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The Lyceum

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The Committee on Masonic Education

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Brethren,

Welcome to the October 2026 edition of The Lyceum! As autumn takes full hold across Illinois, the crisp air brings with it a familiar season of gathering, reflection, and purposeful labor. This issue arrives at a special time on our Masonic calendar as we prepare to convene for the 187th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of the State of Illinois in Springfield. I hope to see many of you there sharing in fellowship, attending the annual presentation hosted by the Illinois Lodge of Research, and celebrating the enduring strength of our jurisdiction.

This month, our contributors have outdone themselves by weaving together a rich tapestry of thought that strikes at the very heart of who we are as Masons.

We begin with an inspiring message from our Chairman, W:. Dr. Bernard Davis Jr., who challenges us to consider what it takes to step beyond comfort and engage in meaningful transformation. Building on those themes, WB:. Greg Knott offers a deeply moving reflection on duty, sacrifice, and the quiet anchor that keeps us grounded in changing times. WB:. Darin A. Lahners takes us on an inventive journey through a modern hero's path, drawing striking parallels between timeless archetypes and our own degree experiences. Bro. Kaleem Kamboj provides a richly detailed historical and symbolic deep dive into the art of rebuilding, reminding us that true growth is an ongoing, lifelong practice. Finally, RWB:. Chad M. Lacek shares a remarkably personal and candid narrative on character formation, exploring how our gentle Craft helps us move beyond simple rules to discover genuine self-governance.

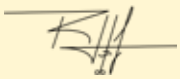
Each of these writers put immense heart, discipline, and research into their pieces without giving away an ounce of the Light you'll uncover when reading them in full. Please join me in extending our heartfelt praise and gratitude to all of our authors for their hard work and dedication to Masonic education. A special thank you also goes out to Chairman Davis for his steadfast leadership and guidance on the Committee.

As you travel to Springfield for Grand Lodge, I wish you safe journeys, vibrant conversations, and a wonderful time enjoying the Annual Communication. May the month of October bring warmth to your homes, harmony to your Lodges, and peace to your spirits.

Be safe, be well, and enjoy the issue!

Fraternally yours,

RWB:. Robert H. Johnson, PDDGM, FILOR



Editor-in-Chief, The Lyceum

Committee on Masonic Education, Grand Lodge of Illinois AF&AM

From the Chairman's Desk

by WB:. Dr. Bernard Davis Jr., Chairman- Masonic Education Committee

THE COURAGE TO CHANGE

Brethren,

As we continue our steady labor in the quarries of self improvement, I invite us this month to reflect on a virtue that is essential to every Mason who seeks true growth, the courage to change. Our Craft teaches improvement, yet improvement is never passive. It requires the willingness to examine ourselves honestly, to release habits that no longer serve us, and to embrace new ways of thinking and living. Change demands courage, for it asks us to step beyond what is familiar and comfortable, and into the unfolding work of transformation.

The courage to change begins with clarity. It calls us to see ourselves without illusion, to acknowledge the patterns that hold us back, and to recognize the opportunities that call us forward. This courage is not loud or dramatic, it is quiet and steady. It is the inner resolve that allows a man to say, I can do better, I can be better, I can grow beyond what I have been. When we cultivate this courage, we open the door to deeper Light, and we allow the Great Architect to shape us more fully according to the divine pattern.

In leadership, the courage to change is indispensable. It reminds us that authority does not excuse stagnation, and that wisdom is not found in clinging to old assumptions simply because they are familiar. A leader who possesses this courage listens carefully, adapts thoughtfully, and acts with conviction. He understands that leadership is not the preservation of comfort, but the stewardship of progress. He is willing to adjust his course when necessary, to refine his approach when beneficial, and to welcome new ideas that strengthen the Lodge and enrich the Brotherhood.

In our Lodges, the courage to change strengthens harmony. It helps us release pride, soften rigid opinions, and approach disagreements with patience and openness. It guides us to consider how our traditions can inspire growth rather than restrict it, and how our fellowship can evolve without losing its essence. When we embrace change with courage, we create a Lodge environment where innovation is welcomed, where improvement is celebrated, and where every Brother feels empowered to contribute to the ongoing work of building a stronger and more vibrant Craft.

And in our personal journeys, the courage to change keeps us aligned with the Light we seek. It teaches us that transformation is not a single moment, but a continual process. It reminds us that the work of refining our character requires perseverance, humility, and faith. Change is the chisel that shapes the rough ashlar into something more refined, more purposeful, and more worthy of the Great Architect's design. When we find the courage to change, we discover new strength, new clarity, and new depth within ourselves.

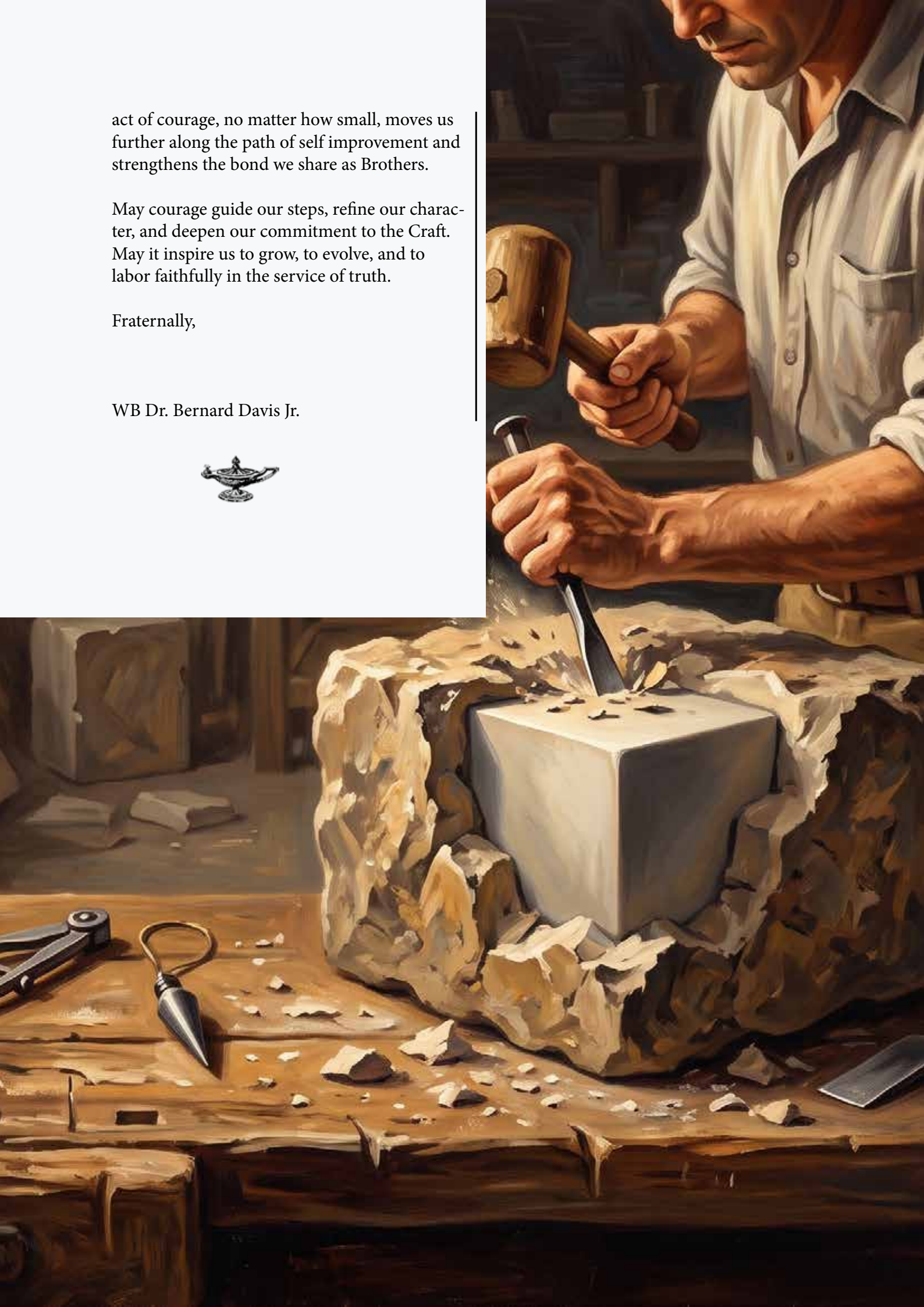
As we move forward this month, I encourage each of us to practice the courage to change intentionally. Let us examine our habits with honesty, our assumptions with humility, and our decisions with sincerity. Let us be willing to release what no longer serves our growth, and to embrace what leads us closer to the Light. Let us remember that every

act of courage, no matter how small, moves us further along the path of self improvement and strengthens the bond we share as Brothers.

