

## Greetings

What good is a message if it is never delivered? What good is a light if it is never seen? How useful is a tool if you never use it? Over the years, many have contributed to this wonderful fraternity of ours. They shared their messages; they shined their light and gave us the tools to have an organization we are proud of. The intent of this newsletter is to share the news and events of Crittenden Dry Ridge 694. We will also highlight events and Brothers from across Masonry, as we can.

### GOING FORWARD

We have a philosophy, never know until you try. Will starting discourse with Brothers across the state, help us improve? Will sharing our news, ideas, and opinions help others? Will highlighting current members who are making a difference, inspire others to do the same?

I guess we are about to find out.



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## Artificiality and the Human Experience

Four hundred thousand years ago, or so, according to anthropologists, Homo Sapiens arrived and started pondering their place in the universe. Since that time, we have reshaped the very fabric of our reality. Are we now paying for that success?

Devoid of the size, strength, speed, formidable weaponry, and defensive weaponry many other species possess, we survived by relying on each other. The human brain being our major advantage, we quickly learned, that by coordinating our actions with one another, we could defend ourselves from and hunt other apex predators. Out of this need for cooperation came the establishment of families, and from there civilization as a whole.

Fundamentally humanity hasn't changed much. Our earliest instincts, traits, and characteristics are still hardwired into our DNA. We were designed as a social creature and will always remain such. Our enemies may have changed from Woolly Mammoths to microscopic diseases, but to fight them we still must work together.

So why does it feel like our society and social institutions are failing? Why are we so isolated in a

Media and endless means of communication? What does this have to do with Masonry?

We have made an artificial world for our natural selves.

Everything about our modern world is artificial. The food we eat, full of artificial chemicals and ingredients. We spend 90 percent of our time indoors, under the glow of artificial light. The medicines we use to combat the chronic illnesses caused by are artificial diet, yes, are artificially derived from petroleum.

Even worse, most of our relationships, and interpersonal communications now days are artificial. Instead of visiting people we post pictures to an app. Instead of talking we text one another or email. Communications devoid of feeling or meaning. Even the most basic structure of civilization has been made artificial. People come together by online dating or meeting through online groups. Even the enemies we must now fight are artificial, political ideology, not the same as the monster animals and frightening diseases we once tackled.

Freemasonry has always been about creating authentic intimate brotherhood with all God's creatures. Let us help light the way!

## Lessons Learned

Look Forward, you will never reach your destination looking at past failures.

Energy is contagious, when you get active, others will follow.

Focus on the effort, not past issues. If a function fails, but you grew closer together during the preparation, it is still a success.

New brothers have new ideas and new energy. Let them try.

Masonry is about brotherhood; you cannot practice brotherhood by yourself.

Do simple things, no need for extravagance.

Just when you are worried you will have to stumble through some parts, you will find others willing to help.

Brotherhood is a plural; you cannot have it by yourself.



## Prioritizing Lodge events.

How looking forward to uniting with your brothers, builds a better experience for all. By Robby Ratliff

How often have you found yourself thinking about an up-and-coming lodge meeting? Then the day of the meeting it is nice outside and you have other things you can do? Or it's cold and the weather is just blah, you're more comfortable in your chair watching TV? Your mind starts to reason with yourself, "Well nothing is going on anyway, it is just a business meeting", or "I'm tired, been a long day, I'll just attend the next one". You may even feel remorse for not going, but your initial thought to skip wins out, and you decide not to go.

Well rest assured you are not the only one who has dealt with this issue. Sure, we all miss a meeting due to other obligations. Kids, sickness, work, out of town etc. However when we miss due to nothing important going on, that is a problem.

Freemasonry was designed to make its votaries wiser, better, and happier. A lodge that

only conducts the required business, ie, minutes and bills, doesn't exactly give its members much to look forward to, nor the incentive to attend. How can we be happy if we have nothing to look forward to?

**"Never know until you try  
If you try and you learn,  
you can never fail."**

Studies have shown our overall mental health greatly improves when we have something to look forward to. Looking forward to vacation after a long stretch of work for example. It is doubtful many will say they aren't happy anticipating such events.

