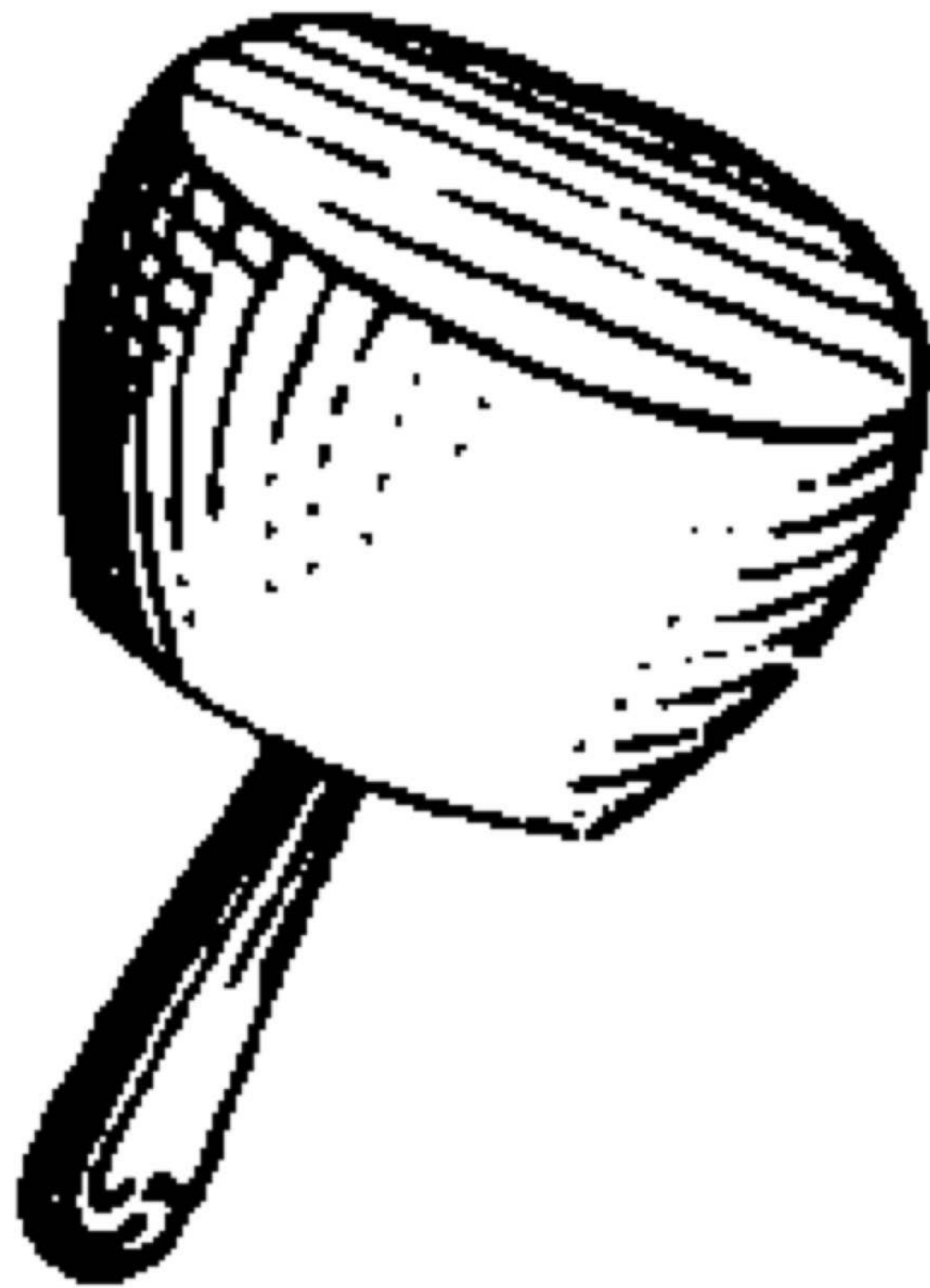

The Lyceum



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



Welcome, Brothers!

We are proud to showcase this latest issue of our magazine, *The Lyceum*, a special edition dedicated to the Master Mason Degree. Within this issue, you'll find a wide range of stories, articles, and more from fellow Master Masons from around our jurisdiction.

We have also included exclusive insights into the rituals and ceremonies of the Master Mason Degree and the importance of continuing its legacy. Darin Lahners has provided some amazing information relating to ancient mystery schools. RWB Chad Lacek has brought his masterful contemplative thoughts to this issue by centering it around our most solemn of Rites...the Funeral. I've added some additional pieces relating to furthering our journey into Freemasonry as well as some encouraging words on intellectualism within our Craft. Bro. Justus Fischer brings a unique and poetic reflection to this most meaningful of degrees as well. All in all, I think this issue hits the mark.