May courage guide our steps, refine our character, and deepen our commitment to the Craft. May it inspire us to grow, to evolve, and to labor faithfully in the service of truth.

Fraternally,

WB Dr. Bernard Davis Jr.



Does Character Still Matter?

by Bro. Greg Knott, 33`

Editor Note: These remarks were given by Greg Knott at the 106th Memorial Day Observance at the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery in Homer, Illinois on May 26, 2025.

Today, as we gather to honor the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation, I want to talk about something deeply intertwined with their service: character. And I want to ask a simple, but profound question: Does character still matter?

Why do I ask this question today, on Memorial Day?

Memorial Day is more than just a day off; it's a time to reflect. It's a time to remember those who stood tall in the face of adversity, who displayed courage when fear was overwhelming, and who held onto integrity when it would have been easier to compromise. Their actions speak of a character forged in commitment and fueled by a sense of duty. Let me tell the story of one such individual who displayed character and has a cenotaph marker here in the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery. William Louis Slayton was born October 6, 1922 in Fithian the son of James Calvin Slayton and Flora McClellan Slayton. After graduating from Homer high school in 1940, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in October 1940, about a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was first stationed in Iceland and in 1942 was transferred to the south Pacific. There he fought in the ferocious battles at Guadalcanal and Tarawa.

While serving with Company F, 6th Marines, 2nd Marine Division he took part in

the Battle of Mariana Islands. The Battle of the Mariana Islands was a significant campaign during World War II, occurring from June to November 1944, where U.S. forces aimed to capture the Mariana Islands, including Saipan, Guam, and Tinian, from Japanese control. This campaign was crucial as it allowed the U.S. to establish air bases for strategic bombing missions against Japan, ultimately contributing to the Allied victory in the Pacific.

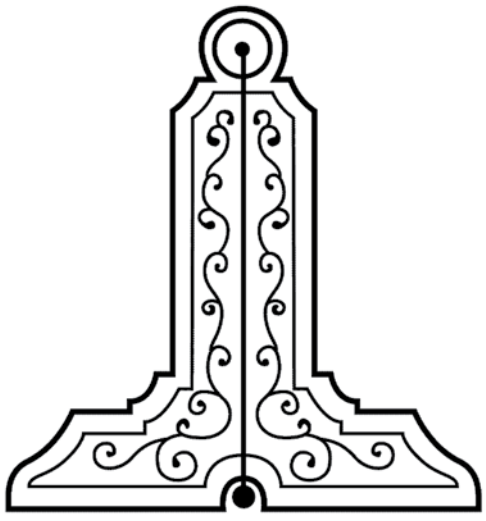
Sgt. Slayton's parents received a letter from their son dated June 6, 1944, where he wrote that he was on a ship headed to a location he could not disclose. A few weeks later, his parents received a telegram that no one wanted to receive. On June 14, 1944, Sgt. Slayton was killed in action in Marianas Islands in Saipan. He was temporarily buried in the 2nd Division Marine Cemetery and was later moved to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific and laid to rest on June 15, 1949.

So what does the sacrifice of Sgt. Slayton and thousands of others mean as we observe Memorial Day 2025? We often think of courage as facing bullets on a battlefield, but it's also the courage to stand up for what's right, the courage to be honest, and the courage to care for others. Integrity means upholding our values even when no one is watching. Resilience is about getting back up when we fall. And compassion? It's about seeing the humanity in everyone around us. These are the building blocks of strong character.

So, does it still matter? Absolutely. Perhaps now more than ever. In our world of rapid change and complex challenges, character provides a steady anchor. It builds trust within our communities, it inspires ethical leadership, and it fosters a sense of stability. On a personal level, strong character leads to fulfillment, stronger relationships, and the resilience we need to overcome life's hurdles. In today's world, character manifests as ethical decision-making, active civic responsibility, and empathy. When we honor those who served, we're not just remembering their sacrifice; we're acknowledging the values they lived by. We can honor their memory by striving to embody those same virtues in our own lives. By being better people, we honor the best in them.

Philippians 4:8-9 (CSB) says -
Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable — if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy — dwell on these things. 9 Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

In closing, let me affirm that character mattered deeply to those we honor today, and it matters just as much now. As we reflect on their sacrifices, let us also recommit ourselves to cultivating strong character, both for our own sake and for the sake of the nation they served.



A Life Changing Obligation

by Robert H. Johnson, FILOR

"Cold Turkey", that's what we call it when we have to stop doing something immediately, whether for the benefit of health or any other reason. Seldom do we think about it in terms of behaviors. But that's just what happens to some of us.

As a man in today's society, and let's face it, it is a huge society, almost eight-billion people world wide, you would think that there isn't much examination on any one particular person. After all, we just blend in right? Wrong. People see us and we influence more people than you would think.

When we think about all the things we do on a daily basis, the things we say--the words "You kiss you mother with that mouth?" may ring a bell. What about social media? All to often there are people posting about things less than gentlemanly and in an all to frequent occurrence. But then, we hear the call, Freemasonry beckons us, calls us and pulls us in.

Upon being brought to light and being made a Master Mason, we must flip a switch, like a snap of the fingers to start acting better, to start being mindful and to show the virtues that we as a fraternity exemplify and that the public has seen since time immemorial. We must in a certain respect, change our behavior "Cold Turkey".

We are a fraternity of men who in fact do, "*make good men better*", and of course this is a constant work in progress, no one is perfect. But the obligations we take as Master Masons are certainly life changing. I know, as a social media user, the all to powerful call to post something which I find hilarious but perhaps may be offensive or rude to some and the real power is to conform to that obligation we took upon ourselves and to be the better man you promised you would be.

"*Self-control is the chief element in self-respect, and self-respect is the chief element in courage.*"
-Thucydides

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Masonry and Courage

Originally published on the website of Ancient Baltimore Lodge #234 AF&AM: Jan 18, 2021

by David R. Sandy, PM,
Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 116
A. F. & A. M. of Maryland

The Application of Courage in its Many Forms

Freemasonry teaches us to practice the four Cardinal Virtues which are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. While these virtues have been written about for thousands of years, they are as relevant today as when Plato taught them. This article zeroes in on fortitude which is another word for courage.

An examination of courage is incomplete without also examining "*fear*". Indeed these two are linked. Our Masonic lessons teach us that this virtue is "*equally distant from rashness and cowardice*." This phrase tells us that courage is not fearlessness. Neither is being afraid the single mark of a coward. The fearless man is reckless and foolish, while the man who lets fear conquer him is a coward. It is the man who faces down his fears who is courageous and has fortitude.

Courage is a virtue that is difficult to simply define. Dictionary definitions may couple courage with intrepid boldness and daring. If we look closely at courage, we find that, there are different types. Here are a few for us to consider and examples of what courage looks

like in today's world:

The first that comes to mind is Physical Courage which we also call bravery or valor. This is personified by the soldier charging across the battlefield or the firefighter who enters the burning building. Those who perform heroic deeds are well known for their physical courage. Freemason Audie Murphy received the Medal of Honor for his heroism. Hollywood movies and best selling books shower us with examples of physical courage or the lack thereof. Consider the Cowardly Lion in the Wizard of Oz, James Bond, Harry Potter and John Wayne. In the Holy Scriptures we read about David and Goliath. All are examples of physical courage. Yet possessing physical courage alone is no guarantee of a virtuous man. Didn't, Jesse James. Al Capone, John Dillinger and Darth Vader have physical courage?

Although many Freemasons are soldiers, policemen and firefighters, a large number are not called upon to guard the perimeter, risk their lives to save and protect others or defend liberty and property at home and overseas. To understand this virtue more deeply and appreciate its significance in our lives more thoroughly, we must make a closer examination of the other forms of courage.