Recently at a lunch with brothers from another lodge, conversation about having a pancake breakfast was brought forth by newer members. Though some of the members were against it, a motion was made and passed. The breakfast turned out very successful. Now even those originally against it are looking forward to doing the next one.

The important point was not that it was a success. The success lies in taking the idea of a new brother and trying it. The worst we can do is say no to those brothers who have ideas they want to try. Could they fail? Absolutely. But they will certainly fail if we never try, or worse, do not support them in trying.

Having something to look forward to at lodge is not hard. It requires just an idea and a little effort. It can be contagious too. Other brothers are wanting something to look forward to as well. Having activities at the lodge fosters teamwork and encourages brotherhood. Something as simple as pizza and a card game once a month outside of the lodge meeting can raise morale of those who attend, not to mention the fun of talking smack and seeing who the card sharks of the lodge are.

Consider having education at the lodge meeting. Do it before the business part of the meeting. It does not have to be hard. Pick a subject and start a discussion. Someone in lodge will have something to discuss.

If underwater basket weaving is your thing, bring it up and discuss it. That's how others learn by discussing and sharing. Most importantly you will learn from each other and grow closer doing it. It's something to look forward to at the next meeting.

Use your lodge! A building sitting there unused is a waste. Go to your lodge and hang out. Do a little work while you're there. Other brothers may see you and stop by. It is a perfect time to have a conversation and get to know one another more. Do it as often as time allows and eventually brothers will look forward to stopping by the lodge, just to see one another. Ideas are generated by us being together.

Travel as a lodge! Some of the best moments as masons are spent traveling together. Visit other lodges. Go to other venues outside of masonry. Go fishing together, come back to the lodge and tell them about all the whoppers you caught, even if you didn't catch a thing. It builds anticipation for future travels.

If we come up with ideas and spend time together working on them, we will grow both as a lodge and as individuals. With growth comes more ideas and more things to look forward to. We can't look forward if we are always looking backwards. Stop worrying about the things that didn't work. Look forwards to the things you will try. If we never try, we will never have the opportunity to succeed or fail. We will go on continuing to assume it is not important, and reasoning with ourselves about

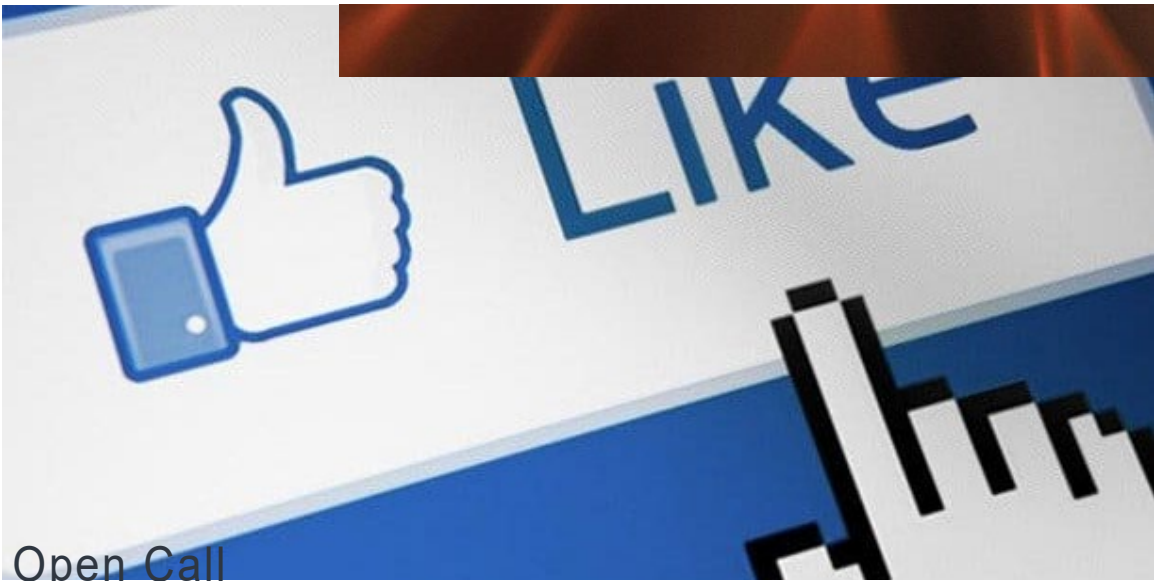
going to a meeting where nothing important is going on. Therefore, we will have nothing to look forward to.