We hope that this issue serves as a reminder of the bond that exists between us as Freemasons, and we invite you to use it as a resource to further your understanding of the Master Mason Degree.

R.H. Johnson

R.H. Johnson



From the Chairman

W.:B.: Michael Overturf, Chairman



My Brothers, I hope this issue finds you all healthy. Those of us in the southern half of the state have the trees blooming and yards “greening up” as we prepare for spring (of course, we also have a high pollen alert followed by a winter storm watch issued on the same day; as Brother Mark McDaniel’s from West Frankfort #567 highlighted on Facebook.)

This issue covers the third and final degree. The Master Mason degree puts our understanding of Allegory to the test, King Solomon shows up, and we have a group of Fellowcrafts in a Master Mason’s lodge. Overall, there is a ton to unpack going through these degrees--this one is nonetheless an equal challenge to wrap our minds around. I hope that you all enjoy this issue.

Fraternally,

Michael Overturf

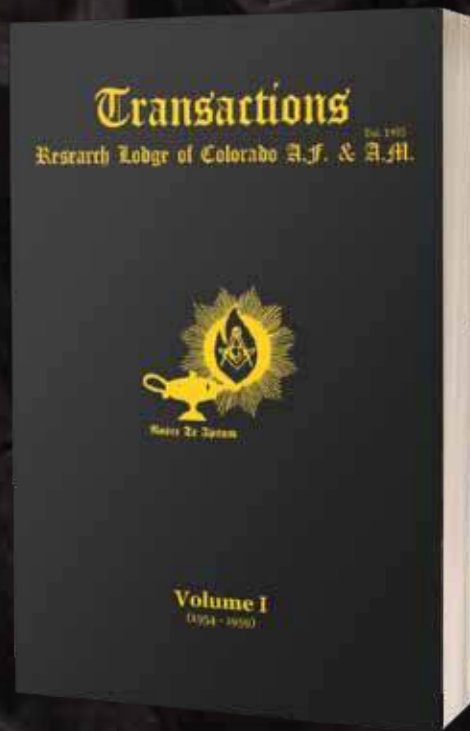
Michael Overturf, Chairman

Masonic Education



Next Month’s Theme

Meaningful Freemasonry



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. Volume II is coming!

\$20

RLCOLO.Org/Items

Featured Article

Is the Third Degree a Teletē?

by AEO Eastern Area WB Darin A. Lahners



In Orphic cosmology, the universe was conceived of in a cosmic egg. The idea is that the cosmos was initially a self-contained embryo, which at a certain point, hatched. The upper half of the egg formed the Heavens, and the lower half formed the Earth. After that ensuing chaos, the three realms consisting of Heaven, Earth, and Sea, were bound by aether. This substance which was described as the fifth element by Aristotle, held the three realms together, creating the universe. The Orphics believed in an omnipotent creator, a demiurge named Phanes. Phanes was the god of all gods until he was devoured by Zeus. This creation story parallels those of other ancient civilizations.

Orphism was named after Orpheus, a mythical hero who tried to retrieve his wife from the Underworld under the condition that he not look at her. He failed and was killed by mænads, who were followers of Dionysus. The religious foundations derive from the myth of Dionysus. Born to Zeus and Persephone, Dionysus was dismembered and eaten by the Titans. An angered Zeus struck the Titans with his thunderbolt, disintegrating them and reviving from their ashes a reincarnated Dionysus, along with mankind.

Man had a dual nature, a soul from Dionysus, which contained the pure divine spark, and a body from the Titans, which was impure. For this reason, the Orphics thought the body (soma) was a tomb (sema). To the Orphics, the body reminded man of his corporeal nature, as opposed to his spiritual one. In his dialogue, *Gorgias*, Plato states: “*I have heard a philosopher [Pythagoras] say that at this moment we are actually dead and that the body is our tomb...*” In order to achieve salvation from the tomb of our material existence, one had to be initiated into the Dionysian mysteries and undergo teletē. Teletē is a ritual purification that consists of reliving the suffering and death of the god. Orphics believed that they would, after death, spend eternity alongside Orpheus. The uninitiated (amúētos), they believed, would be reincarnated indefinitely. This idea is similar to the Buddhist idea of Samsara, the wheel of rebirth. If, when we die, we have not balanced our Karma, we are condemned to live another life. This process would continue ad infinitum until we do so.

