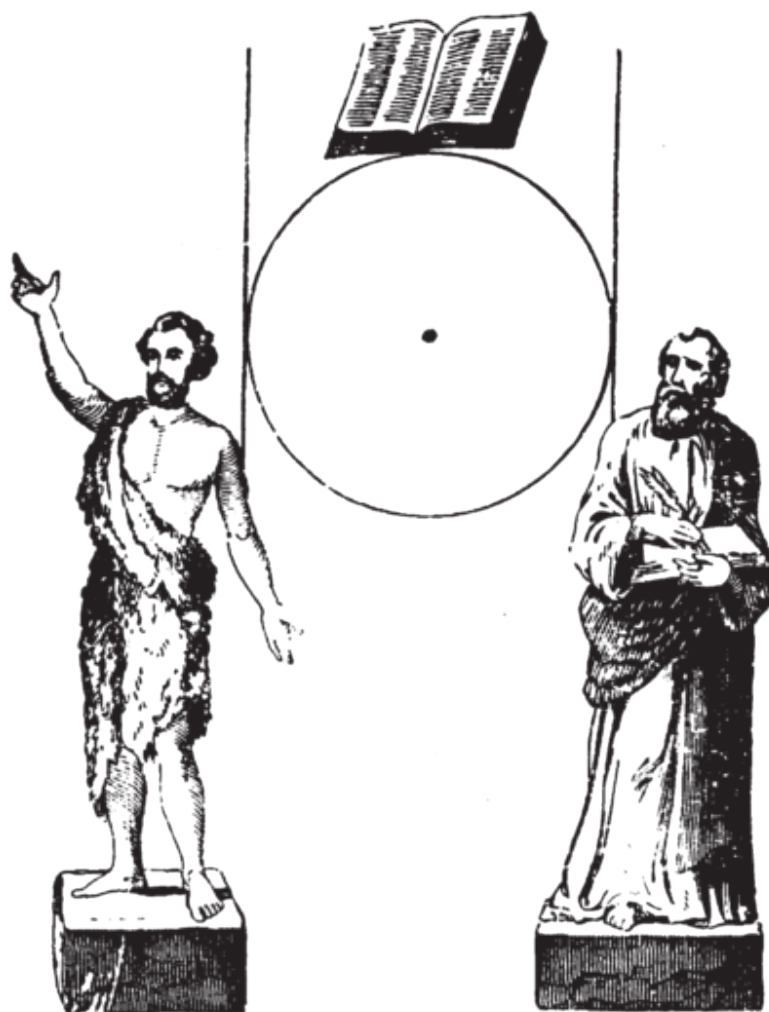

The Lyceum



A publication of the Illinois
Committee on Masonic Education



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Corrections:

In the first release of Vol. 1 No. 1 we spelled Bro. Jordan Kelly's name incorrectly. It has been corrected.

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Since our inaugural issue (August 2021), we've received a ton of positive feedback. We also received some requests for a few changes. I'm happy to report that your education newsletter is now more of a complete magazine. We've added more content and questions for in-Lodge discussion after just about every article, should you choose to use them. If we said we had a theme this month, it would be the Entered Apprentice degree, specifically the Interrogatories. We've asked CLI (Certified Lodge

Instructor) R.W. Spencer Hamann to give us some perspective and some contemplative questions regarding this precursor to receiving the degrees.

Our Featured Article this month is from our Eastern Education Officer, Darin A. Lahners. In this article, he explores the artificers (designers) of Solomon's Temple. I'm sure you'll find some great information about this seldom explored topic. We've also printed a unique story from RW:. Chad Lacek. I know you'll connect with this story, and in the end, Chad asks a question that will have us combing our minds for the answers. We've also received an excellent writeup from RW:. Wayne Spooner, our Membership Chairman. There's loads of content this month, and whatever you're into, whether philosophy, history, or charity, I believe you'll enjoy this issue.

Masonic Education spans the gamut in terms of content. Freemasonry itself is a transformative art, making good men better. We do this through teachings--which is Education. We feel by offering great content in a variety of ways with contemplative and discussion questions, you will find extreme value in your Masonic Education magazine, The Lyceum.

As we continue to evolve this educational resource for the members of Illinois Freemasonry, it will make its way into the hands of all Master Masons in the state. We're working toward distributing this resource via our MORI (M2/Groupable) email service, and until we do--please forward this to your members. This is not a tool for the AEOs, DEOs, or LEOs only. It's for ALL our Freemasons. You can always find the latest issue on our Grand Lodge Website under the "Masonic Education" Section.

I now leave you to take on a great adventure as you read through the pages herein contained--a journey comprising winding roads of thought. The journey is the destination.

Robert H. Johnson, PDDGM
Member-Committee on Masonic Education
Grand Lodge Illinois AF&AM



From the Desk of the Chairman

My Brothers,

There are so many things in Freemasonry to which we might want to study. The history, the ritual, the philosophy, the charity, but this month I wanted to pose a few questions for you and also give you some quotes which might assist us in understanding one of the first things we're asked in Freemasonry.



“Whence Came You?”