Perseverance is the courage to be determined or steadfast; to stick with a purpose and to be discontent with merely holding ground. It means continually striving to move forward, even in times of failure and setback. Our Brother, President Theodore Roosevelt speaks of this kind of courage in his Citizen in a Republic speech where he describes the man in the arena, The man "*whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again, (the man) who spends himself in a worthy cause*."

Every Mason faces obstacles in life. He has the choice to conquer the obstacle or to give up and quit. Undeniably, giving up on mastering a video game is not the same as giving up on fighting cancer. So what does perseverance look like? By considering this question, an answer emerges: Does it take perseverance to increase Lodge attendance, serve as care-giver to an aged or handicapped parent or spouse, provide food baskets to the needy, convince a Lodge membership to raise their dues, raise an autistic child or start up a business?

Moral courage is the ability to face ethical challenges. This is the Mason who holds onto his convictions when his values are put to the test. When a Mason puts ethics into action, he is showing moral courage. Also, when he stands up for a moral principle, when others are standing aside. While others may choose an aloof detachment from the issues, the Mason with moral courage takes a stand. This is not merely whistle blowing, which is a relatively quick action. Moral courage involves ongoing integrity exercised with poise, and serving as a role model for others to emulate.

Social Courage – This is the quality of being comfortable in our own skin, standing tall, being the first to offer a handshake and greeting. Not being a slave to conformance to the expectations of others. Being one's self at the risk of social disapproval. The ability to express opinions without checking to see if they are in line with others' preferences. Standing firm against destructive peer pressure. Being the man who steps up and stands out when it is so comfortable to sit back and blend in. Social courage is speaking one's mind, even though their voice is quivering.

Another element of this multi-faceted virtue is Spiritual Courage. The obvious example of its practice is a Mason's welcoming of the Grim Tyrant, but there is more. Consider the spiritual courage needed when explaining

death to a young child. How about the courage to have faith? Or the fortitude to let go of needing to control all things in our lives. What does spiritual courage look like in a fragmented world, divided by sectarianism, intolerance, hatred and greed? Imagine the Mason who has friends who practice a faith other than his own. Isn't a Mason taught to practice sharing rather than hoarding? Consider the Mason who asks questions about other religions and is tolerant of other men's beliefs.

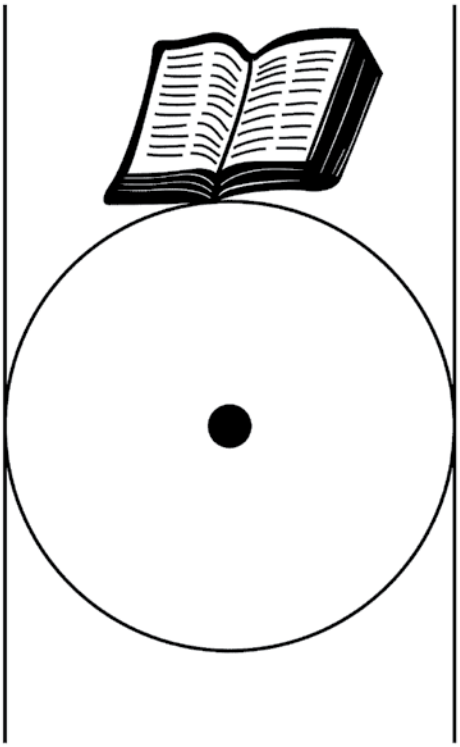
The final component of this subject is Intellectual Courage, which is the willingness to face new ideas and to solve problems. Also, the willingness to be curious, check facts, ask questions and even make mistakes. This is the courage it takes to do something, even if it might be incorrect. Said another way, it is risk-taking daring and decisiveness.

The Mason with intellectual courage takes as long as necessary to gain a thorough understanding of a subject and is not satisfied with a superficial overview. He listens intently and considers other's points of view. He seeks out opposing positions on issues. The Mason with intellectual courage is not afraid to say, "Can you please explain that to me again?"

Facing new ideas is generally coupled with change. Throughout history, Freemasons have been at the forefront of political and social changes. Freemasonry provided an atmosphere for free thought, where intellectual courage could be exercised. Those earlier Brothers of ours tested their ideas in the safety of their Lodges, then took great personal risks by sharing their innovations with the world. They introduced new governments, new philosophies and new ways of living. What was accomplished by Masons then, can be accomplished by Masons today through intellectual courage.

Indeed, our Masonic lesson on fortitude provides us with a lot to contemplate.
In closing, consider this thoughtful truth , appropriate not only in this discussion of fortitude, but also to our human condition in general, as men and as Masons:

Regardless of where in life we are challenged and despite all consequences for the risks we accept in following our convictions or overcoming life's obstacles, we must each decide on the path we take. The courageous actions of others may inspire us, instruct us and offer examples for emulation, still the courage to act on our decisions comes from within and each of us must look into our soul and then apply it.



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2ND AND 4TH
WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH

Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes
(Turn and face the strange)

by WB Darin Lahners FILOR

One of the inherent themes of our Masonic Degrees is change. One can look at the progression of the degrees representing the journey from youth to old age as the progression of time. One can think of the transformation of the rough ashlar to the perfect one as metamorphic change. Ultimately the symbolism behind being raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason is the penultimate representation of this.
But what isn't inherent about the lessons of our degrees is the idea that change requires hard work and discipline. Our degrees talk about laboring in our quarries, but without that common gavel to break off the rough and superfluous aspects of our living stones, what is that labor? Can a stone be shaped without the tools to shape them or the effort to use these tools? It is one thing to state that you are going to change, but it is another to undertake the journey to make that change.

One of the presentations that I give is titled "*Harry Potter and Freemasonry.*" (Shameless Plug). Within the presentation I discuss the idea of the Hero's Journey. In mythology, the mono-myth or hero's journey is the common template of a broad category of storytelling that involves a hero who goes on an adventure and returns a changed individual. Originally put forward in Joseph Campbell's "The Hero with a Thousand Faces", the mono-myth can be seen illustrated time and time again in Hollywood and popular novels. The mono-myth or hero's journey is applied quite well to the journey that Harry Potter takes in each of his books, as well as the overall series.

For the presentation, I use an adaptation of it made by Christopher Vogler. Christopher Vogler adapted the mono-myth into 12 steps. As I mentioned, each of the Potter books (and movies) follows this formula, but for the purposes of the presentation, I use it to follow the plot of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's (Sorcerer's) Stone. I then draw parallels to the degrees.

The 12 steps can be summarized best below:

ACT 1: Departure
- The ordinary world
- The call to adventure
- Refusal of the call
- Meeting with the mentor
- Crossing the threshold to the special world.

ACT 2: Initiation

- Tests, allies and enemies
- Approach to the inmost cave
- The ordeal
- Reward

ACT 3: Return

- The road back
- The resurrection
- Return with the elixir

ACT 1: DEPARTURE

The ordinary world – This is where the hero exists before his adventure begins. The hero is oblivious to the adventure to come. In general, this part of the mono-myth humanizes the hero so that we can identify better with them and empathize with them during their journey.

Harry Potter lives in the cupboard in the ordinary Muggle—or non-magic—world. Masonically, this would be a candidate prior to petitioning a lodge.

The call to adventure – The hero's adventure begins when they receive a call to action. This could be a threat to their safety, their family, or way of life in general. It could be as Dramatic as Luke Skywalker being shown the distress message from Leia Organa in Star Wars: A New Hope or as mundane as receiving a phone call. Harry receives (many, many) invitations to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Masonically, this would happen when a candidate first thinks about joining the fraternity. For some of us, it could have been a friend or peer discussing Masonry. For others, it would have been a Father or Grandfather who was a Mason. Ultimately though, there is usually some circumstance which makes the candidate interested in joining Freemasonry.

Refusal of the call – The hero has second thoughts about going on the adventure. Normally the Hero will have second thoughts or be conflicted about going, often refusing the call because it's easier to sit at home and do nothing than to undertake a perilous journey.

Initially, Harry doesn't even believe that there is a wizarding world and briefly wonders whether his mean-spirited aunt and uncle had planned this all as a joke.

This would be the candidate prior to petitioning the lodge. They might be interested in joining, but ultimately as I said, it is easier to stay at home.

Meeting with the mentor – It's at this crucial point where the Hero needs some guidance and meets a mentor figure that gives him something that they need. They could be given some item, advice, training or self-confidence. The mentor's role is to provide the Hero with the power to overcome his refusal of the call, and help the hero begin his quest.