By this point, you might be wondering, What does this have to do with Freemasonry? Pythagoreanism, the philosophical brotherhood started by Pythagoras, took many of the orphic doc-

trines and incorporated them into his teachings. In the third Degree lecture, we are taught that Pythagoras was the inventor of the forty-seventh problem of Euclid. We are told that in his travels through Asia, Africa, and Europe, he was initiated into several orders of Priesthood and is said to have been raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. Historians accredit Pythagoras with being the first to call himself a philosopher, as he considered it a way of life. He believed that philosophy was a life that was lived in discussion and in experimentation. He is said to have “intellectualized” Orphism by applying scientific thinking and reasoning to its beliefs. In doing so, he made it a viable way of life rather than a mystery. In *Gorgias*, Plato states: “[T]hey say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end, which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but never destroyed. And the moral is, that man ought to live always in perfect holiness.”

Plato describes the ethical system of Orphism, explaining the idea of purification, which is required if one wants to reach the afterlife. This system heavily influences the idea of the immortality of the soul advocated by Pythagoras. It is believed that this is an idea that Socrates taught him and that would play a crucial role in his philosophy. Pythagoras believes that the soul exists eternally and can never be destroyed; if it is impure at the end of its body's life, it would be reincarnated into the body of a new person, this cycle continuing until at death, the soul was pure, at which point it would go onto be one with divinity. For Pythagoreans, a virtuous life was one that would lead to this purification. This life consisted of dutiful moral responsibility and severe self-discipline, and abstention from all forms of indulgence. Although our bodies were a tomb, the Pythagoreans believed that the soul was holy and needed to be pure if it wanted to return to divinity. The life of the Pythagorean was dedicated to caring for and tending to the soul. They were cautious not to commit any vices. In the afterlife, the soul would be judged by its scars, not the physical ones, but the spiritual ones. These spiritual scars are symbolic of the vices of which the body was guilty. Because of this belief, the soul was of absolute importance,

and it took precedence over the well-being of the body.

As I stated, One of the key beliefs of the Pythagoreans was the transmigration of the soul borrowed from the Orphics and expanded upon. In fact, one story about Pythagoras was recanted by Xenophanes. He recalled: “*Once they said that he [Pythagoras] was passing by when a puppy was being whipped, and he took pity and said: Stop, do not beat it; for it is the soul of a friend that I recognized when I heard it giving tongue.*” In this story, Pythagoras remembered the voice of a friend of his and reasoned that his soul must have been reincarnated as a dog. Pythagoras was famously a vegetarian, and anyone who joined the Pythagoreans would become a vegetarian. This was not for ethical reasons. It was based upon the basis that animals could be the host of either a friend's or an ancestor's soul. Beans were also to be refrained from, for Pythagoras said they were the seeds from which humans were birthed. To the Pythagoreans, to eat a bean was to eat a fellow human. Ironically, according to legend, Pythagoras died because he was chased to a bean field by an angry mob, and in not wanting to trample the beans, he decided to surrender himself to the mob instead.

The eating of meat or beans was called Adikia, and it was one of the greatest vices. Plato stated in his work, *Laws*, that “[M]en are said to have lived a sort of Orphic life, having the use of all lifeless things, but abstaining from all living things.” Orphism was practically synonymous with vegetarianism as a result. The Pythagoreans believed all life was interconnected, like a web that was connected to the Divine, of which all living things were a part. A story in Pythagorean teaching tells of a man named Æthalides. He was bestowed by Hermes the gift of being able to remember his past lives. Upon passing, he was reincarnated as Euphorbus, who was slain by Menelaus in the Trojan War. His soul then went to inhabit Hermodimus, who went to a temple and allegedly pointed out the shield used by Menelaus. In doing so, proving he was Euphorbus in his previous life. Then, Hermodimus died and became Pyrrhus; and finally, the soul went

on to inhabit Pythagoras. Because of this, Pythagoras taught his followers to every night to go through their previous day in their memory. In recalling as much detail as possible, as a way of strengthening their memory, they would be able to eventually remember as far back as their own previous lives.

