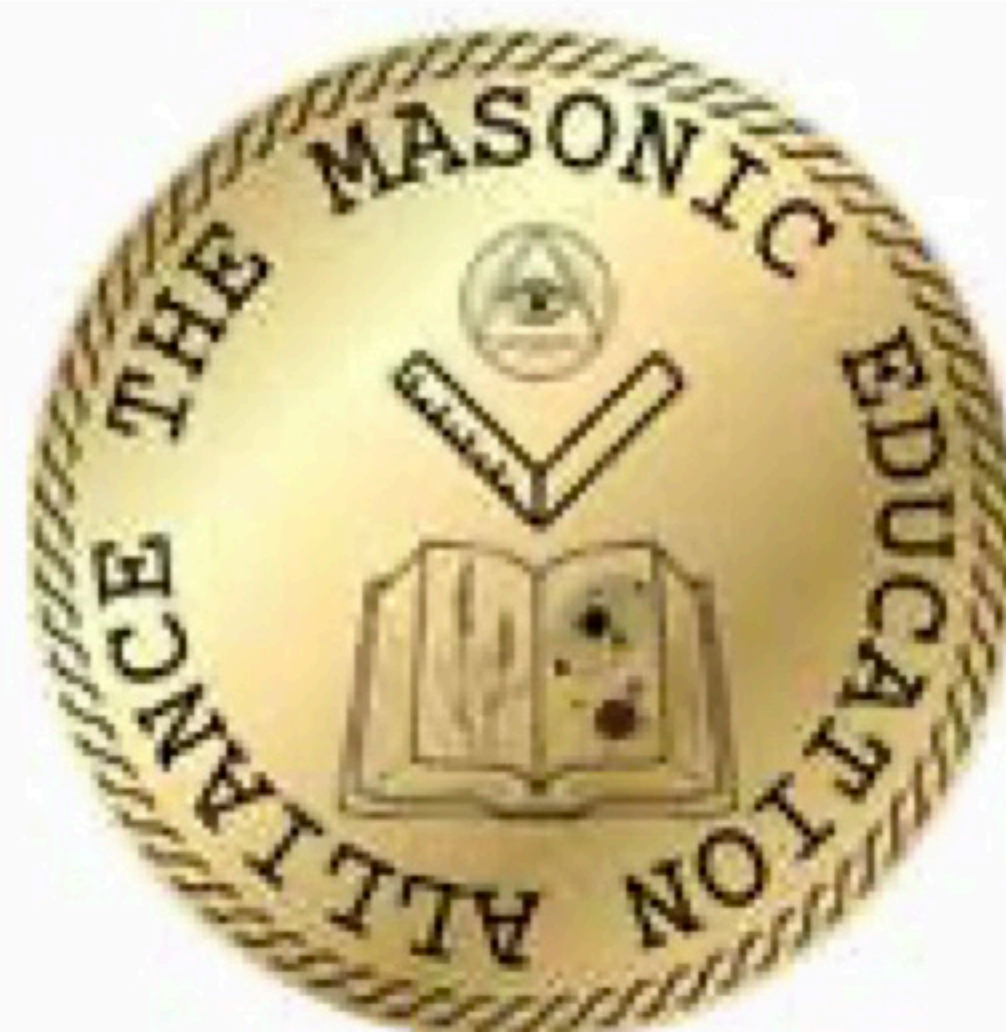

The Lyceum



A Publication of
The Masonic Education Alliance



From the Desk of R.H. Johnson



History:

Started in xxxx, The Lyceum, an e-magazine dedicated to Truth and Progress in Freemasonry, has undergone a necessary evolution in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Originally a publication of the Committee on Masonic Education of The Grand Lodge of Illinois, the magazine was the collaborative effort of two committee members. However, with the departure of one member and the Grand Lodge's change in direction, The Lyceum faced the threat of going defunct. In response, all previous issues have been rebranded, removing any association with the Grand Lodge of Illinois. While previous versions may still be available on certain websites, they are no longer offered by the publisher. These changes in branding ensure that The Lyceum can continue as a free and independent publication, focused on promoting Truth and Progress in Freemasonry, regardless of oppositional forces in any Grand Lodge organization. It is important to note that the content, authors, and publisher of The Lyceum do not represent any statements or positions of any Grand Lodge, unless expressly stated.

About:

The Masonic Education Alliance, a groundbreaking initiative, has emerged as a beacon of Light in the realm of Freemasonry. Born out of the necessity to bridge the gap left by dwindling education committees within various Grand Jurisdictions, this alliance has taken on the responsibility of providing a limitless educational magazine dedicated to all things Freemasonry. Unrestricted by the restraints of any particular jurisdiction, the Alliance unites Masonic scholars, writers, and enthusiasts from around the world to create a platform where knowledge can flow freely and uninhibited.

In the past, education committees were the pillars of Masonic educational activities, disseminating knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of the Craft within their respective jurisdictions. However, due to various circumstances, these committees have been effectively gutted, leaving a void in the educational landscape of Freemasonry. Recognizing this critical need for a comprehensive educational platform, the Masonic Education Alliance was formed.

Unlike traditional Masonic publications, which are often confined by the limitations of a specific Grand Jurisdiction, the Masonic Education Alliance embraces the power of collaboration and inclusivity. Its mission is to foster a love for learning, share profound insights, and explore all aspects of Freemasonry in an unbiased and global

manner. By removing these boundaries, the Alliance opens doors for Masons and non-Masons alike to delve into the mysteries, history, philosophy, and symbolism of Freemasonry from diverse perspectives.

Through the publication of a cutting-edge digital magazine, the Masonic Education Alliance brings forth a wealth of articles, essays, research papers, and creative works that elevate the intellectual understanding of Freemasonry. Drawing upon the expertise of its contributors, the Alliance takes readers on a journey of intellectual expansion, inviting them to explore the depths of Masonic teachings and traditions.

In this rapidly changing world, where traditional modes of education are transforming, the Masonic Education Alliance stands as a beacon of progress and innovation. By harnessing the power of technology, this alliance is able to disseminate knowledge to a wide audience across continents and jurisdictions. As a digital platform, the Alliance ensures that no Mason is left behind and that access to Masonic education is available to all seekers, regardless of geographical boundaries or political constraints.

In essence, the Masonic Education Alliance is more than just a magazine; it is a revolution in Masonic education. With an unwavering commitment to intellectual growth, unlimited collaboration, and global connectivity, the Alliance cultivates a vibrant and dynamic community of Freemasons hungry for knowledge. Together, members of the Alliance strive to preserve the essence of Freemasonry while embracing the transformative power of education in an ever-evolving world.

The Seal:

The seal of the Masonic Education Alliance embodies the organization's commitment to providing rich and unbiased content to its readers. The golden hue represents the wealth of knowledge and information offered, while the borders ensure the protection of the Alliance from external influences and attacks. The Square symbolizes the Alliance's dedication to staying true to its research and providing accurate information to its readers. The presence of the All-Seeing Eye signifies the recognition of a higher power, while the book represents the Book of Nature, with a stalk of vegetation on one page and an illustration of a germ and the solar system on the other. Absent is the Compass, for the search for knowledge knows no boundaries.

R.H. Johnson

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Brothers all,

June is here...and halfway over! I can't believe it. This month's theme is "The Weight of Our Obligations." To this end, we've curated some great articles that speak to the Masonic obligations and other papers that were prepared for this specific issue.

In a letter from our Chairman, Michael Overturf, concerns over the recent behavior of brothers on the Internet are discussed. Brother Mike offers some possible solutions to this web-based epidemic. To follow this up, we've also posted the Grand Lodge of Illinois Social Media Policy, enacted in 2015.

In this issue, for the first time, we've published Masonic fiction from Brother Bill Hosler. Some might know Bill from his time on the Midnight Freemasons writing a series called, "The 50-Year Member". Here at the Masonic Education Committee, we're all excited to publish the results of the Q1 Masonic Education Survey for 2022 run by Darin Lahners. In this short survey, much was discovered about how all of you feel about Masonic education in our grand jurisdiction. We'll give you the results, including--the number one area of interest for Freemasons today. You might be surprised!