Hagrid brings Harry to Diagon Alley to find his required supplies for wizard school (which was no easy feat, considering the hidden magic entryways and other obstacles!). This serves as his first introduction to the wizarding world

Ultimately, this would be when a candidate petitions the lodge. They either meet with a mentor or peer, or meet with several. The candidate is ultimately given the information that was needed to make them heed their call, and to petition the lodge.

Crossing the threshold to the special world. – The Hero is now ready to begin their adventure. They may go willingly, or not, but they ultimately move from the world which is comfortable to one which is mysterious.

This action ends ACT 1 and signifies the hero's commitment to the adventure.
From Hagrid, Harry had learned the truth about his parents' deaths and the story behind the scar on his forehead—a story that will shape his entire existence in the magical world. As the summer holiday ended, Harry boarded the Hogwarts Express to enter what had been his parents' world, the world to which he rightfully belonged.

In Freemasonry, The candidate literally undergoes this transition upon knocking three times at the door of the preparation room. They are in darkness and must commit their self to their ultimate quest, receiving the degrees of Freemasonry. They knock upon that door and once they are admitted, they cross the threshold from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

ACT 2: INITIATION

Tests, allies and enemies – The hero is confronted with a series of challenges. Obstacles are thrown in their path, and the hero must overcome them as they journey toward their ultimate goal. The hero finds out who they can trust, who they can't and they are prepared for the challenges ahead as well. Each obstacle helps us gain insight into the hero's character, and helps us identify with them. Harry faces his first test at The Sorting Ceremony and chooses to align himself with the House of Gryffindor even though the Sorting Hat said he could rise to greatness through Slytherin (the house that developed the dark wizard who killed his parents). This choice immediately determines Harry's allies—and enemies—within Hogwarts walls and beyond.

In Freemasonry, This takes place upon the candidate's first entrance into the lodge. They are received in due form and is challenged by the Senior Deacon. They are lead around the lodge by the Senior Deacon and interrogated by the Junior and Senior Warden. They are also led to the Worshipful Master, who does the same.
Approach To The Inmost Cave - The inmost cave represents the location of the Hero's ultimate challenge. As the hero approaches the cave, they may again face some doubts regarding their adventure. They may need to think about the next step, and ultimately find the strength to continue.

Harry, Hermione, and Ron decide to go on their first magical adventure together, to keep Professor Snape (who they are convinced has nefarious intentions) from stealing the Sorcerer's Stone, which provides the wielder with unlimited riches and eternal life…including to Lord Voldemort, who had been ripped from his body when his attempt on Harry's life had failed.

For the candidate, this is when they make their turn to the East, their feet forming the angle of a square, standing erect before the altar. They are once again challenged to insure that their choice to approach the altar remains the same as before.

Ordeal – The penultimate conflict that the hero faces upon their journey. It might be a physical test of strength against an enemy, or a battle of wits. The hero must draw upon everything they have learned up until now to survive the challenge. Basically, the hero undergoes a life – changing event and comes out of it a better person.

Harry, Hermione, and Ron overcome the numerous magical obstacles blocking them from retrieving the Sorcerer's Stone: but narrowly! From a three-headed dog (affectionately christened "Fluffy" by none other than Hagrid…) to murderous flora and poisoned vials, the trio faces death at every turn along the way.

Now, ultimately the oaths that a candidate

takes invoke a promise of physical harm if they knowingly give away the secrets of Masonry. I think the ordeal that the candidate undergoes is an internal one, and one that they must deal with daily going forward. The process of being brought from darkness to light is a metaphorical and philosophical ordeal. It's a challenge to the candidate to live your life one way going forward or face penalties for not doing so. Ultimately, you are facing yourself in battle when you take your obligation, because you are forced to choose to live by the promises you swore, or to not. You might be tested by your promises daily, or maybe never, but you always must be aware of what they are and to honor them. Being a Freemason is a full-time job because when you represent yourself going forward, you also represent your brethren. That is the ordeal we must face not only during our obligation, but also by trying to live it daily.

Reward (Seizing the Sword) – After overcoming the adversity of the ordeal, the hero is transformed into a new state. They are battle-tested and often end up with an item of great importance as a reward. The reward might be an object of great power, or a secret, greater knowledge, or reuniting with a loved one. In all cases, the reward prepares the hero for the final leg of their journey back to the ordinary world.

With Ron and Hermione having risked their lives to get Harry safely through each potentially deadly challenge, Harry dashes into the last chamber just in time to battle for the Stone—with the fate of the entire wizarding world hanging in the balance.

Ultimately, the reward given to a candidate is the password, grip or token, due guard and sign, how to wear their apron and their working tools, as well as the explanatory lectures and charges for that degree. Everything that happens after the obligation in the 1st and 2nd degrees, after the obligation to the second section in the 3rd, and after the second section of the 3rd degree, is a reward to the candidate. They are imparted with knowledge and wisdom that they did not have prior to their entry into the lodge. They were in darkness and were brought to light both literally and metaphorically. In our case the reward is the lessons on how to act like a member of our fraternity both while in lodge and out of lodge in the form of the charges given to the candidate.

ACT 3: RETURN

The road back – this represents a retracing of the hero's steps in reverse order from Crossing the Threshold to receiving the call to adventure. As the hero's journey draws to an end, they are now worried about adjusting back to an ordinary life in the ordinary world. However, the journey is not yet over. There are still potential challenges to overcome, and there might be a moment where the hero must choose between personal objectives or to answer a higher cause. The best example of this would be in The Matrix, where Neo chooses to save Morpheus from the agents with the help of Trinity. This was foreshadowed by the Oracle telling him that he'd have to choose his life over that of Morpheus's.

As Harry walks into the final chamber where the Stone is hidden, he encounters Professor Quirrell (not Professor Snape like he had expected) and discovers that Lord Voldemort has possessed the professor's body to steal the Stone and kill Harry. Using Quirrell's body, Voldemort fights Harry for the Stone, and while he fails, Quirrell's body is destroyed—and Harry nearly dies in the struggle.

In the 3rd degree, this would be represented by the candidate's journey beset with the 3 ruffians, whereby they try to pry the secrets

of a Master Mason from them.

Resurrection – This is the climax of the hero having to face his final and most difficult encounter with death. The final battle represents something far greater than the Hero's own existence with the consequences being the fate of the world or universe which hang in the balance. Ultimately the hero will vanquish evil and save the day and will be reborn either literally or metaphorically. Think of Luke destroying the Death Star, or Neo becoming the "*One*".

Harry wakes up in the hospital days later, when Dumbledore tells Harry more about his parents and explains that he is not alone in the world: he has always had the ancient magic of his mother's love and sacrifice to protect him.

Applied to Freemasonry, I think this is self-explanatory to those that have gone through the 3rd degree. It is a deeply moving and profound ceremony which transforms the candidate.

Return with the Elixir – This is the final stage of the Hero's journey. The hero returns to the Ordinary World changed. They will have grown as a person due to their experiences. They will obtain a final reward, which is either literal or metaphoric. There is a resolution for the hero, but also his allies and detractors. Ultimately, the hero is back to where they started, and nothing will ever be the same for them.

Harry is publicly recognized by Professor Dumbledore and is subsequently awarded house points for his bravery. The semester ends and he returns to the muggle world, armed with the support and love from the wizarding world he now calls home.

The candidate's journey is also complete for now. They are now raised as Master Mason. They have received some final instructions, tokens, words. They are given a voice in the affairs of their lodge by gaining the ability to vote, wear a Masonic ring, and begin a new journey to the East, and join appendant bodies.

If you've read closely, then you realize that the hero's journey is a transformative one. For Freemasons, it represents transforming ourselves from the profane world and stepping into the world of Freemasonry. While it is applicable to our journey through each degree, the ideas presented throughout it can be applied to our journey through life.

Built Twice

by Brother Kaleem Kamboj, 32˚

"The equinoctial days, in the months of March and September, in memory of the Temple having been built twice."
— McClenachan, The Book of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite

I. The Fords of Jordan

The men coming down to the river are tired, and they want only to get across. The Gileadites hold the fords of the Jordan, and every man who asks to pass is given a single word to say. The word is shibboleth. In Hebrew it means an ear of grain, and in another sense a stream in flood: grain standing beside running water. It is a harvest word, then, and a fitting one to carry into October.