Prior to the second section of the third degree in Illinois, we read code 365A, which strictly forbids “...*any levity, horseplay or roughness and insists that there be no such actions and no audible laughter or other noise in the Lodge room which might distract the attention of the candidate. Failure to comply with this code and any action by any officer or member in violation of or inconsistent with the language of this order shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.*” But what I find really interesting is what is written right before that statement in the code. I have bolded the sentence that stands out. ***“The second section of the Third Degree constitutes a most solemn and impressive portion of our ritualistic work. In it, we are taught the ultimate lessons of Masonic philosophy--victory over death and the immortality of the soul. Nothing must be allowed to impair the deep impression which should be made upon the mind of the candidate.”*** This makes me wonder if Pythagoras and his teachings still resonate within the second section of the third degree.

In the first degree lecture, we are taught the ornaments of the lodge, one of which is the mosaic pavement. A mosaic pavement consists of several stones of mixed colors joined together in a pattern to imitate a painting. In Freemasonry, the pavement is depicted as alternating black and white tiles like that of a chessboard. We are told that it is emblematical of human life, checkered with good and evil. Does this dualistic philosophy not remind you of the Orphic/Pythagorean belief? The belief that man has both the divine spark, which is pure (good), and the body, which is impure (evil).

If this is the case, we can think of the third degree as a teletē. If the ultimate lessons of Masonic philosophy are - victory over death and the

immortality of the soul, then does it not stand to reason that what happens during the second section of the third degree is a ritual purification that consists of reliving the suffering and death of our Grandmaster Hiram Abiff. I want to be very clear, while the Orphics did this for a god, Dionysus; Freemasons do not worship or deify Hiram Abiff. That being said, in undergoing this ritual and in following the teachings of Freemasonry, are we not purifying ourselves? Is the idea of becoming a perfect ashlar not an idea of becoming pure? By undergoing this ritual in the second section of the third degree, we are taking a necessary final step in the purification of ourselves.

I believe that while it is not implied nor can it be proven, the ancient mysteries have heavily influenced our rituals and practices. Pythagoras is specifically mentioned as our ancient friend and brother in our third-degree lecture for his invention of the forty-seventh problem of Euclid. Does it not stand to reason that some of his other teachings would have influenced our ritual? There are other connections to the Egyptian mysteries and others that I will not go into today, but if you look hard enough, you will be able to make the connections yourself. Just don't think too much about whether or not to eat those green beans at the next dinner you are able to have with your brethren.



April 15th, 2023

9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

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The Scientific Masonic Association - No Dullards, Please

by RWB.: R.H. Johnson



No, No, No. Stop right now. You don't need to look 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.”



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 is owing to the Spiritualist Movements worldwide, 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 “bologna.” 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: 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 quote.

"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



A Short Reflection on the Master Mason Degree

by Bro. Justus E. Fischer, Masonic Education Committee



For me, and likely the rest of us, the Master Mason degree left a lasting impression in my mind. One was standing for what you believe in, even if the whole world is against you. Hold to your

beliefs and uphold your obligation and duty as a man of your word. In our daily vocations, we, as Masons, could be tried in our various quarry labors and tested. The profane world could often demand us to indulge our innermost secrets because these outsiders can't comprehend our ancient mysteries. People are afraid of what they don't know, and as Master Masons, upholding our convictions and never succumbing to pressure is paramount. We are men of faith, honor, and integrity.

How often have we been disappointed when someone breaks their promise or does not stand by their word? I often struggle with this; I am learning not to take on too many tasks and say "no" when possible.

We often joke about this [No}, being the "true lost word" of Freemasonry. It is essential to remember the lessons contained within this powerful ritual. We must manage our time wisely while still alive and ticking on this earth. The sands within the hourglass, the dial on the clock, and the day and night--learning to embrace these opposing forces and work harmoniously with the grain, not against it. We are not humans having profound spiritual experiences; we are merely spiritual entities having humanistic experiences. Humans are by-products of trial and error, racing against time, trying to avoid the inevitable. We can work against time or let time work with us and for us. We can be true to ourselves and our loved ones, leaving this earth knowing we set goals and accomplished them. We are masons true, forging our destinies and

making our dreams a reality. We are often tried, never denied, and ready to be tried again. Steel sharpens steel striking while the iron is hot as builders of a spiritual temple. Let us destroy and rebuild because it is our destiny. The renewal of our energy. Always faithful and forevermore.





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The Noahchites

by WB Darin A. Lahners, AEO Eastern Area, Committee on Masonic Education

It may surprise some Freemasons that Hiram Abiff wasn't always prominent in the Master Mason Degree. In fact, the first reference to the Hiram legend occurs in 1730 in Samuel Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*. In this work, Prichard refers to Hiram as "Grand Master Hiram." We do know that by 1738, the Hiram Legend seems to be in place, as Dr. James Anderson's *Constitutions of 1738* states that after the completion of the Temple, "their joy was soon interrupted by the death of their dear Master, Hiram Abiff, whom they decently interred in the Lodge near the Temple according to ancient usage." If Hiram wasn't always featured in the Master Mason degree until sometime around 1730, then what was the degree like?