There are several pages that reflect Masonic education conferences happening around the country. From Kansas to California, there's no shortage. In a pointed piece, the always brilliant Chad Lacek causes a stir of emotion in his latest article, "The Vanishing Act." In it, he explores what happens when members just stop coming to lodge. As I mentioned, one of the articles was composed especially for this issue. It's called "The Weight of Your Obligation," which is explored as a concept by Brother Kevin Wheeler. In it, he explores the philosophical subjectivity of the Masonic obligation.

If you missed the Midwest Conference on Masonic Education this year, there's a great write-up called "A Journey Southward" by Brother Spencer A. Hamann. Spencer and I had the pleasure of driving down to Kansas City, MO, together to attend the conference. Be sure to read this article to hear about what was covered, and the hijinks both Spencer and I got into.

I've also included in this issue a short piece I wrote a while ago exploring an offshoot of the Masonic fraternity. It's called the "Scientific Masonic Association." The piece examines the standards of educated Brethren coming into the craft. And last but certainly not least, we continue our Reader's Corner section with another great book review by Brother Kevin Wheeler. I hope you all find joy and edification in this issue.

Yours in Brotherhood,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. H. Johnson".

R. H. Johnson



From the Chairman

WB Michael Overturf, Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee

Brethren, as the temperature warms up, I hope this finds you all healthy and happy. After numerous posts on social media and some of the most vitriolic comments from Brothers in and around our jurisdiction, I feel it is time to address a few things.



RWB Wayne Spooner, in his New Master Mason Workshop, explains our obligation in a very easy-to-understand format. Our obligations are simply “I Will” and “I Won’t.” The necessarily and gradually get more severe as we progress to Master Mason.

It’s the lectures and Charges after our obligations that peel back more of the layers and offer a deeper explanation of what is required and to which we gave our cheerful ascent. The need to be read in open Lodge—From the East, the “tenants of Freemasonry” (i.e., “regard the whole human species as one family” and “to aid, support, and protect each other” or “Conciliate true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance” is more prevalent than ever. Our Obligations are to motivate us for/to, “a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements.”

More to the point, “You there stand as a just and upright Mason, and I give you strictly in charge ever to walk and act as such.” I want to blame our internet behavior partly on the pandemic and the forced isolation we all experience. But the other half, I blame on the social media “keyboard warrior mindset.”

We are taught to circumscribe our passions and desires—to keep them within due bounds with all mankind, but more especially with our brethren in Freemasonry. I don’t know; maybe we need to reread the Cardinal Virtues together and discuss. Perhaps each officer could pick one, and we can discuss it in our local Lodges. This bad social media behavior must stop. Attacking a Brother on social media is behavior unbecoming of a Master Mason, and wise counsel should be given. “Harmony being the strength and support of all institutions, especially ours.”

For all of our edification, please find the Social Media Code of Conduct, given by our own Grand Lodge on the next page. Address questions, comments, and concerns with your DDGM – And let’s be our Brother’s keeper.

Fraternally,
WB Michael Overturf

Michael Overturf

Chairman of the Committee on Masonic Education



The Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois

AF & AM

Social Media Policy

A Mason should always conduct himself by the high standards of integrity he is held to by his obligations. He is never to let slip the least sign, token, or word whereby the secrets of Freemasonry may be unlawfully obtained. It is expected that these charges are to be observed in a Mason's daily conduct as well as his online interactions.

The following are policies outlined by the Grand Lodge of the state of Illinois for conduct on social media. It is expected that all Masons under the Grand Lodge's jurisdiction should conduct themselves at all times as outlined in the following policies.

- No derogatory or inflammatory statements should be made in any form of social media about the Grand Lodge, a local lodge, a Brother Mason, or his family.
- The ritual of the Grand Lodge of Illinois should never be quoted or outlined in any manner which would allow the uninitiated to receive information, rights, or benefits to which he is not legally entitled.
- Content pertaining to the business of the Grand Lodge, local lodge, or any of the committees of those bodies should not be shared with the general public. Divulging information about the business of a lodge is considered a violation of the secret trust each mason is charged with.
- A Brother's personal information may not be shared in any form of social media without his prior consent.
- No Mason should use any Masonry to promote himself to gain favor in the business, politics, or religion beyond simply stating that he has a Mason. The good name of the craft should stand on its own.
- No campaigning for stations will be allowed on social media.
- No discussions about a candidate's petition, ballot, background, or degrees are allowed beyond notices of these events taking place.
- Dishonorable content such as, but not limited to racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and physical disability slurs will not be tolerated.
- Any message, posting, video, or other form of communication should conform to established Grand lodge by-laws and edicts.

October 15, 2015



The 50 Year Member

Talkin' Bout My Obligations

Masonic Fiction by WB.: Bill Hosler



Pudge was sitting comfortably in one of the newly restored leather wingback chairs in a quiet corner of the Temple's Social room. Pudge seems quite happy while looking at a pad of drawings with a group of the lodge's younger Brethren. The group was talking and laughing with cigars in their hands as the 50 Year member walked into the room. A smile came across the old man's face as the sound of young men laughing took him to an earlier time on a cloud of cigar smoke. "It's just like old times.", the old man thought to himself.

As the 50 Year member approached the men, he could begin to hear some of their conversations. "I like that one." Said one young man "Have you seen the Superman I have on my calf with the Square and Compass on his chest in place of the letter "S"? I finally got the coloring finished on it." The 50-year member laughed and said, "It must be hard coloring something on your calf. I hope you stayed within the lines." the old man said with a laugh in his voice. The group checked. "Pudge looked up and saw the 50-year member. "Hi, John! Hey, do you have any tattoos?" The old man smiled. "Nah, back in my day the only guys who got tattoos were either serviceman, while they were away from home or prisoners who got them while they were in prison. Neither of which I would have been, my mother would have killed me." The crowd laughed as the old man slipped quietly into a leather chair. The group continued to discuss

various kinds of tattoos and showing each other pictures of Masonic tattoos that they found on Google while doing their research on the topic.

Hearing the laughter while walking down the hallway on the way to the lodge room, Past Master Herb Johnson ventured into the Social room and began to listen silently to the young men's conversation. Herb piped in after he heard the 50-year member's response to the younger guys. "No John wouldn't have a Masonic tattoo. John remembers the obligations that he took!" Herb said in a gruff voice.

The young men sat silent for a second and looked at each other. They all seemed confused. One young man said hesitantly in a quiet voice "It's unMasonic to get a tattoo?" Herb stood up and arched his back and said in the know-it-all authoritarian voice, "It is if you get a Masonic tattoo!" Herb said, matter-of-factly. "You kids have already forgotten, "I will not print, paint..." Each with an uneasy feeling, the entire group of men began to steal glances at each other, worried and questioning if they were all going to be in a great deal of trouble. Herb continued "Yep. If you got one of those tattoos, the lodge might have to file charges on you for expulsion." The group started talking to each other in quiet scared voices.

The 50-year member began to laugh so hard he began to shake in glee, as he slapped his knee. The old man eventually gained his composure again as he wiped the tears of laughter from his eyes, "John this is no laughing matter. This is serious business!" Herb said. The 50-year member began laughing again and said to Herb through his laughter, in a mocking tone, "Oh yes it is Herb. You have them quaking in their boots at the thought of a Masonic trial. I hope you are as equally prepared as these young men will be when the un-Masonic charges are filed against you." The old man was laughing so hard he could barely stand up from his chair.