While we know this as the opening line to the Entered Apprentice Degree and the name of the most popular Masonic podcast hosted by this committee's very own Right Worshipful Brother R.J. Johnson, there's more to this question than meets the eye. Something much deeper and beautiful in meaning. Where do we come from in that spiritual sense?

In my search, I discovered this quote from Rabbi Berel Wein in the Pirkei Avos.

“Teachings for our Time” [1]

“Akavia ben Mahalel says: Consider three things and you will not come into the grip of sin: Know whence you came, whither you go, and before Whom you will give justification and reckoning. “Whence you came” — from a putrid drop; “whither you go” — to a place of dust, worms, and maggots; “and before Whom you give justification and account”? — before the King Who reigns over kings, the Holy One Blessed is He.”

— Pirkei Avot 3:1

Most Worshipful Grand Master of Oklahoma Robert Davis, in his new book *In Search of Light* best put it; [2]

“The Ritual ceremonies of Freemasonry are performed to convey one most powerful idea to the young person. He has left one life and is entering another. He is putting away an old life and taking on another. This is the reason one of the first questions posed to him as he begins his journey toward initiation is: Whence came you, and whither are you traveling? It is significant for him to know that he is at that moment in time between the “whence” and the “Wither” of his life.”

A summary of Rabbi Wein's thought is that our conception of anything can be good or bad. We can have lust or love--and that death is the result for everyone--it is the great leveler. Ultimately, it's how we live this life that counts in the end.

Take time and contemplate on these questions

Where do you stand right now?

What does the above invoke in you as you read it?

[1] Rabbi Berel Wein: Pirkei Avos --- Teachings For Our Times (jewishworldreview.com)

[2] *In Search of Light* Robert G. Davis page 1 Craft Lodge – Robert G. Davis (robertgdavis.net)



Original Freemasons: The Dionysiac Architects /Artificers?

by Darin A. Lahners,
Eastern Area Education Officer

The first references to the Dionysiac Architects appear in the writings of Strabo, a Greek geographer who lived ca. 64 BC - 24 AD, and the Roman Historian Eusebius who lived ca 260 - 340 AD. Both referenced a guild of architects/builders who were called Dionysian Artificers. Strabo stated: "Lebedos was the seat and assembly of the Dionysian Artificers who inhabit Ionia to the Hellespont; there they had annually their solemn meetings and festivals in honor of Bacchus." Strabo traces their presence to Syria, Persia, and India as well. Eusebius wrote of them being a secret society with their own signs, tokens, and means of recognition as well as having symbolism largely derived from the arts of building. He claims they first appeared in Phoenicia as well as Asia Minor about 50 years prior to the building of King Solomon's Temple.

Manly Palmer Hall in his seminal work, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, states: "The Dionysiac Architects constituted an ancient secret society, in principles and doctrines much like the modern Freemasonic Order. They were an organization of builders bound together by their secret knowledge of the relationship between the earthly and the divine sciences of architectonics. They were supposedly employed by King Solomon in the building of his Temple, although they were not Jews, nor did they worship the God of the Jews, being followers of Bacchus and Dionysos. The Dionysiac Architects erected many of the great monuments of antiquity. They possessed a secret language and a system of marking their stones. They had annual convocations and sacred feasts. The exact nature of their doctrines is unknown. It is believed that CHiram Abiff was an initiate of this society." Robert Macoy in his work, *Illustrated History and Cyclopedia of Freemasonry*, wrote they were: "Priests of Bacchus, who is also named Dionysus. Becoming skilled in the science of architecture they founded the order of Sidonian Builders, a considerable period before

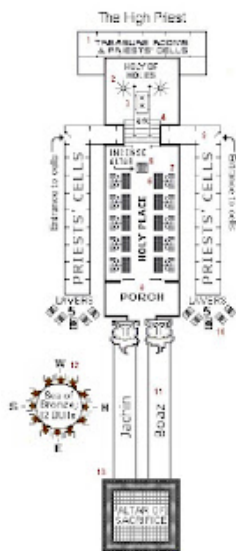


the time of David, King of Israel. From this society - which build the Temple of Solomon - sprung the Roman Colleges of Architects, and these, in their turn, gave birth to the building corporations of the middle ages, from which the present order of Freemasonry is derived. Thus the society of Dionysian Builders is the connecting link between Modern Masonry and the Ancient Mysteries."

What evidence remains of their influence upon Freemasonry? Hall states again in *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, that "The checkerboard floor upon which the modern Freemasonic lodge stands is the old tracing board of the Dionysiac Architects, and while the modern organization is no longer limited to workmen's guilds it still preserves in its symbols the metaphysical doctrines of the ancient society of which it is presumably the outgrowth." He continues stating: "Aside from the operative aspect of their order, the Dionysiac Architects had a speculative philosophic code. Human society they considered as a rough and untrued ashlar but lately chiseled from the quarry of elemental Nature. This crude block was the true object upon which these skilled craftsmen labored - polishing it, squaring it, and with the aid of fine carvings transforming it into a miracle of beauty. While mystics released their souls from the bondage of matter by meditation and philosophers found their keenest joy in the profundities of thought, these master workmen achieved liberation from the Wheel of Life and