In 1936, a document entitled: *The whole Institution of free Masonry opened and proved by the best of tradition, and still, some scripture references were discovered*. The document, which came to be known as The Graham Manuscript, comprises two small pieces of parchment which have been dated to 1726. It was written in very old English and thought to be a copy from another document. Translated into Modern English, it reads:

"We have it by tradition, and still some reference to scripture for it caused Shem, Ham and Japheth to go to their father Noah's grave for to see if they could find anything about him to lead them to the valuable secret which this famous preacher had..."

For I hope all will allow that all things needful for the new world was in the Ark with Noah.

Now these three men had already agreed that if they did not find the very thing itself, that the first thing that they found was to be to them as a secret...

They not doubting, but did most firmly believe that God was able and would also prove willing, through their faith, prayer, and obe-

dience, to cause what they did find to prove as valuable to them as if they had received the secret at first from God Himself at its headspring.

So [they] came to the grave, finding nothing save the dead body almost consumed away.

Taking a grip at a finger, it came away... so from joint to joint... so to the wrist...

so to the elbow... so they reared up the dead body... and supported it...

setting foot to foot... knee to knee... breast to breast... cheek to cheek... and hand to back... and cried out 'Help, Oh Father'...

As if they had said 'Oh Father of Heaven, help us now, for Our earthly father cannot'...

so laid down the dead body again and not knowing what to do...

so one said: 'Here is yet marrow in this bone' and the second said: 'But a dry bone' and the third said: 'It stinketh'.

So they agreed to give it a name as is known to free masonry to this day...

so went to their undertakings, and afterwards works stood."

So it can be said then, without a doubt, that Noah held an essential role in the Master Mason degree before the introduction of Hiram Abiff. This is further illustrated in Albert Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences. Under the entry for Noah, Mackey states: "In all the old Masonic manuscript Constitutions that are extant, Noah and the Flood play an important part in the Legend of the Craft. Hence, as the Masonic system became developed, the Patriarch was looked upon as what was called a Patron of Freemasonry. This connection of Noah with the mystic history of the Order was rendered still closer with the influence of many symbols borrowed from the Arkite Worship, one of the most

predominant of the ancient faiths. So intimately were incorporated the legends of Noah with the legends of Freemasonry that Freemasons began, at length, to be called, and are still called, Noachidae, or the descendants of Noah, a term first applied by Doctor Anderson, and very frequently used at a much later day.”

With all of the characters in the Old and New Testaments, why would Noah be chosen to be represented in the Master Mason degree prior to Hiram Abiff?

Noah was important for a few reasons:

1. He and his ancestors would have been the progenitors of the Human Race after the flood, as well as the saviors of the animals of the land that he held in the Ark.

2. He carried the Noachide Laws, or the six laws given to Adam by God, to which a seventh was given to Noah. These were the laws that would be followed by his people until he gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

The Noachide Laws were:

- Renounce all idols.
- Worship the one true God.
- Commit no murder.
- Be not defiled by incest.
- Do not steal.
- Be just.
- Eat no flesh with blood in it.

3. He would have been the keeper of antediluvian knowledge, especially the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Mackey further acknowledges these points in his entry for Noah: *“The writer of the Cooke MS. (1410/1450 A.D.) had before him an original which may have been written about 1350 A.D. The author of that original frankly acknowledges that many of his historical statements are taken from “the polychronicon,” a sort of universal history, or omnium gatherum, in which were collected scraps and fragments of lore of many kinds, especially about the remote past, and without any attempt to*

distinguish genuine history from myths, legends, tales, fables. It was from such a polycilronicon that the writer of the Cooke original drew the story of Noah and the Deluge, which the Cooke condenses into a paragraph beginning at line 290. According to the old tale thus taken from the polychronicon, men knew that God would destroy the world out of vengeance, either by fire or by water; therefore, to save them from destruction, men wrote the secrets of the Arts and Sciences on two “pillars of stone.” When the vengeance came, it turned out to be by water as Noah had expected, and for 365 days, he and his family lived in the Ark. With him were his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. Many years afterward, the “cronyelere telleth,” the two pillars were found; Pythagoras found one, and Hermes the other.