Herbert, who began to sputter while his face reddened with anger looked at the old man and said in a high nasal tone, "File charges against me!? Why I never! I have been a member of this lodge almost as long as you have! I have never done anything that can be considered un-Masonic in my entire adult life! I served this lodge as Master four times! I served on several Grand Lodge committees-- I have been a model..." The 50-year member interrupted Herb's tirade "Oh Herb, I know! That's why it will be a sad day when I walk into the lodge room and see the Tyler using his sword to keep you from gaining admittance. It will be a downright shame." Sweat began to drip down Herb's forehead as his fists were balled up in anger. "So what is the evidence against me that you are going to use?" Herb said in a quiet voice, trying to calm his anger.

The 50-year member said, "Basically the same evidence you are planning on using against these "kids", as you call them. Violating their obligations to keep secrets. Herb, you know as well as I do the only real secrets this Fraternity are its words and grips, and you know as well as I do you can pick up a hundred books or get on the internet and find those. These young men aren't going to tattoo those words on their bodies. That's stupid. If you ever bothered to talk to these young men before acting all high and mighty, you'd discover they are going to tattoo Masonic symbols like the square and compass, symbols from the York Rite or the Scottish Rite. Just like the ones you have on the back of your car and if I am honest, I've seen on the mailbox at your house, and I know we as a lodge have contributed to your guilt by giving you plaques and certificates through the years with those incriminating symbols on them. So I think if these young men are guilty of a Masonic crime then sadly Brother, you are guilty, nay, more guilty than the rest, because you have been in the Craft long enough to know better.

The 50-year member got quiet. The sound of the silence in the room was deafening. The old man said, in a quieter, more calm voice "I'm sorry if you think I'm rough on you Herb, but dang it! I feel like you have it coming. You might know our ritual front to back, but you haven't bothered to learn the meaning of one single word which you've memorized. But that doesn't stop you from spouting off pieces of ritual, trying to act like an expert on the matter when you haven't the slightest clue what you are talking about."

The old man continues "Sadly you aren't the only one with this particular notion. Think back to last month when the lodge was discussing men, for goodness sake, policemen, carrying their legally owned pistols to a lodge meeting. Sadly, I knew as soon as the discussion began, some poor, uneducated Brother would stand up and utter the phrase "I will carry nothing offensive or defensive into the lodge room with me." And I was surely not disappointed, because it didn't take long for the phrase to be uttered. You know what gets me? I bet that poor ignorant Brother and every man who grunted his agreement to that phrase was nodding his head while he was carrying a pocket knife in his pants pocket. Should we have the Tyler frisk each brother before he enters the room? Or better yet make them pass through a metal detector to ensure he isn't carrying anything metallic into the lodge? If we are going to misquote ritual, we might as well go all the way with this silliness."

"Brother we both know that line is about a candidate, not for a Master Mason attending a stated meeting. It's just one of my pet peeves that we either use pieces of our ritual wrong, or worse yet, we purposely twist a bit of the ritual, out of context in order to further our argument or to prove a point to someone who is as equally ignorant into the meaning of those words we've all memorized, but we can't call them on it because it will cause "Disharmony" within the lodge."

The 50-year member paused for a moment as Herb's head began to lower "Brother all I am saying is we are either going to hold all members to the same standards, or we will continue to see this Fraternity further erode. The days of saying one thing but meaning another have to stop before we drive off every new member. If we are going to make good men better, we need to do it through education and teaching actual Masonic education, not through twisted, bastardized ritual which has lost its meaning through the years because we have misapplied it." The old man smiled. "OK, I am now going to step down from my soap box and get ready for the lodge meeting. Herb go in and gets us some good seats, will you?"

Herb slowly backed away. "Honest John. I think I am going to head home. I don't feel so good right now. I think I am going to take one of my Nitro pills and head for the house." One of the younger men of the group stepped out of the crowd and said to Herb. "Brother, my name is Tim. I am a paramedic by trade. Why don't you sit down here and let me examine you? You look a little flushed. If you are feeling that

bad, I don't want you traveling home by yourself." He continued, "After I look you over if you still don't feel well, I'll take you home, or if need be to the Emergency Room. You shouldn't be left on your own if you feel that bad." Herb looked up at Tim and said in a weak voice. You are going to help me even after how bad I was talking about you kids? Are you sure?" Tim just smiled, took Herb and sat him in one of the wingback chairs, and said, "Of course! I may not know all the ritual as well as some of the guys here, but one part I do know and remember quite well is "I will help, aid, and assist." It's not only my obligation, but I live it every day of my life." Tim took Herb's hand, "Now just be still, let me have a look at you." He looked to the crowd and said as he threw his car keys in the air, "Hey Pudge go to my trunk and get my paramedic bag out of the trunk please." Tim then looked back to Herb and started his usual questions "So tell me Brother are you having any pains? Nausea?" ...

WB Bill Hosler was made a Master Mason in 2002 in Three Rivers Lodge #733 in Indiana. He served as Worshipful Master in 2007 and became a member of the internet committee for Indiana's Grand Lodge. Bill is currently a member of Roff Lodge No. 169 in Roff Oklahoma and Lebanon Lodge No. 837

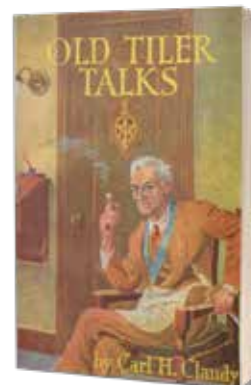


in Frisco, Texas. Bill is also a member of the Valley of Fort Wayne Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite in Indiana. A typical active Freemason, Bill also served as the High Priest of Fort Wayne's Chapter of the York Rite No. 19 and was commander of the Fort Wayne Commandery No. 4 of the Knight Templar. During all this, he also served as the webmaster and magazine editor for the Mizpah Shrine in Fort Wayne Indiana.

More of his writings can be found on The Midnight Freemasons Blog, or on his website, UpontheSquare.com--or just search, "The 50 Year Member" on Google.



If you enjoy Masonic Fiction, we recommend the following titles:



The Old Tiler Talks by Carl Claudy



Big John Deacon, Freemason Extraordinair
Vol 1-4

Both can be found on Amazon. Remember to use Amazon Smile, and select the Grand Lodge of Illinois Charities!

THE BIGGEST SECRET REVEALED

THE FUTURE OF MASONIC EDUCATION AS DIRECTED BY THE MEMBERS

by Darin A. Lahners, AEO Eastern Area

As the Area Education Officer for the Eastern Area of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Illinois Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, I have the distinct pleasure of serving on the Committee for Masonic Education for the Grand Lodge. To better serve the membership and hopefully give perspective to the Grand Lodge line, I devised a Masonic Education Survey. I limited the result set to be no more than one thousand respondents, which I didn't think we'd come close to reaching. I am pleased to say that I was wrong.

The survey was open from April 14th to April 25th, 2022. The survey host we used only allowed one response per member to ensure that there were not multiple responses that would compromise the data we wanted to collect. However, I did not require an answer to each survey question, so you will see that while we had a total of one thousand respondents, not every respondent answered every question.

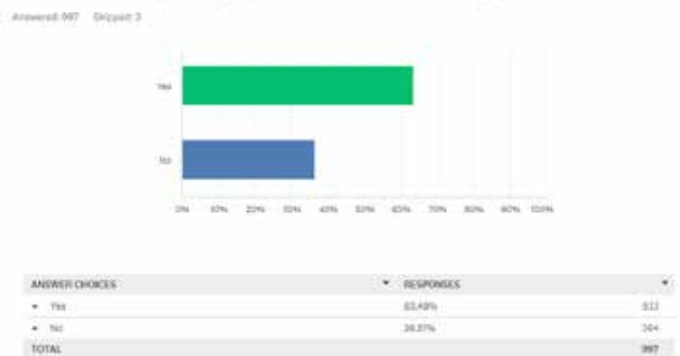
My Lodge is located in below Masonic Area



The first question on the survey asked which Masonic Area the respondent was located in, Northern, Northeastern, Eastern, Western, or Southern. We had a total of Nine Hundred Eighty-Nine respondents to this question. Of those, we had Three Hundred Thirty-One respondents from

the Northeastern area, Two Hundred Thirty-Six respondents from the Northern area, One Hundred and Eight Respondents from the Western Area, One Hundred Thirty-Seven respondents from the Eastern Area, and One Hundred Eighty-Four respondents from the Southern Area.