The men of Ephraim know the word perfectly well. They simply cannot say it. The book of Judges gives the whole difficulty in a single line: "he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right." Those who cannot say it do not cross.

What captures me, whenever I return to the story, is where the difficulty lies. Nobody at those fords lacked information. The Ephraimites were not ignorant of the word; they were held back by a habit so deep they could not hear it in themselves. Their knowledge was complete, and their tongues were still Ephraimite. A lifetime of speech had settled in the mouth, and it would not be argued out in the one moment when everything depended on it. Thaddeus Mason Harris, who served as Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, understood how such habits take hold. "There is observable in human nature a peculiar proneness to imitation," he told his brethren. "*Hence some of our earliest habits are formed*." We copy those we admire, and those we merely stand beside: "*We assimulate to our associates, imbibe their opinions, and imitate their conduct: We even take their mode of speech and tone of voice.*" That is the Ephraimite condition exactly. Most of what we would need to change in ourselves we never chose, and so it does not feel like a habit at all. It feels like the way things are said.

When Charles T. McClenachan compiled the cere-

monies of the Scottish Rite for the Northern Jurisdiction, our own, he set Milton's couplet on the Shibboleth at the head of the ceremony for constituting a new Lodge of Perfection, the first of the Rite's bodies. I have often wondered why he chose it for the threshold of a lodge's life. The best answer I can give is that a lodge, like a man, begins to grow on the day it learns to hear itself.

So the courage to change begins somewhere humbler than the phrase suggests. Before a man can abandon an old habit or an old assumption, he must first catch it in his own mouth.

II. The Old Skin

On midsummer's day in 1796, the festival of St John the Baptist, Harris preached to King Solomon's Lodge in Charlestown on a text from Matthew, "*be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves,*" and gave much of the sermon to what a Mason might learn from the least-loved creature in Scripture. Among the lessons was this: "*It is observed of serpents that they cast off their old skins in the spring, and a new one succeeds them, and they grow, as it were young again.*" In a footnote he adds the remark of Epiphanius that the serpent, in shedding its skin, puts off its old age.

Harris draws the first application quickly: we ought "*to throw aside our rough exterior.*" Then he reaches deeper. The shedding, he says, recalls "*that moral renovation of life*" which religion enjoins, and he gives Freemasonry's version of it in words every Mason will recognise: "*three stages of advance, from unformed roughness to complete perfection.*" The rough ashlar, the stone as it comes from the quarry; the stone under the gavel; the perfect ashlar, squared and fit for the builder's use. Addressing a brother newly advanced to the second degree, that of Fellowcraft, he put it more plainly still: by the working tools, "*you will learn to reduce rude matter into form, and rude manners into the more polished shape of moral and religious rectitude.*"

But notice the season. The serpent sheds in spring, when the old skin has nothing left to protect. Our own occasions for change seldom come so kindly. They come in autumn, when a habit is fully grown and has borne its fruit, and we have lived inside it long enough to mistake it for ourselves. That is why change asks for courage and not merely for resolution. One of the Scottish Rite's philosophical lectures says so without ornament: "*If change should be called death, we die and are born again every day; for every day our forms change.*" What we hesitate over, in letting go of an old assumption, is rarely the new view. It is parting with the man who held the old one, who argued for it and was admired for holding it. Epiphanius's serpent put off its old age with its skin; October offers a man the same chance, at any age.

The Rite finds words for it in October's own language: "*The seed dies, and out of its death springs the seed of the new wheat.*" No farmer mistakes the harvest for a loss, though every harvest is a cutting-down; grain that is never cut never becomes bread. An old prayer of the Rite asks for exactly this, and for nothing easier: "*Change, O heavenly Father, change the spirit within us! Teach us what is good!*" It does not ask that circumstances be changed. It asks for the harder and better thing.

III. Square, Level and Plumb

If the first act of courage is to hear one's own accent, the second is to go on listening. Change of this kind is not a resolution made once, on a good night in lodge. It is a practice, and like every practice in the Craft it has its tools. Harris gave them to that same newly passed Fellowcraft in a single charge: "*By the square of justice, learn to measure*

your actions. To the level of humility … reduce your disposition and demeanor: And by the plumb line of rectitude regulate all your moral conduct." Each of the three, looked at closely, is an instrument of change.

The plumb line comes first, because a man learns what upright is by hanging a true line beside his own wall. Example does the same work. In the discourse where Harris described how our habits are caught, he also described how better ones are formed: example "*is a constant and powerful call to imitation. It works, though gradually and imperceptibly, yet more powerfully and successfully than we are aware of; like light, silent in its operation, but wonderful in its effects.*" The proneness to imitation that fixed our old manners is the means of our new ones. A lodge is, among other things, a company chosen for its examples, a row of plumb lines hung where we cannot help but see them. We will catch the manner of the men around us whether we mean to or not; the Craft arranges for the manner worth catching to be close at hand.

The square is the tool of the honest account. A man who means to change must try his own angles, and try them often. It is a searching exercise to write out, now and then and without flattery, the character one believes oneself to have, and to read it again a month later. Better still is a short reckoning at the close of each month: which prejudices I have found in myself, which I have weakened, and which I have put out altogether. A man who lays his work against the square in this way every month for a year will not be the man who began. He will also learn the first condition of all moral improvement, which is to doubt that he is already true. Self-regard is a flattering light. It is wise to hold praise at arm's length and to search oneself when rebuked, for there is usually some truth in what others see, even when they say it unkindly.

The level is the tool of the teachable mind. Most of us stand ready to instruct any man; fewer stand as ready to be instructed by him. Humility, which the level signifies, is precisely that second readiness: to meet another man on level ground and let him show us what we could not see from where we stood. It has an outward sign as well, which is saying so. Real changes of mind seldom arrive whole. They come as a revised clause, an honest admission that the ground has moved under one part of a view while the rest still stands. To make that admission openly, before the brethren who knew us by the old view, is a quiet form of bravery, and the Craft is the richer for every brother who practises it.

To these three the Scottish Rite adds a caution about the words of the work itself. McClenachan's charge to a new Master of a Lodge of Perfection warns him against being "satisfied with merely knowing by rote the formulas, the phrases, and ceremonies of the work." The ritual is meant to be heard as well as recited. Its words were chosen to change the man who speaks them, and they keep that power for as long as he keeps listening. Here, too, the men at the fords are our teachers: a word can be known perfectly and still not be spoken aright.

And every one of these tools is laid against one's own stone. Harris is exact about how a Mason helps a brother who has faltered. His charge at the closing of a lodge asks each of us to "*remind him, in the most tender manner, of his failings, and aid his reformation.*" Aid, gently offered. The gavel stays in the hand of the man whose ashlar it is.

IV. Choose, Traveller

Change of this patient kind has a natural image, and the eighteenth century found it in the garden. James Stevens Curl's Freemasonry and the Enlightenment is in large part the re-

cord of a generation's hopes, written in stone, water and planting. In Poland, he tells us, lodges bore names like Prejudice Overcome, as good a statement of this month's theme as any I know.

The loveliest of those gardens, and the one I find myself walking through in my mind, lies at Wörlitz on the Elbe. From 1764 Prince Leopold III Friedrich Franz of Anhalt-Dessau laid it out as the first major German garden in the English style, and he insisted from the start that it should teach. In one part of it a labyrinth of rockwork represents the individual's journey through life. A narrow path leads to a clearing shaded by acacias, a tree Masons have long held as an emblem of immortality, and then on through a rockwork passage bearing the words WÄHLE WANDRER DEINEN WEG MIT VERNUNFT: Choose, traveller, your path with reason. The visitor, by one early account, was invited there to choose between the path of "*the ignorant and uncultured man*" and "the mysterious way of the mystagogue, apprentice in divine knowledge."