The Old Charges (Masonic MS, Old Constitutions, etc., they also were called), which served as a charter for the first permanent Lodges of the Freemasons, were held in great reverence; in them was this story of Noah and the pillars, and it is from this source, it is reasonable to believe, that pillar and column symbolism came to be used in Speculative Masonry; and since the use of the Arts and Sciences traced directly back to Noah’s sons who recovered their use after the Deluge, practitioners of them were sometimes called “Sons of Noah.”

The first, or 1723, edition of the Book of Constitutions of the Mother Grand Lodge touches but lightly on the story of Noah, but in the second, or 1738. edition, the whole account is changed, the Ark; itself is described as having been a Masonic masterpiece, and Noah and his three sons are described as “four Grand officers.” *“And it came to pass as they journeyed from the East of the plains of Mount Ararat, where the Ark rested toward the West, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there as Noachidae, or Sons of Noah . . .”* In a footnote, the author explains the word: *“The first name of Masons, according to some old traditions.”*

What those “old traditions” were, nobody knows because there is no evidence that Operative Freemasons called themselves by that name. But it was in some use before 1738, for in 1734,

Lord Weyrnouth ordered a letter to be sent to the Prov. Grand Master at Calcutta in which this curious statement was included: *“Providence has fixed your Lodge near those learn’d Indians that affect to be called Noachidae, the strict observance of his Precepts taught in those Parts by the Disciples of the great Zoroastres, the learned Archimagus of Bactria, a Grand Master of the Magians, whose religion is much preserved in India (which we have no concern about), and also many of the Rituals of the Ancient Fraternity used in his time, perhaps more than they are sensible of themselves. Sow if it was consistent with your other Business, to discover in those parts the Remains of Old Masonry and transmit them to us, we would be all thankful”* (A. Q. C. XI, p. 35.)

If ever “Noachidae” was in use as a name for Masons, it could not have been extensive because the word (an ugly hybrid) is rarely met with in early Lodge Alinutes or Histories; probably, such small use of it as is encountered in American Lodges in the first half of the Nineteenth Century (it is now wholly obsolete) was directly owing to the popularity here of the writings of the Rev. George Oliver who never hesitated to give to fancies out of his own mind the same weight as the verdict records of history.

There were two reasons for the place of Noah and his sons in Masonic thought and traditions. It is obvious that the writer of the Cooke MS—or rather, the author of the original of which the Cooke is a copy—had a historical problem to solve: if the Deluge destroyed everything, how were the Arts and Sciences, Geometry especially, preserved and recorded?

The story of the pillars and of the use made of them by Noah’s sons, which, as was seen, he found ready-made in a polychronicon, was his solution. Second, the story of the sons of Noah had a point to it of value for Masons who sought to make clear to their own minds the religious foundations of the Craft. If Masonry was geometry and architecture, it is as old as the world; if it existed in Noah’s time, it existed before Christianity or Judaism either; and yet it now works in Christian lands; how could a “Christian” society

have a pre-Christian origin? The answer was that under the separate religions is a ground, or fundamental, or matrix of a universal religion which consists of a belief in God, Brotherhood among men, and righteousness. Oliver himself gives one of the clearest expressions of this idea in a paragraph of his in A Dictionary of Symbolical Masonry (New York; 1855; p. 190): *“NOACHIDAE, Sons of Noah; the first name of Freemasons; whence we may observe that believing the world u as framed by one supreme God, and is governed by him, and loving and worshiping him, and honoring our parents, and loving our neighbor as ourselves; and being merciful even to brute beasts, is the oldest of all religions.”*

Not all the versions of the Old Charges contain the Noah story in the same form; the Graham MS. version, which has so many details peculiar to itself, and is really an Old Catechism more than a version of the Old Charges, gives the Noah story in a different form and reads in it a different lesson. It has the lost secrets discovered after the death of Noah rather than after the death of Hiram. In his Ahiman Rezon, or Book of Constitutions, writing as Grand Secretary for the Ancient Grand Lodge of 1751, Laurence Dermott ridicules the whole story. Still, it is only as history that he ridicules it, not as symbolism, because (to judge by such written remains of it as have survived) the Ancient Ritual connected the Great Pillars with the two “pillars” in the Cooke MS. Also, in both Ancient and Modern symbolism and in the Royal Arch, the Ark is used as an emblem. (This identification of the Ark with Noah’s Ark may be a mistake on the part of Eighteenth Century Ritualists, because before 1717, Operative Gilds kept their papers in a “coffin”—which later reappears under the name “casket,” “the Lodge,” and “ark.”)