I attend more than 75% of my lodge's activities (Stated Meetings, Degree Work, Family and/or Community Events). If you are a plural or honorary member of multiple lodges, please answer for the lodge you attend the most.



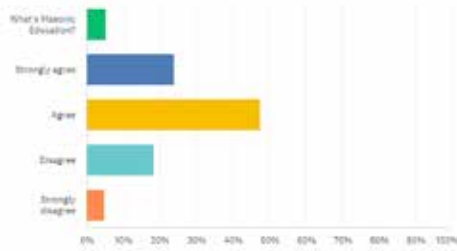
The second question was an attempt to determine if the respondent was "Active" in Freemasonry or not and was a choice of Yes or No. To do so, I asked if they attended more than Seventy-Five percent of their lodge's activities (Stated Meetings, Degree Work, Family or Community Events), and then stated if the respondent was plural or honorary member of multiple lodges to only answer for the lodge they attend the most. We had 997 respondents, of which Six Hundred Thirty-Three answered Yes, while Three Hundred Sixty-Four answered No.

The next question asked if the lodge they attend the most does a good job of presenting Masonic Education as a part of its stated meeting. The answer choice was multiple choice with the options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and "What's Masonic Education?" This question had a total of Nine Hundred Eighty-Four respondents. We had Two Hundred, and Thirty-Six responded that they Strongly Agreed, Four Hundred and Sixty-Eight responded that they Agreed, One Hundred Eighty stated they Disagreed, and Forty-Eight responded that they Strongly

Disagreed. Fifty-Two responded with “What’s Masonic Education?”

My Lodge does a good job of presenting Masonic Education as a part of it's stated meeting.

Answered: 304 Skipped: 0

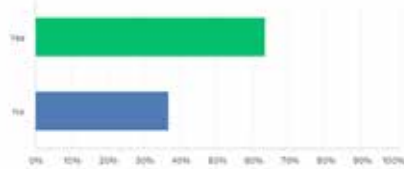


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
What's Masonic Education?	1.6%
Strongly agree	23.0%
Agree	43.8%
Disagree	16.8%
Strongly disagree	8.0%
TOTAL	304

The next question in the survey asked if they knew who their Lodge Education Officer (LEO) was. The answer choice was either Yes or No. Of the Nine Hundred Ninety-Six respondents, Six Hundred Thirty-One knew their Lodge Education Officer, while Three Hundred and Sixty-Five responded that they did not.

I know who my Lodge Education Officer is.

Answered: 996 Skipped: 0



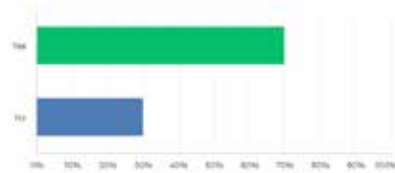
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	63.9%
No	36.1%
TOTAL	996

The next question in the survey was also a Yes or No question. It asked if the respondent would be inclined to attend a Grand Lodge-sponsored Masonic Education Conference (Masonic-Con) in their area. Of the Nine Hundred Ninety-Five respondents, Six Hundred and Ninety-Five responded that they would be so inclined, while Three Hundred answered that they would not be inclined to do so.

The next question in the survey asked if the respondent's lodge used the Intender Program. The answer choice for this question was also Yes or No. There was a total of Nine Hundred Thirty-Eight responses, of which Seven Hundred and Fifty-Two answered Yes, while One Hundred and Eighty-Six answered No.

I would be inclined to attend a Grand Lodge sponsored Masonic Education Conference (Masonic-Con) in my area.

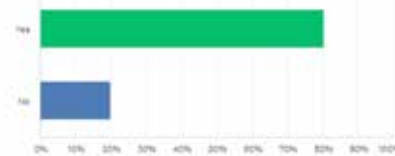
Answered: 995 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	69.0%
No	31.0%
TOTAL	995

My lodge uses the Intender Program.

Answered: 938 Skipped: 0

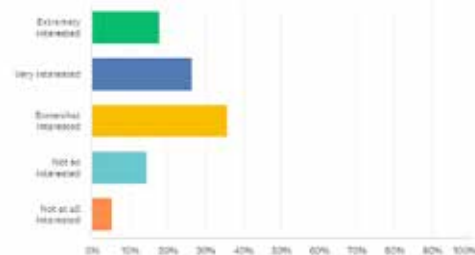


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	80.7%
No	19.3%
TOTAL	938

The next question in the survey asked the respondent to give their level of interest in participating in a structured Masonic Educational Program that builds upon what they were taught during the Intender Program. The responses were: Extremely Interested, Very Interested, Somewhat Interested, Not So Interested, and Not At All Interested. Of the Nine Hundred and Ninety-Two respondents, One Hundred and Seventy-Seven said they were Highly Interested, Two Hundred and Sixty-Three said they were Very Interested. Three Hundred and Fifty-Six noted that they were Somewhat Interested. One Hundred and Forty-Three said, Not So Interested. Fifty-three were Not At All Interested in such a program.

Rate your level of interest below: The opportunity to participate in a structured Masonic Educational Program that builds upon what I was taught during the Intender Program.

Answered: 992 Skipped: 0

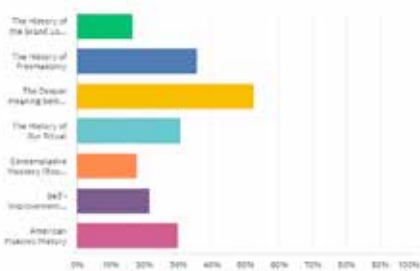


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Extremely interested	17.8%
Very interested	26.5%
Somewhat interested	35.8%
Not so interested	14.4%
Not at all interested	5.3%

The survey's final question asked the respondents to pick one topic(s) they were most interested in learning more about. The answer choices were: The History of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, The History of Freemasonry, The Deeper Meaning Behind Our Symbols and Rituals, The History of Our Ritual, Contemplative Masonry (Basic Applications of Mindfulness and Meditation guided by Masonic Ritual), Self-Improvement (Learning Non-Masonic Skills to Improve our Member's Lives) and American Masonic History. I did not limit the ability of each person to choose only one answer. We had a total of Nine Hundred Sixty-Eight respondents to the question and One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Three responses. Of these, Five Hundred and Ten answered **The Deeper Meaning Behind Our Symbols and Ritual**, Three Hundred and Forty-Six answered The History of Freemasonry, Two Hundred and Ninety-Nine answered The History of Our Ritual, Two Hundred and Ninety-Two answered American Masonic History, Two Hundred Eleven answered Self-Improvement (Learning Non-Masonic Skills to Improve our Member's Lives), One Hundred Seventy-Four answered Contemplative Masonry (Basic Applications of Mindfulness and Meditation guided by Masonic Ritual). One Hundred Sixty-One answered The History of the Grand Lodge of Illinois.

Of the below topics, select the one that you would be most interested in learning more about.