"*If Freemasonry sought to re-fashion the world, to reform it,*" Curl writes, "*the garden is as good a place as anywhere to start.*" I take that as more than a pleasantry. A garden is the one kind of reform that cannot be carried out by decree. It changes on nature's schedule, by cultivation, and the gardener who tears up his beds every spring to prove his zeal has nothing to show in October. Whoever would harvest must first till, and then wait, and the waiting is part of the work. The garden at Wörlitz is still growing, more than two and a half centuries after its first beds were laid. Our own tradition keeps the gardener's secret. The Rose-Croix, the eighteenth degree of the Scottish Rite, teaches that "*the end of all philosophy is to free the mind from those encumbrances which hinder its progress toward perfection,*" and then adds the indispensable clause: "*This effect must be produced by easy steps, lest the mind, hitherto conversant only with sensible things, should revolt at the change.*" A man, like a field, is improved by cultivation, and character is formed by character. New convictions grow up quietly beside the old until, one season, the old are simply no longer there.

So courage, in this light, takes an unexpected form. It is not the courage that pulls down walls. It is the courage to begin something whose harvest you may not live to see, and to keep at it through the seasons when nothing shows above the ground.

V. Built Twice

Which brings me back to the Temple, and to a feast just past.

The line at the head of these pages comes from McClenachan's account of the Councils of Princes of Jerusalem, a body of the Scottish Rite, who kept the equinoxes of March and September as feast-days in memory of the Temple built twice. This issue reaches you a few weeks after the autumn equinox, a fitting season to ask what that second building means.

The Rite returns to this story in the degrees conferred by those Councils, and Scripture tells it in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The captivity in Babylon has lasted seventy years. Then, Ezra says, "*the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia*," and the king sends out his proclamation: "*Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel …*" It is worth noticing where the change begins: not among the captives, but in a stirred spirit, a conscience that will not lie still. Most true changes of heart begin there.

Not all of them went. Josephus, telling the same history, records that many stayed in Babylon, unwilling to leave their possessions. Seventy years is long enough for a captivity to become a home. Those who stayed had houses and vineyards and standing, and an accent that no longer marked them as strangers. Those who went crossed a river — there is always a river — cleared the old site, and took up the work. When the time came to raise the walls, Nehemiah records, "*every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.*" Every one of us keeps a Babylon of this kind: habits and assumptions we did not choose, which we have furnished comfortably, and which we would have to leave on foot.

Most of us, most of the time, would rather keep the old shelter than take it down and live for a season under the open sky while a sounder house goes up. Yet that season under the open sky, after the old assumption has come down and before the new understanding is built, is exactly where the courage to change is spent. It is shorter than we fear.

The oldest words for this kind of change are words for turning back. The Hebrew teshuvah and the Arabic tawba both grow from roots that mean to return; in the Arabic, the same verb is used of the man who turns back to God and of God who turns toward him. Even the Greek metanoia, a change of mind, carries the sense of thinking again, afterwards. The Second Temple is the great image of it: a return that is also a rebuilding. And the rebuilding was no innovation. Ezra records that "*they gave money also unto the masons,*" sent once more to Tyre and Zidon for cedar from Lebanon, as Solomon had done, and laid the new foundation on the old ground. The same chapter preserves a sound worth remembering every October. The ancient men *"that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy,*" so that "*the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people.*" That is what the courage to change sounds like from the inside: something mourned and something welcomed, in the same breath. And Ezra adds how it ended: "*the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.*"

That continuity resolves a tension running through our own literature. Harris, who preached the serpent's shedding, also charged his brethren to "*carefully avoid any innovation in its long established practices.*" Men are fallible and changeable; principles are not, and that is precisely their use. The Craft asks its members to change because it does not. The design on the trestle-board, where the master lays out the plan for the workmen, stays as it was; the builders are the ones who must be rebuilt. We are not the Temple's architects, revising the plan to suit ourselves. We are the men who went home, laid the stones again on the old foundation to the old plan, and were changed by the laying.

And so, back to the fords, and to the harvest word. At the Jordan there was no time to learn a new way of speaking. We are given time. We have a lodge, a company of men whose manner we will catch in any case, and so may choose to catch the best of it. We have the turning of the year. And we have been charged, in the same words McClenachan gives the new Master of a Lodge of Perfection, not to think "*that the field of Masonic learning has been so often reaped and gleaned that there is nothing left for you to gather. Its history has never yet been written. Its symbols are only in part understood. Its philosophy is a vast region almost wholly unexplored.*"

The field has not been gleaned, and neither have we. Across Illinois this month the

combines are in the corn, and October asks of a man only what it has always asked of a field: that what has ripened be cut, that what has been cut be threshed, and that the seed kept back be willing to go into the ground. The seed dies; out of its death springs the new wheat. And the Temple, as the Princes of Jerusalem remember at every equinox, is built twice.

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- *James Stevens Curl, Freemasonry and the Enlightenment: Architecture, Symbols, and Influences (London: Historical Publications, 2011) — ch. IX, "Landscapes, Allusions, and Meanings" (Wörlitz, pp. 206–08; Polish lodges, pp. 217–18; p. 244).*
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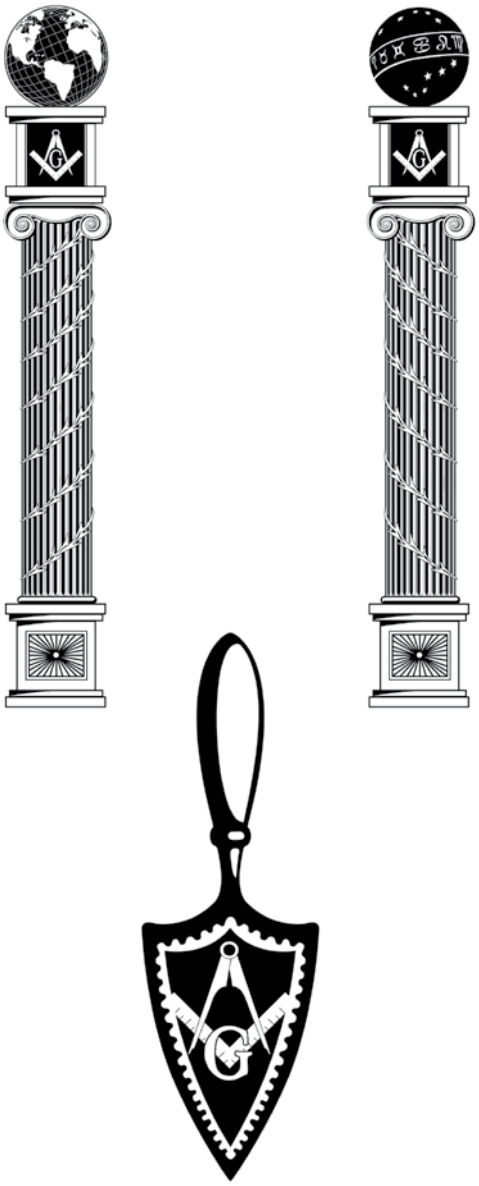
- *Judges 12:5–6; Matthew 10:16; Ezra 1:1–3, 3:7–13; Nehemiah 4:17 (King James Version).*
- *Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews XI.1.3, trans. William Whiston (https://www.ccel.org/ccel/josephus/works/files/ant-11.htm).*



RAISED LIKE A DOG

by RW:. Chad M. Lacek, 33°

Like many of my peers growing up in the early 80s, I was a '*Latch Key Kid*.' My parents were divorced just before my fifth birthday. The court system at the time seemed to award the mother custody by default, if one considers that an award. We didn't see much of each other. She, to her credit, always had at least one job to make sure we had a roof over our head and something in the fridge. There wasn't enough money for much else, certainly not enough for daycare. The solution for most families in this situation was a shoelace and a key.

This distinctive badge was worn around the neck to prevent it from being lost and branded us as "*Latch Key Kids*." We came home from school to an empty house. We made a snack from whatever we could scrounge. We found our own entertainment. We did whatever we wanted and hid the evidence before Mom got home.

Being an only child I was particularly left to my own devices. The downside was there's no one to play with, but on the upside, there were no witnesses to report my misdeeds. I don't lament this upbringing. On the contrary, I believe it shaped me into the self-reliant, confident, capable man I am today. When something broke, I had to fix it. In fact, I had to learn how to fix it first, then fix it. If I was hungry, I cooked. If I was injured, I performed my own first aid. I'm proud of those traits. They serve me well in adulthood.

What I didn't realize until well into my 30s was that no one actually raised me. When my mom got home from work, she was understandably tired. She would pour herself a bowl of cereal and watch the soap operas she recorded daily on the VCR. If the house was clean and nothing seemed out of place, she would have no reason to speak to me and could go directly to her bedroom. The only time it was necessary to communicate was if something was wrong. She would then scold me for whatever it was and then vanish for the night.