## We want to hear from you!

Your voice is important. At CDR we believe that each member of this fraternity has something to offer. If you would like to submit anything we would love to hear from you! Not a great writer, but have something to say, don't worry, neither are we, but we will help in any way we can.

Going forward our format may change some. If a submission doesn't fit the boundaries of this newsletter, we may publish it as a plain paper along with the newsletter.

As my favorite song says, "We're all in this thing together." If any of our topics resonate with you, and you would like to use them for education, or you need a speaker, CDR 694 is here for you. Reach out via our website and get in touch.



## Open Call

Sometimes a little introspection is a good thing. While our Fraternity does many great things, there are a few where we lack. One of the worst is in engagement. 80 members on your roster, 6 show up. 6 show up but only 2 or 3 do all the work to keep the lodge functioning. Try to have an event and must beg for help to pull it off. Confer a degree and rely on other lodges to fill in parts.

How about as others post events or announcements to social media? Many groups have hundreds of members, yet each post is only

met with a couple thumbs up. Maybe a comment or two at most. There are 25 thousand masons in this state, and all outreach is met with a less than tepid response.

Our predecessors put out a newspaper article or passed info by word of mouth, and there are many pictures where hundreds and even thousands showed up. Some of our older members even remember those days.

Our motto is not Faith, Hope, and Apathy. And while it is impossible for any one mason to attend all the

events masonry offers, we must do a better job of supporting our brothers.

At the end of the day, how hard is it to give a thumbs up, if nothing else to encourage each other? Maybe a comment.

A simple truth that underpins our universe, is that energy creates action. Put gas in a car, unleash its potential energy, and the car moves. Simple analogy, but simple point. Our forefathers expended enormous energy to create the organization we have today, and she's hurting today because we can't muster the energy to hit a button on a screen.

## Up Next at CDR Regular Communication

March 8<sup>th</sup> is our next regular scheduled communication. Education is open to all.

If you need directions, please visit [www.cdr694.com](http://www.cdr694.com).

## District Meeting District 19

District 19 annual meeting will be March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, at Trinity Lodge in Newport.

This will be a combined meeting of Districts 18 and 19. Meal will commence at 6:30pm, meeting will be at 7:30pm.

Any questions please reach out to District Deputy Grand Master Jake Fields.

## Fellowcraft Degree April Communication

At our April Communication, on the 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be passing at least two EAs to the degree of Fellowcraft. This will be our Education for that meeting.

## This Month's Masonic Spotlight

### David Cooper English 622 Carrollton 134

Hoosier Favorite mason! David was initiate into our fraternity in 2019 and raised in 2021 at his home lodge English 622. If that doesn't sound familiar, well it's in Indiana. In David's travel for more light he finally found his way to the Promised Land and became a plural member of Carrollton Lodge, where he currently sits as Senior Warden.

Aside from that he is also the sitting master at English, and a Grand Lodge of Indiana Ritual instructor for

David is often seen around many degrees as he is always eager to help.





## Suggestions

We are always looking to improve. If you would like to make a suggestion, please reach out to us, in person, via text, or on the web! We're pretty easy to find!

## Upcoming Events

- **March 8th**  
Regular Stated Communication, Education is open to everyone, Meeting is Master Mason Only. 9 Am
- **March 21st**  
District 18 and 19 District Meeting Trinity Lodge, Newport. 6:30 Meal 7:30 Meeting.
- **April 12**  
Regular stated communication. 9:00am. Conferral of Fellowcraft Degree