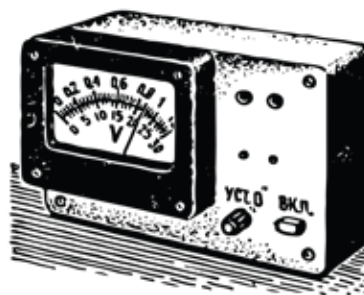
Answer: 938 Slipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
The History of the Grand Lodge of Illinois	16.82% 161
The History of Freemasonry	36.35% 348
The Deeper Meaning Behind Our Symbols and Ritual	52.69% 510
The History of Our Ritual	29.85% 299
Contemplative Masonry (Basic Applications of Mindfulness and Meditation guided by Masonic Ritual)	17.86% 174
Self-Improvement (Learning Non-Masonic Skills to Improve our Member's Lives)	18.02% 171
American Masonic History	29.71% 283
Total Responses: 938	

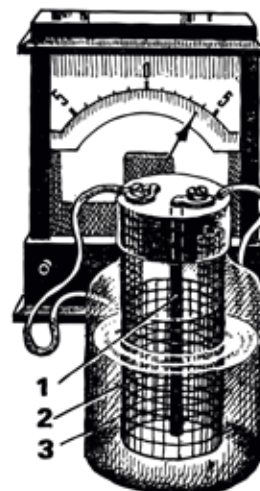
We in the Masonic Education Committee have taken this data to heart, and the members of the Education Committee are working on creating new programs and adding to existing ones to fit our member's desires based on this data. Be sure to keep reading the Lyceum for future announcements as we slowly begin to roll some new things out in the coming

months. I appreciate everyone who took the time to fill out the survey.



MAIN TAKEAWAYS

- 71.54% of respondents believe their lodges agree or strongly agree that their lodges are doing a good job of presenting Masonic Education in their Stated Meetings.
- 63.35% of respondents know who their Lodge Education Officer is.
- 69.85% of respondents would be inclined to attend a Grand Lodge sponsored Masonic Education Conference in their Area.
- 80.17% of respondent's lodges use the Intender Program.
- 80.24% of respondents would be interested in a Structured Educational Program that builds upon what they were taught in the Intender Program.
- 52.69% of respondents would be interested in learning more about the deeper meanings behind our Symbols and Ritual.



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EIGHT LECTURERS - TWO PANELS

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AUGUST 27TH, 2022

VENDORS-FESTIVE BOARD-SWAG



L A I N E

S I M M O N S

J A R Z A B E K

G O L D

The Vanishing Act

by RWB: Chad Lacek, 33°, Committee on Masonic Education



You've seen it. If you have been a Mason for more than a few months, you must have. A Mason that usually attends every meeting has suddenly vanished. After a couple of missed events, we start asking questions. Has anyone seen him? Has anyone spoken to him recently? Emails and text messages go unanswered. Phone calls are not returned. Much time passes, and suddenly, out of the blue, he reappears. You greet him with happy surprise and ask him where he has been. The reply is always the same. "I was going through a tough time."

Let's take a step back and examine why that happens so often. We belong to a kind of mutual benefit society, pledging to aid and assist each other in time of need.

We take oaths of secrecy, vowing to keep our Brother's private business as guarded as our own. We say that every Freemason is a member of our extended family, as evidenced by the term Brother, which we use so freely. Does any of that really mean anything to us? Are those empty vows?

Every Mason knows that if he shares his struggles with his Brothers in Lodge, the only things he will receive are love and support. That's it. Add to that the fact that none of us has unique problems. The issue you are going through now is the same issue hundreds of Masons have gone through before. It is likely, in fact, that there is a Mason in the room with you that has suffered as you suffer now. We know this, yet we vanish in times of hardship. Why?

If there is one time when you should turn hardest towards your Lodge and your Brothers, it is when you are struggling. That's what Freemasonry is here for! Would you pay for insurance monthly with no intention of ever filing a claim? What's the point of having Brothers to turn to if you don't trust them enough to do so? Perhaps you are too stubborn for that, but you are available if someone else needs to lean on you? Really? Do you think someone will rely on you when you aren't open enough to rely on them?

When we became Freemasons, we sacrificed our anonymity. We joined a worldwide family. That means that our suffering, as well as our triumphs, no longer belongs solely to us. It's all of ours. When we play the vanishing act, we deprive our Brothers of their privilege and their duty to care for us. It's selfish, Brother. It's plain and shameful selfishness. We're too proud to show a moment of weakness, and so we ignore the men who finally have a chance to fulfill their obligations as Masons. We should feel more ashamed of that than whatever issue we're dealing with.

It's easy to be a soldier in peacetime. It's easy to be a firefighter when the alarm bells are silent. It's easy to be a Freemason when none of life's challenges appear. But wars do happen, and fires do start, and life tests us every day. If you didn't know what you signed up for, don't worry. You can ask your Lodge Secretary for a demit. For those of you that accept the responsibility of being a Freemason, let's check our egos at the Tyler's door, and demonstrate that we don't just talk the talk.

The vanishing act is unacceptable and unjustifiable. It's harmful to everyone and everything we stand for. It's Unmasonic. We should not accept it from each other, even less so from ourselves. Let's close the curtain on the vanishing act.





SPML'S MASONIC CON 2022

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SPEAKERS ▲ PANELS ▲ SCREENINGS ▲ VENDORS ▲ FESTIVE BOARD

THE SCHEDULE

July 22-24, 2022

[Day 1](#) [Day 2](#) [Day 3](#)

5:30 pm	Doors Open Welcome to SPML's Masonic Con 2022. Check in and enjoy the reception and vendor tables.	
7:30 pm	Welcome Address Before moving into our Festive Board, let's cover introductions, what's in store for the weekend, and obvious safety rules.	FRIDAY
8:00 pm	SPML's Masonic Con Pop Culture Festive Board Hosted by Erik Strom, SPML's Masonic Con is opening with a seven course Festive Board on the very first night! This ceremony will not only be open to Masons of other Lodges, but to non-Mason gentlemen and ladies who may enjoy the talk, laughter and fellowship that flourishes on such a ceremonial occasion. We are not here to be silent and grim sitting on a bench and staring across the wall. We are here to enjoy good food, drink, sing and partake in the joys of frivolous merry making. For, on this night, we celebrate the arrival of South Pasadena's First Masonic Con weekend and will toast those unique Brothers who contributed to the betterment of our society - to the Masonic Pop Culture Icons we hold dear: <i>Ready! Aim! FIRE!</i>	
11:30 pm	Lodge Closes	

8:30 am	Doors Open Get settled in for a full day of world-class Masonic presentations, discussions, and screenings.	
9:00 am	Speaker: Jaime Paul Lamb Topic: The Archetypal Temple	
10:00 am	Speaker: Chris Hodapp	
11:00 am	Speaker: Kirk White Topic: Nones In The Temple	
12:00 pm	Speaker: Chuck Dunning Topic: Nurturing the Renaissance of Masonry in the 21st Century	
1:00 pm	Lunch with Screening and Q&A Screening: The Masonic Table: The Art of Dining in Freemasonry - Q&A: Brian T. Evans (Moderated by Ian E. Laurin)	
3:00 pm	Speaker: Bob Davis Topic: It is Time to Cross the Rubicon and Battle Our 20th Century Ruffians	SATURDAY
4:00 pm	Speaker: Chris Murphy Topic: "The Center of Union": Overcoming Societal Discord Through Engagement in Masonic Myth	
5:00 pm	Panel: The Masonic Legacy Society	
6:00 pm	Dinner	
7:30 pm	Speaker: Mitch Horowitz - Hermeticism	
8:30 pm	Screening: The Kybalion	
9:00 pm	Screening Q&A: Mitch Horowitz	
9:30 pm	Q&A: Mitch Horowitz Moderated by Robert Johnson	
10:00 pm	Lodge Closes	

8:30 am	Doors Open	
10:00 am	Panel: Innovation in Freemasonry Moderator: Ian Laurin - Guests: Robert Johnson, Ron Duncan, Cesar Rubio	SUNDAY
11:00 am	Panel: Manhood and Freemasonry Moderator: Robert Johnson - Featuring: Bob Davis and Angel Miller	
1:00 pm	Closing Remarks: Dago Rodriguez	
1:30 pm	Conference Ends Happy and safe travels home!	