The only lesson I learned from this pattern was, <u>don't get caught</u>. There was no morality. The two states were "*In trouble*" or "*Got*

away with it." I was told to get good grades in school, but not how to get them or why it was important. I was told not to tell lies, but not what it meant to be an honest person. I don't ever remember sitting down and talking about how to be a human being. I didn't know our family values or if we ever had any. The lessons I learned centered around not burning the house down and not killing myself in some reckless stunt.

It's clear to me now that I was raised like a dog. When a dog does something bad, you punish it. It learns to not repeat that offence, or to not be caught committing it. You don't explain the philosophy of good and evil to a dog. You train it to not make a mess of the house and not run into a busy street. A successful day is one where you don't need to scold the dog, and the dog is still alive. A successful day for me was my mom eating her cereal in silence and the sound of her bedroom door closing, signaling that I now had the run of the house for the rest of the evening.

Thank God I found my way to the door of a Masonic Lodge. Freemasonry is not merely concerned with behavior, but character. Not with what a man does when he is observed, but what he knows to be right regardless of anyone else. Human beings are not honorable by nature. We must be taught, and more importantly, we have to understand why it matters.

There's a big difference between giving rules and giving reasons. Rules can produce compliance. Reasons produce judgment. A man who knows the rule will follow it when it is enforced. A man who understands the just reason will obey it when there is no threat of penalty. Some of us did not grow up with that second piece of the puzzle.

There is a particular kind of upbringing that focuses almost entirely on survival. It is not always intentional. It is often the result of a single parent, most often a mother, carrying the full weight of that responsibility. Time is limited. Energy is limited. The priority becomes clear. Keep the child safe. Keep the child fed. Keep the child out of trouble.

That is not a small task. It deserves respect. But that does not qualify as raising that child. In that environment, instruction often takes the form of rules without explanation. This is off limits. Do not touch that. Do not go there. Do not do this. The boundaries are real, but the reasoning behind them is seldom shared. The child learns what is allowed and what is forbidden, but not why it's important to obey.

Over time, a pattern emerges. If the rule is present but the reasoning is absent, the lesson becomes practical rather than moral. The question is no longer "*What is right*?" but "*What can I get away with*?" Compliance becomes situational. Behavior is adjusted based on the likelihood of being observed. What is learned is not judgment, it's stealth.

There is a familiar image that illustrates this. A dog can learn that it is not allowed to be on the couch. It has been corrected before. It has learned this boundary. Yet when left alone, it climbs up anyway. It enjoys a comfortable nap there, then as soon as it hears the car in the driveway, it jumps down and relocates as if nothing has happened. The dog has learned the rule. It has not learned the lesson.

In many cases, children raised under constraint without explanation develop a similar pattern. They understand limits, but only in relation to enforcement. They behave only when they must. The goal becomes avoiding consequences, not developing character. This is not a moral failure on the part of the child. It is the predictable result of the system in which he was raised.

The system itself is not malicious. It is often the best that could be done under difficult conditions. But it has limitations, and those limitations become clear over time. If the measure of success is simply staying alive, then growth is defined by endurance rather than development. The child becomes older, but not better. The focus remains on avoiding harm rather than pursuing good.

There is an important difference between them. Avoiding harm keeps you out of trouble. Pursuing what is good gives your life direction and purpose. Our Masonic institution was built with this in mind. It does not begin with a list of rules, it begins with sound principles. It does not say only what to avoid, it explains what to aim for. It teaches that conduct is not merely a matter of restriction, but of intention.

Consider something as simple as restraint. A dog, left to its own devices, will eat until it is sick. It does not regulate its intake based on long-term considerations. It responds to immediate availability. The same tendency exists in humans. Appetite, whether for food, attention, or comfort, does not naturally limit itself. Restraint must be learned.

If the only lesson received in youth was, "*Do not do this,*" without any explanation of why, then restraint remains external. It depends on supervision. As adults we're expected to supervise ourselves. My first thought when I got my own apartment was, "Ah Ha! No adult supervision!" Developing restraint as an adult requires understanding the purpose of the limits. It requires recognizing the consequences of excess. It requires choosing, deliberately, to act in a way that aligns with a broader standard.

This is the beginning of moral development. It does not happen all at once. It is a process of adjustment. The habits formed under one system are replaced, gradually, by habits formed under another. The focus shifts from avoiding consequences to pursuing alignment. The question changes from "*Will I get caught?*" to "Is this consistent with the kind of person I intend to be?" Freemasonry provides a framework for this shift. It offers principles rather than prohibitions. It encourages self-examination rather than passive compliance. It treats the individual not as something to be controlled, but as something to be formed.

I'm sure there are other Freemasons with a childhood like mine, or worse. We can't change our past, but we can decide that it will not define us forever. It's weird to think that we need to re-raise ourselves as adults, but someone must if we aspire to more than a dog's life. Thankfully we found a place where we can practice virtue. We do what's right because that's the kind of person we want to be. We're honest because there is so much value in our word of honor. We naturally act uprightly because that's expected of Freemasons, and we're proud to bear that title.
It's taken a while, perhaps longer than it should have, but we've altered the course that was set by our upbringing. We've still got work to do, but that's OK. Everyone does, even the ones that had a head start on us. We're in the right place, and we've surrounded ourselves with the right people. Best of all, when we hear the sound of a car pulling up the driveway, we're not moving a muscle. We paid for this couch, and we're going to sit here just as long as we please.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE:
LISTEN TO IT:

EPISODE: 0211

HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/TMR0211
BROTHER: NOT A STRANGER

EPISODE: 0514
MORAL COURAGE
DO WE HAVE IT?

HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/WCY514

What is Masonic Week?

While active since 1932, the annual event known as Masonic Week first convened in Washington, D.C., on February 21, 1938. Since then, it has met continuously in the Washington D.C. metro area nearly every year. The event brings together several small and invitational orders of Freemasonry that host their annual meeting and other events during the week. Several of these organizations provide representatives to the planning committee which oversees the arrangements and schedule. Being the largest of the organizations, the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees of the United States of America has served as the lead organizer since the inception of the event.

Masonic Week 2027

Held February 3 to February 7, 2027
at the DoubleTree by Hilton Washington DC – Crystal City

Registration Information

All Masons attending any event during Masonic Week must complete and submit the Registration Form. Meal tickets may also be reserved and purchased using the same Registration Form.

Hotel Information

The Conference Hotel is the The DoubleTree by Hilton Washington DC – Crystal City 300 Army Navy Drive Arlington, VA 22202. Room block: Monday, February 1st – Monday, February 8th, 2027.

Go to www.AMDUSA.Org for more information
Or Contact Robert H. Johnson, Grand Superintendent for Illinois

The deadline for meal reservations is Sunday, January 31, 2027, at 5 PM Eastern Time.

After that date, additional meals may be purchased in-person at the Masonic Week registration desk. A surcharge of 25% per meal will be charged for in-person registrations.

The deadline for hotel reservations is Monday, January 11th, 2027.

2027 Schedule of Events

Unless otherwise noted, all events are only open to those individuals who hold a current membership with that organization.