Prior to being Widow’s Sons, Freemasons were sometimes identified as NOACHIDES or NOACHITES or “Sons of Noah.” This is further confirmed again by Mackey under the entry for NOACHIDAE (NOACHITES) in his Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences, Mackey states: *“The descendants of Noah. A term applied to Freemasons on the theory, derived from*

the Legend of the Craft that Noah was the father and founder of the Masonic system of theology. Hence the Freemasons claim to be his descendants because, in times past, they preserved the pure principles of his religion amid the corruptions of surrounding faiths. Doctor Anderson first used the word in this sense in the second edition of the Book of Constitutions: "A Mason is obliged by his tenure to observe the moral law as a true Noachida." Aside from being the Sons of Noah, the Noachides were essentially those that followed the Noachide Laws up until the time of Moses. In following the moral laws of a Freemason, Freemasons were also following the Noachide Laws and therefore were associated with the Noachides.

It is easy to see the similarities between the Noachite Legend given in the Graham Manuscript and the current Hiramic legend. Both include raising from the grave, the five points of fellowship, and the pact to record whatever was observed during the actions in an attempt to recover lost knowledge. Furthermore, the words and

actions around the grave should strike some level of familiarity with Master Masons. Given the similarities, I think one can say that the Noachite Legend was mostly transformed into the Hiramic Legend that we know today. Noah and his sons still are represented in Freemasonry in one of the Allied Masonic Degrees, in that of the "Royal Ark Mariner." Noah is also alluded to one of the emblems of a Master Mason, "The Anchor and the Ark." I think that the brethren who went through the Master Mason degree prior to when Hiram Abiff was part of it still had a profound and profoundly moving experience. I can only imagine how interesting the degree would have been to witness with Noah being the main figure. All this being said, I might be the only Freemason that is disappointed that real grip of a Master Mason isn't called: "It Stinketh." It would be a much easier explanation than Covid-19 to explain why we're now bumping elbows instead of shaking hands.

Sure, You're a Master Mason, But Are You A Fellow?