The Weight of Your Obligation

by Kevin A. Wheeler, PM



For this month's Lyceum insert, the committee on Masonic Education was tasked with thinking about the weight of your obligation(s). At first, this topic seemed a difficult one for me to grasp. How would I explain to my fellow brethren

what the weight of their obligations are or should be? Although many Freemasons share the same interests, I would argue that there are none who fully think the same or share all the same interests. Each man decided to join Masonry of his own accord and for his own reasons--each man, although he received the same or a very similar initiation, internally may have had a very different experience. Therefore, just as it is not appropriate for me to tell a Brother how he should interpret a particular symbol, I believe it would not be appropriate for me to tell him how his obligation should weigh on his conscience.

Before I begin to discuss the weight of your obligation, I'd like to provide the definition of the word obligation, to avoid any misinterpretation that may arise from my discussion. According to the Dictionary.com (2022), obligation means:

1. *The act of binding oneself by a social, legal, or moral tie.*
2. *(a) A social, legal, or moral requirement that compels one to follow or avoid a particular course of action. (b) A course of action imposed by society, law, or conscience by which one is bound or restricted.*
3. *The constraining power of a promise, contract, law, or sense of duty.*
4. *Law (a) A legal agreement stipulating a specified payment or action, esp. if the agreement also specifies a penalty for failure to comply. (b) The document detailing such an agreement.*
5. *(a) Something owed as payment or in return for a special service or favor. (b) This service or favor.*
6. *The state, fact, or feeling of being indebted to another for this service or favor.*

Illustrious Brother Albert Mackey, in his Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, described the obligation as:

"The solemn promise made by a Freemason on his admission into any Degree is technically called his obligation. In a legal sense, the obligation is synonymous with duty. Its derivation shows its true meaning, for the Latin word obligation literally signifies a tying or binding. The obligation is that what binds a man to do some act, the doing of which thus becomes his duty. By his obligation, a Freemason is bound or tied to his Order".

Worshipful Brother Lahners, in his description, stated:

"The Masonic Obligation is that moral one which, although it cannot be enforced by the courts of law, is binding on the party who makes it, in conscience and according to moral justice. It varies in each degree, but in each is perfect. Its various clauses, in which different duties are prescribed, are called its points, which are either affirmative or negative, a division like that of the precepts of the Jewish law. The affirmative points are those which require certain acts to be performed; the negative points are those which forbid certain other acts from being done. The whole of them is proceeded by a general point of secrecy, common to all the Degrees, and this point is called the tie".

Now that we have a complete understanding of what an obligation is let us explore briefly why it is that we take such obligations in Freemasonry. As described by Worshipful Brother Cholka, in his article entitled "The Obligation", he states that the reason we as Freemasons take oaths is that:

"Our obligations to include the penalties are part of the universal system of Freemasonry and are the basis of the means of recognition everywhere throughout the Masonic world. It is the focal point of every degree. Our obligations make a man a Mason. Our obligations bind every member to the Fraternity, its aims, and objects. They make us feel as one with our Brothers, whether of the same Lodge or anywhere throughout the world, and with all who have taken

the same obligations. Our obligations require us to be obedient towards our Craft, reverent toward the Great Architect of the Universe, protect the secrets of the craft, respect all others, and love and care for all Brethren as ourselves.

He continues by stating that *“the obligation is the tie that binds us to Freemasonry and to each other. It is a voluntary pledge each of us takes by virtue of which we are accepted as a responsible member of the family of Masons”*.

The obligation is what binds us to the Craft, and we take it for that purpose. Thus, what weight, if any, should be placed on your obligations? I cannot aim to answer this question for anyone, for each of us must determine what those obligations mean or meant to ourselves. However, I can and will discuss how our obligations weigh on me personally. In my opinion, with each obligation, both the affirmative and negative points and the penalties for violating them appear to intensify. For me, it's not so much the intensity or the difficulty of the obligation and its points or penalties but rather the weight of my conscious if I violate them. I cannot determine the level of seriousness one places on Freemasonry and its obligations, but for those of us like myself who try to live by these values and lessons, violating them is unacceptable, for not only will I be letting myself and my brethren down but I would be de-sanctifying my word with God and for any God-fearing men, this is unacceptable and to be avoided at all costs. Thus, the weight of my obligation is a heavy burden for me. If I fail to keep it, I am not only failing myself, I am failing us all. Accordingly, I will always do my best to live up to and live by my each of my obligations because I am a Freemason.

References

- Dictionary.com (2022). Obligation. Retrieved June 1st, 2022, from Dictionary.com application.
- Lahners, D. (2020). Obligation or Affirmation?. Midnight Freemasons. Retrieved June 1st, 2022, from <http://www.midnightfreemasons.org/2020/11/obligation-or-affirmation.html?m=1>.
- Cholka, P. (2016). “The Obligation.” Grand Lodge of Wisconsin – Masonic Study Series. Retrieved June 1st, 2022, from <http://members.wisc-freemasons.org>.
- Mackey, A. (1913). Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences. Masonic History Organization.

Questions for Lodge Discussion

1. What is the cost of violating your obligation? Personally? Socially?
2. Is it ever permissible to break an obligation?
3. Is an obligation binding if a man believes in God, but does not believe in judgment in an afterlife?
4. Is a man's word by itself ever good enough?



A Journey Southward

Experiencing the Midwest Conference on Masonic Education

by Spencer A. Hamann, DEO 1st Northeast

Early on Friday morning, April 29th, 2022, I heaved my carry-on bag and computer satchel into the back of Robert Johnson's Jeep. It was a cooler morning, the chill of Midwestern winter teasing at dissolving away into spring. As the noise of the road rose up, so did our spirits. With each passing mile, the gravity of the weekend to come became more real, and I'm not sure if it was the prodigious amount of coffee and Red Bull in our systems or just the giddiness of embarking on a nearly 9-hour road trip with great company, but an electric current seemed to fill the air.

We were bound for Kansas City, Missouri, and the 2022 Midwest Conference on Masonic Education. For those unfamiliar, the conference is an annual in-person event that rotates through the states of the Midwest Grand Jurisdictions that participate in it. Currently, the conference is made up of Brothers from the Grand Lodges of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. The conference has been going on for decades, and its primary goal is fostering Brotherhood through a weekend of world-class Masonic Education and discussion. Think of the energy of meeting with Brothers from all over the state at the Grand Lodge Sessions each year, but expanded across multiple jurisdictions and viewpoints, and coming together in Masonry to workshop, exchange ideas, and grow together.

I first attended the MCME in 2019, when it was held out in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The conference was postponed in 2020 due to the pandemic, and was run virtually in 2021, when Illinois played host to the conference. This year, the conference resumed its usual in-person attendance with the addition of a virtual ticket for Brothers to be able to watch the presentations streaming live. The virtual component also gave the flexibility to have speakers present remotely, broadening the range

of topics available and crafting a more dynamic conference experience.

It was a pleasure to meet up with out-of-state Brothers whom I had met in my travels over the years, and the overall feeling was one of joyful homecoming. Many of us had not attended a Masonic event of this scale since before the Pandemic, and the grins and chuckles betrayed any sense of serious decorum we tried to maintain. No matter that I understand Freemasonry exists beyond my lodge, my district, my state, and my country, this feeling is never brought into such wonderful focus as it is when gathering with a group of engaged and energetic Brothers from other jurisdictions!

Friday evening's events opened with dinner and a warm welcome and address by MWB Ty Treutelaar, Grand Master of the State of Missouri. He made Missouri's commitment to education quite plain, and it was inspiring to see leadership who not only endorsed education, but had personal skin in the game. MWB Treutelaar was followed by Masonic scholar and writer Josef Wages, who gave an excellent dissection of research methods and information organization using his own research on the historic La Candeur Lodge. The evening wrapped with a hospitality suite and continued discussion into the night. RJ and I made it back to our hotel just as the skies opened up, and a truly awesome thunderstorm pounded in.