Wednesday, February 3, 2027

Start Time	End Time	Organization	Event	Attendee Information
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Laying of a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier	Open to the public for viewing.
3:00 PM	5:00 PM	Ancient Egyptian Order of Sciots	Conferral of the Degree of Membership by the Supreme Pyramid	Open to all Master Masons in good standing. Candidate registration from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.
7:00 PM	8:00 PM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Rank of Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Order of the Red Branch of Eri	Private Conferral – **Strictly** By invitation only to eligible members. *Attendees must already hold the rank prior to the start of Masonic Week.*
7:00 PM	9:00 PM	Grand Order of the Sword of Bunker Hill	Conferral of the Order of the Sword of Bunker Hill by San Jacinto Order No. 128	Open to all Master Masons in good standing. Candidate registration from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Thursday, February 4, 2027

Start Time	End Time	Organization	Unit	Attendee Information
8:00 AM	8:30 AM	Masonic Week Program Committee	Masonic Week Orientation	Recommended for first time attendees at Masonic Week.
8:00 AM	9:30 AM	Order of Holy Wisdom	Conferral of the Order of Holy Wisdom	Private Conferral – Strictly By Invitation Only
8:00 AM	9:30 AM	Ye Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon	Grand Master's Council of the United States of America Rehearsal	
9:30 AM	11:30 PM	Ye Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon	Annual Meeting of the Grand Master's Council of the United States of America	
12:00 PM	1:30 PM	Ye Commemorative Order of St. Thomas of Acon	Festive Board Luncheon	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to St. Thomas of Acon members and their guests.
1:30 PM	2:30 PM	Masonic Week Program Committee	Education Presentation by Dr. Heather Calloway of Indiana Universtiy	The Mission and Work of the Center for Fraternal Collections and Research
2:30 PM	5:30 PM	Masonic Order of Athelstan	Annual Meeting of the Grand Court of the Masonic Order of Athelstan for the United States of America	
5:45 PM	7:00 PM	Sovereign Order of Knights Preceptor	Annual Meeting of the Grand Chapter	
7:00 PM	8:45 PM	Masonic Order of Athelstan	Athelstan Banquet	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.
9:00 PM	11:00 PM	Masonic Order of the Bath	105th Annual Assembly	Candidate registration from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM
9:00 PM	11:00 PM	Masonic Order of Pilgrim Preceptors	Mayflower Conclave No. 8 and the Annual meeting of the Region of the United States of America	

Friday, February 5, 2027

Start Time	End Time	Organization	Event	Attendee Information
7:00 AM	8:00 AM	York Rite Sovereign College	Annual Breakfast	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.
7:30 AM	8:00 AM	Masonic Week Program Committee	Masonic Week Orientation	Recommended for first time attendees at Masonic Week.
8:30 AM	9:00 AM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Knight Commander of the Royal Order of the Red Branch of Eri	Registration Information
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	Masonic Week Program Committee	Ladies Breakfast	RESERVE TICKETS Open to all ladies, free of charge.
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Knight Masons	61st Annual Meeting of the Grand Council of the United States of America	
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Knights Masons	Knight Masons Luncheon	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.
1:00 PM	3:00 PM	Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests	93rd Annual Ingathering of the Grand College of America	
3:15 PM	4:45 PM	Grand College of Rites	96th Annual Convocation of the Grand College of the United States of America	
5:00 PM	6:30 PM	Society of Blue Friars	81st Annual Consistory	Open to all attendees.
5:00 PM	5:30 PM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Installed Sovereign Master Degree	Registration Information
5:30 PM	6:00 PM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Degree of Worshipful Commander Noah of a Lodge of Royal Ark Mariners	Registration Information
6:00 PM	6:45 PM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Degree of Installed Supreme Ruler of a Conclave of the Order of the Secret Monitor	Registration Information
7:00 PM	8:45 PM	The Philalethes Society	Philalethes Banquet	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.
7:00 PM	8:45 PM	Chevaliers Bienfaisant de la Cite Sainte (C.B.C.S.)	Reception and Dinner for the Great Priory of America	Open to C.B.C.S. members only.
9:00 PM	10:30 PM	Allied Masonic Degrees	101st Annual Cellar of Ye Antiente Order of Corks	Open to AMD members only. Candidate registration from 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Saturday, February 6, 2027

Start Time	End Time	Organization	Event	Attendee Information
7:00 AM	8:00 AM	Masonic Week Program Committee	All Masonic Breakfast	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.
8:00 AM	9:45 AM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the First, Second, and Third Grades of the Order of the Scarlet Cord	Registration Information
9:45 AM	10:45 AM	Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Fourth Grade of the Order of the Scarlet Cord	Registration Information
10:30 AM	12:00 PM	The Philalethes Society	99th Annual Meeting	
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Convent General, KYCH	KYCH Luncheon	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.

2:00 PM	3:30 PM		Masonic Week Program Committee	Ladies Afternoon Tea	RESERVE TICKETS Open to all ladies, free of charge.
1:30 PM	4:30 PM		Allied Masonic Degrees	135th Annual Communication of the Grand Council of the United States of America	
15 Minutes Following the Close of the AMD Grand Council	6:00 PM		Allied Masonic Degrees	Annual Meeting of the Council of the Nine Muses No. 13	Open to all AMD members.
6:00 PM	7:00 PM		Allied Masonic Degrees	All Masonic Social Hour	Open to all attendees and their guests.
7:00 PM	8:45 PM		Allied Masonic Degrees	All Masonic Banquet	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.
9:00 PM	9:45 PM		Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Degree of St. Lawrence the Martyer	Registration Information
9:45 PM	10:30 PM		Allied Masonic Degrees	Conferral of the Degree of Royal Ark Mariner	Registration Information

Sunday, February 7, 2027

Start Time	End Time		Organization	Event	Attendee Information
8:30 AM	9:00 AM		The Worshipful Society of Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviors, Plaisterers and Bricklayers (The Operatives)	Washington Monument Assemblage	
9:00 AM	10:30 AM		The Worshipful Society of Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviors, Plaisterers and Bricklayers (The Operatives)	Lodge of Menatzchim V°	
10:30 AM	12:30 PM		The Worshipful Society of Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviors, Plaisterers and Bricklayers (The Operatives)	Lodge of Harodim VI°	
12:30 PM	1:30 PM		The Worshipful Society of Free Masons, Rough Masons, Wallers, Slaters, Paviors, Plaisterers and Bricklayers (The Operatives)	The Operatives Brunch	PURCHASE TICKETS Open to all attendees and their guests.

Is this your first time attending Masonic Week?

Masonic Week is an amazing opportunity to further your Masonic journey and engage in fellowship. But, unlike a "Masonic Con" or educational event, the week is designed around several business meetings for groups with varying membership requirements. While there will be opportunities for individuals to learn and enjoy presentations, Masonic education is not the primary purpose of the event. If this is your first time attending Masonic Week, we invite you to the join us for one of our Masonic Week Orientation periods, available for one half hour each morning. The information provided is the same on each day, so you only need to attend one session.

Welcome! We hope you enjoy your time with us.

Masonic Conferences

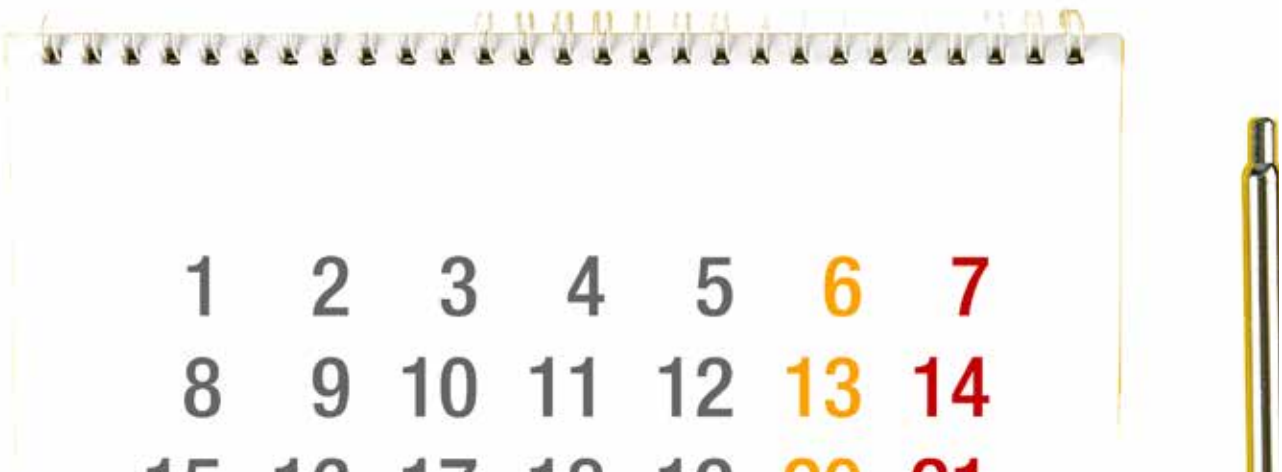
Grand Lodge Annual Communications (GLAC) – October 9th and 10th, 2026, Springfield Illinois.

Midwest Conference on Masonic Education – April 24-26 - 2026, Omaha, NE

Yes! **Masonic Con Chicago** will be back in Spring 2027.

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

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



The Lyceum