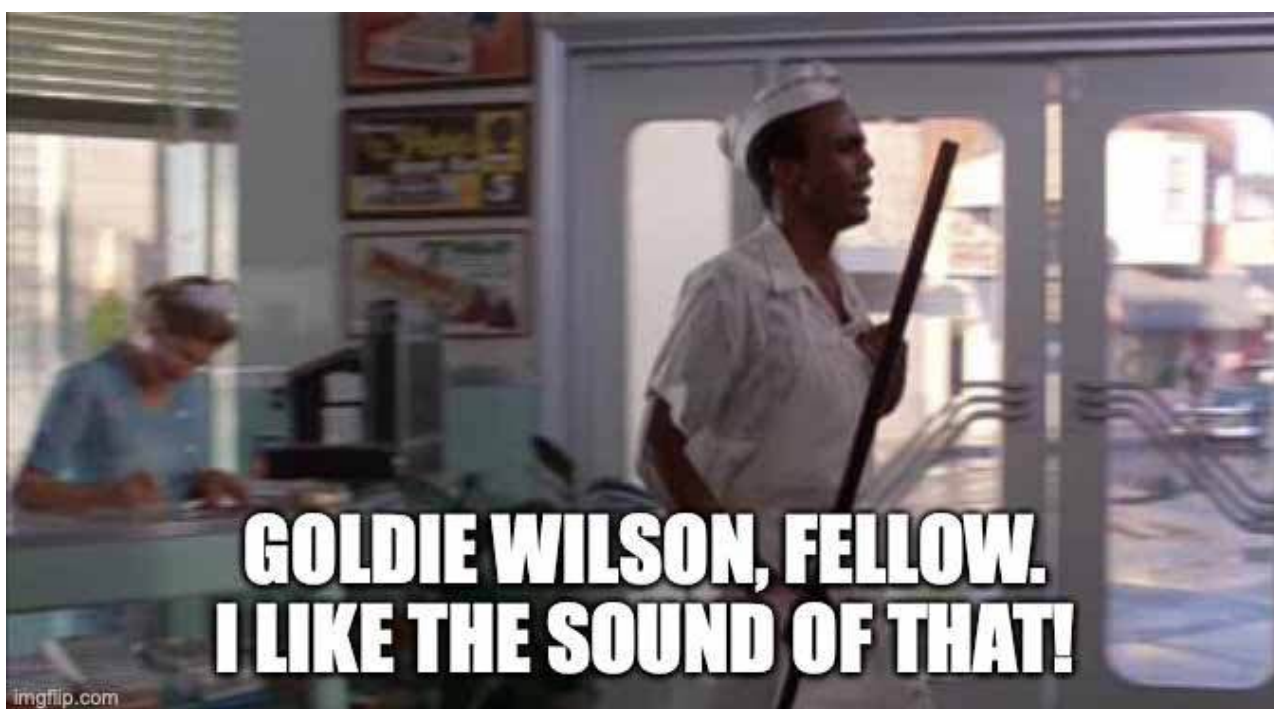
by Robert H. Johnson

Last week I decided to read a paper on the podcast, Whence Came You? In it, the author described the organization of Freemasonry in the days of our operative craftsman--when we were literally laying stones. Something that caught my eye and that I pointed out within the episode was related to the following:

In the days of our operative craft, a person became an Apprentice, and when they were good enough, they became a Master. But if they traveled and truly worked, they were a Fellow. So here we are today, three degrees in Freemasonry--Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft (Fellow of the Craft), and Master Mason.

We put all the prestige on Master Mason, don't we? In several Lodges of Research to which I belong, Illinois Lodge of Research, Kansas, California, and Missouri, becoming a Fellow means you have produced actual work. Of course, you need to be a Master Mason to join...but not everyone is a Fellow.

You don't just go to the "...big meets and big eats." as Joseph Fort Newton puts it. The Fellow has something he's done--something tangible that you can see, hold, read, and experience. With this in mind, I think "Fellowship" is something we should all strive toward. Be a Fellow.



A Guest at Your Own Funeral

by RW. Chad Lacey, 33°, Member Committee on Masonic Education



We all know the clock is ticking. It started the moment we were born. The limited nature of our lives is what makes them so valuable. The lessons of the Master Mason degree remind us of our own mortality, not only to prepare for that inevitability but also to consider the legacy we will leave behind.

The rituals of funerary rites serve several purposes for the living that remain. It provides an opportunity to celebrate the life of the person now departed. It gives us a chance to say goodbye. And perhaps most importantly, it allows us to grieve.

A eulogy is often given to proclaim the details of the life once lived, and the impressions made on those whose lives they touched. Our good manners and our sense of loss cause us to limit our comments to those that are most favorable to the deceased. We've all heard the phrase, "Don't speak ill of the dead." But the word "eulogy" comes to us from the Greek, and means 'True Words.'

What if you could be a guest at your own funeral? What words would you speak over your coffin? Would you tell the whole truth of your life, or just the most favorable parts? Imagine actually writing your own eulogy today. What would you say? If you speak the truth, then your eulogy shouldn't be that much different than the one that will be read someday.

Does the idea of someone else searching for good things to say about your life make you cringe? It's not too late to do something about it. That's one of the lessons of the 3rd degree. You still have time to set things right, but you don't have time to waste.

Think about what you would like said about your life. Consider the legacy you hope to leave and the impressions you will make on those around you. Now explore what changes you could make in your life right now, so that your reality will match your wishes.

Do you owe anyone an apology? Is there someone you need to forgive? Perhaps there are a few you should thank? Undoubtedly there are people that need to hear you love them. This is your opportunity to do those things. Before we know it, our eulogy will be read, and then it's too late. The closing phrases of the Emblems lecture in this degree are among the most beautiful of all our rituals. Our attention is called to our own feet, which slide on the precarious bank of a vast ocean, and but a few suns more, and we too will be whelmed by death's awful waves. And though we have faith in the immortality of the soul, we are still mindful of the legacy we leave behind.

The moments of our lives and the people we shared them with matter. The time we have left is all the more precious. In the simplest terms, every Mason should "Live Respected and Die Regretted." Be the kind of man and Mason you hope to be remembered as. Make sure the eulogy you will receive is one you will be proud of.



EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

Saturday, April 15th, 2023
Illinois Lodge of Research Traveling Symposium
Valley of Danville, AASR
www.TinyUrl.com/TravelingIlor



Friday-Sunday, April 28th-30th, 2023
Midwest Conference on Masonic Education
Canton Masonic Temple, Canton, Ohio
<http://www.mcme1949.org/events.html>



Saturday, April 29th, 2023
The Southeastern Masonic Education Symposium
Hillsborough Lodge No. 25 F&AM, Tampa, Florida
<https://www.h25smes.org> for more information.



Friday, July 28th - 30th
Masonic Con Kansas
Overland Park, KS
www.MasonicConKansas.com



Saturday, September 16th
Masonic Con Chicago
Libertyville, IL
www.MasonicConChicago.com



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.