After group breakfast on Saturday morning, author Dan Hrinko of Ohio gave a presentation on the concepts of effective servant leadership and the skills of a Masonic leader which he outlines in his latest book, "The Purple of the Fraternity." He was followed up by Jacob Thompson of Missouri who gave an in-depth examination of the Grand Lodge of Missouri's Wardens and Masters Training program. It was fascinating to compare and contrast the program and training ideas with the programs in place

(or not in place) by the Grand Jurisdictions of the Brothers in attendance, and ideas were discussed throughout the rest of the conference stemming from this presentation. A break for lunch preceded the afternoon sessions, which consisted of a roundtable discussion facilitated by James Buckhorn of Indiana and Chad Kopenski of Ohio, and involved representatives of the various Grand Jurisdictions. Discussion centered around membership, growing involvement, educational facilitation and opportunity, and reaching Brothers of the Craft wherever they were on their own journeys. The breakout sessions that followed continued the dialogue.

Dinner, which consisted of Kansas City Barbeque (what else, after all?) was followed by a virtual presentation by Masonic researcher Shawn Eyer, who dove into his findings on the metaphors of Freemasonry contained within architecture, geometry, and aesthetics. Hospitality and fellowship again closed the evening, and while the night waned, the enthusiasm and discussion were as strong as ever late into the night.

Sunday morning Breakfast wrapped up the event, and the Brothers departing gave our goodbyes and swapped contacts like baseball cards on the playground. Although this was the “official” end of the conference, I was privileged to join a small group of Brothers who went off to explore the outstanding Nelson-Atkins Art Museum (home of the world’s largest shuttlecocks; look it up) and finally stuff our faces at the venerable Q39, a local barbecue institution. Sticky with sauce and nourished in both body and mind, Robert and I bade Kansas City farewell and drove off into the evening and back to northern Illinois.

Perhaps in the paragraphs above, I have been able to convey a snapshot of the proceedings and content of this year’s Midwest Conference on Masonic Education. Maybe readers will turn this page with a sense of what happens at a Masonic Convention which will, sooner or later, be quite literally coming to a venue near you. I could go into great detail outlining the presentations of the weekend, or share my notes on the discussions that took place, or even describe the signature tomato-based sauces slathered across dry-rubbed smoked meats. But like capturing lightning in a bottle, or describing the atmosphere in a well-put-on Degree, some things are beyond the human ability to contain and quantify: you needed to be there. Really; you needed to be

there. If you were not, I hope in the most well-meaning way that you feel like perhaps you missed out on something special. You assuredly did.

The Midwest Conference on Masonic Education has been a strangely well-kept secret in Illinois over the past decade that I have been a Brother of the Craft. It need not be, and it shouldn’t be. If you are looking to find something deeper in your Masonic experience, if you are looking to further your journey or just unsure of how to take some of the first steps, if you feel full of Light and love for the Craft or maybe in need of some Light and a recharge, the MCME is just what you’ve been looking for. The 2023 conference will take place in Ohio at the Canton Masonic Temple on April 28-30. Bother your DDGM, DEO, Grand Lodge Officers, and other Masonic leaders for the information, don’t let them off the hook.

I’ll see you there.

-RWB S.A.Hamann



Visit MCME on the Web
www.mcme1949.org



The Scientific Masonic Association: No Dullards Please

by RWB.: R.H. Johnson, Committee on Masonic Education

No, No, No. Stop right now. You don't need to go looking for them online and send in a petition or earmark some money for more annual dues.

They don't exist anymore. This society is outlined in Mackey's Masonic Encyclopedia and has the following entry:

"The German title is Scientifischer Freimaurer Bund. A society founded in 1803 by Fessler, Mossdorf, Fischer, and other distinguished Freemasons, the object being, by the united efforts of its members, to draw up, with the greatest accuracy and care, and from the most authentic sources, a full and complete history of Freemasonry, of its origin and objects, from its first formation to the present day, and also of the various systems or methods of working that have been introduced into the Craft. Such history, together with the evidence upon which it was founded, was to be communicated to worthy and zealous Brethren. The members had no peculiar ritual, clothing, or ceremonies; neither were they subjected to any fresh obligation; every just and upright Freemason who had received a liberal education, who was capable of feeling the truth, and desirous of investigating the mysteries of the Order, could become a member of this Society, provided the ballot was unanimous, let him belong to what Grand Lodge he might. But those whose education had not been sufficiently liberal to enable them to assist in those researches were only permitted to attend the meetings as trusty Brethren to receive instruction."

-Albert G. Mackey
Charles T. McClenachen
Encyclopedia of Freemasonry
Revised Ed. 1920

Over two-hundred years ago, a society was formed to compile an accurate history of our Craft, and it sounds like they had a sound mission and a good start. Accuracy and care--two things invariably missing from much of the research done today. No doubt much of this owing to the Spiritualist Movements across the world, stretching from the late 18th century and on into the early 20th. In this period, occult orders popped up all over--spurious and "cult"



influences of men like the Reverend H.J. Prince in the mid-1840s have trailblazed a path of imagination and bull\$%. And unfortunately, Freemasonry also gets caught up in this--many Masonic rites and orders being created as "spin-offs", with a type of religious prerequisite. These orders do nothing but get grown-up men to believe in fantasy.

So yes, accuracy and care are important. Authentic Sources! Wow...imagine such a concept. If only we held our "scholars" to the same expectations as laid out above. Our only exceptions are few, our de Hoyos', our Wäges, our Kendalls...

But what about admission into this society? That's quite the "West Gate," isn't it? To be liberally educated... Otherwise, "...sure you can come in and we can teach you."

Today we would call it unbrotherly to keep a man from the Craft based on their education. But in this small "spinoff," they certainly did keep their reigns tight. Perhaps this is why they don't exist anymore. Perhaps it's because Albert Mackey wrote a compiled history of Freemasonry spanning seven volumes and numerous editions.

One thing is for sure about the Scientific Masonic Association--that Freemasons were concerned with accurate, authentic, and objective historical truth

concerning the Fraternity at an early age. I think we should expect some sort of intellectual prowess. Not genius or highfalutin, self-righteous level, but good, solid, smart individuals. Intrinsically smart, street smart, and academic--this is what I hope for anyway. I leave you with another few quotes.

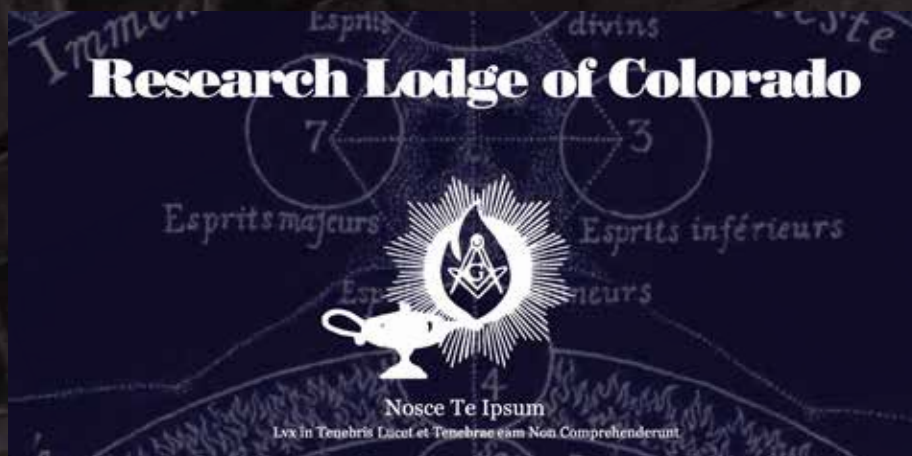
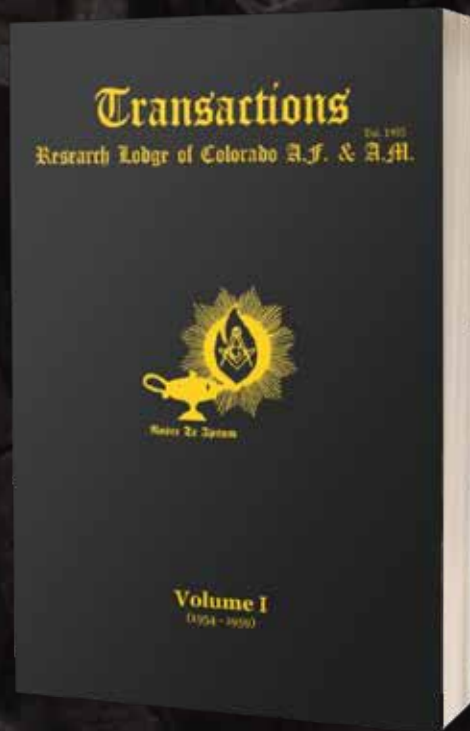
“Because the world at large must continue to recognize the educational as well as the fraternal function of Freemasonry, the lodge, therefore, must have a Masonically intelligent membership.”

“No man ever grasped the full significance of the principals of Freemasonry simply by receiving the degrees.”

“Trooping through the doors of our preparation rooms we find an ever-increasing company composed of those from whose faces is missing the stamp of high intelligence, in whose eyes the torch of education has lit no fires and whose halting steps are led by friendly suggestion or quickened by the hope of gain.”

The Master's Lectures
Fraternity - 1923





Since 1953, the Research Lodge of Colorado has been producing quality Masonic Education papers. Over the last three years, the Lodge has worked tirelessly to compile the transactions into an amazing volume that is beautifully curated and printed.

\$20

RLCOLO.Org/Items

District Education

Talking Points

Overview of the Intender Program - After The Third Degree

“After the Brother is raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, the Intender continues to meet with the new Master Mason. The new Master Mason is encouraged to learn the long-form catechism for all three degrees, and perhaps demonstrate his proficiency in open Lodge for all three catechisms. The Intender also maintains contact with the new Master Mason and guides him in further study, if that is the desire of the Brother. If not, the Intender can determine what the new Master Mason’s interests are, e.g., charity work, community involvement, progressing in the chairs, etc.”

Reader's Corner

The Master Builders: A History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania Vol. II, 1874-1986

by Wayne A. Huss

A Book review by
WB: Kevin A. Wheeler



In this volume of *The Master Builders: A History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania*, I was introduced to some very important decisions that led to continued growth and

prosperity. In this volume, we learn of the enormous amounts of charities the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania had/has, as well as documentary evidence ending the age-old debate of which Grand Lodge was the first Sovereign Grand Lodge in the United States of America.

On the very first page of the first chapter in this volume, we see that by the year 1874, Masonry in Pennsylvania was a highly respectable organization in the eyes of the public; we know this because the Grand Lodge was invited by the Public Buildings Commission to lay the cornerstone for the future City Hall, the New Public Building. Following the cornerstone laying, Masons began participating in many Ceremonies, increasing further awareness of the craft. Shortly after, the Masonic Temple was opened to the public as a tourist attraction. It brought in as many as fifteen hundred people per day. Some of the ceremonies the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania conducted were enormous--such as June 24th, 1882, on Saint John's Day, which brought eight-thousand Masons who marched in a procession.

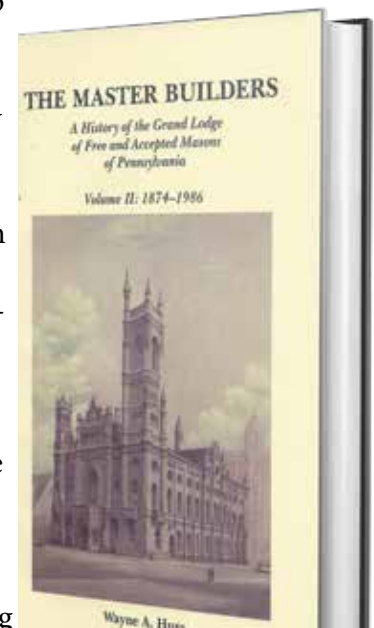
One unique thing that drew my attention when learning of this ceremony was that "All participants wore the usual Masonic dress, a black suit, top hat, white gloves, and a lambskin apron" (p.5). This caught my attention for two reasons. First--from my personal experience as a Mason, only the Master of

the Lodge wears a top hat. However, I then recalled seeing a few photos from the early twentieth century of Masons meeting at an Illinois Lodge with everyone wearing a top hat. Prior to reading what the "Usual Masonic Dress" was, I had assumed that picture was of a lodge of Past Masters, as no one could give me a satisfactory explanation. The second thing that came to mind was

a question: When did it become a rule that only the Worshipful Master wear a top hat?

Because my focus in Masonry has always been on education, history, symbolism, and esotericism, I was excited to learn of Brother Clifford P. MacCalla, who, among other things, found a document in the form of a ledger, proving that the first Masonic lodge in Pennsylvania was in Philadelphia as St. John's. In addition to this discovery, he found a copy of the by-laws written by Bro. Benjamin Franklin.

A great many things occurred throughout this time frame addressed in this volume. One worth mentioning here is the sheer prestige obtained by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania; especially by way of the Committee on Correspondence. The committee's job was to collect all documents generated by all Masonry worldwide and then edit and print them for use by members. Besides a few disputes, it appears Masonry, especially in Pennsylvania, enjoyed steady



healthy growth, although many Grand Masters cautioned when membership rose too quickly. Because it appeared that the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania held itself to a higher standard, it was quick to condemn or withhold recognition from certain Grand Lodges for various reasons. One of the more obvious cases is when the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge “condemned the Grand Lodge (“Orient”) of France because it had established lodges in Louisiana, in violation of the jurisdiction of the grand lodge of the state and, more seriously, because the French Grand Lodge after 1877 no longer required in a Supreme Being for membership” (p.17).

This volume also informed me that the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is responsible for a great deal of good throughout the world. As previously mentioned, it was established through factual documents that it was the first Grand Lodge in the United States, despite years of controversy. The Grand Lodge has always held itself to a higher standard, being one of a handful who never permitted the ritual to be written. Some other things that are worthy of mentioning were that the Grand Lodge rarely responds to any negativity or anti-Masonic sentiments. And curiously, that certain membership requirements, mainly the one pertaining to physical perfection, remained on the books for so long.

From its inception, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania participated in and created many charities. One example of the size of its charity is the Masonic Village, which consists of a Grand Lodge Hall, recreation Center, Children’s Home, Masonic Conference Center, Masonic Health Care Center, Masonic Temple, Auditorium, as well as nine other buildings and a garden.

Some other things worth mentioning were the fact that the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge was not a Proponent, and was even against having the American Flag in a Lodge room. It did not change its position on this until the patriotism exhibited during the first world war. Lastly, I learned that the Grand Lodge had a committee on Masonic Lodge Temples that developed a standardized architectural model for new lodges to emulate in their construction, and through all of this, in the years “1914 to 1986, well over had a million men either initiated or admitted into membership in the Masonic Fraternity in Pennsylvania” (p.160).



*Editor’s Note - There are a total of three volumes to this historical set focussed on Pennsylvania. This is the second. Next month, we will run the last one in this series.

GRAND LODGE IMPORTANT DATES

Grand Lodge Annual Communication is scheduled for October 7th & 8th. Based on the date of our event, there are some important dates you need to be aware of:

Item Due to Grand Lodge by:

Proposed Amendment (90 days out) July 9, 2022

Reinstatement from Expulsion (65 days out) August 3, 2022

Lodge Name Change Requests (30 days out) September 7, 2022

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

South Pasadena Masonic Lodge - Masonic Con,
Los Angeles - July 22-24, 2022

Texas Masonic Con, August 20th, 2022

Masonic Con Kansas, KC Metro - August 27th, 2022

AMD Illinois- In-gathering, Bloomington Normal
- September 17th, 2022

For more visit, MasonicConferences.com

If your lodge or organization is having an Educational Event (not related to instruction or charities), please let us know. Email the details to: secretary@spesnovum.com

Please give us at least a month notice so that we can ensure it is added.