Death by learning to swing their hammers with the same rhythm that moves the swirling forces of Cosmos. They venerated the Deity under the guise of a Great Architect and Master Craftsman who was ever gouging rough ashlar from the fields of space and truing them into universes. The Dionysians affirmed constructiveness to be the supreme expression of the soul, and attuning themselves with the ever-visible constructive natural processes going on around them, believed immortality could be achieved by thus becoming a part of the creative agencies of Nature.” There is also a belief, put forward by Joseph De Costa in his work, *The Dionysiac Artificers*, that: “This society was called the Dionysian Artificers, as Bacchus was supposed to be the inventor of building theaters; and they performed the Dionysian festivities. From this period, the Science of Astronomy which had given rise to the Dionysian rites became connected with types taken from the art of building. The Ionian societies..extend their moral views, in conjunction with the art of building, to many useful purposes, and to the practice of arts of benevolence. They had significant words to distinguish their members; and for the same purpose they used emblems taken from the art of building.”

Even though there is little written evidence of the beliefs of the Dionysiac Artificers, what we do have does seem to point to the links laid out above of a direct correlation of some of the ideas, symbols, and beliefs of this group to the Mason Guilds of the Middle Ages whereby we inherited our symbols as those guilds moved from being operative to speculative. Of course, we will never truly know the extent of the influence, but I think that it is undeniable that it exists. It is interesting of course to have the idea of Hiram Abiff being a member of this group along with the workmen at the building of the temple of Solomon, but it does make sense that if this group were essentially the precursors to the Stone Masons guilds that they would be the ones employed in any major building projects of that time. That is of course if you believe that the Temple Of Solomon was a real edifice and not an allegory for the Temple within you.



Discussion Questions for Lodge

1. After reading the article, do you believe that the Dionysian Architects/Artificers had any influence over our symbols or ritual? Why or why not?
2. Are there other groups prior to the Medieval Stone Masons guild, like the Knights Templar, that you feel have influenced the Craft? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that Hiram Abiff and the workmen at the temple were members of this group? Why or why not?
4. Manly P. Hall is quoted in the article stating:

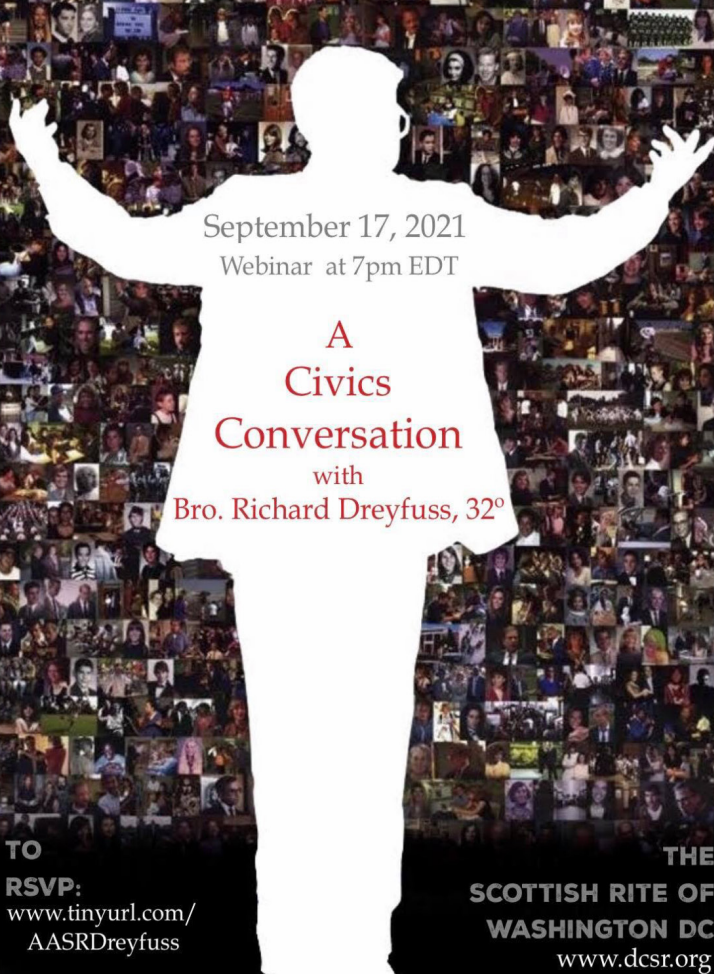
“Aside from the operative aspect of their order, the Dionysiac Architects had a speculative philosophic code. Human society they considered as a rough and untrued ashlar but lately chiseled from the quarry of elemental Nature. This crude block was the true object upon which these skilled craftsmen labored – polishing it, squaring it, and with the aid of fine carvings transforming it into a miracle of beauty. While mystics released their souls from the bondage of matter by meditation and philosophers found their keenest joy in the profundities of thought, these master workmen achieved liberation from the Wheel of Life and Death by learning to swing their hammers with the same rhythm that moves the swirling forces of Cosmos. They venerated the Deity under the guise of a Great Architect and Master Craftsman who was ever gouging rough ashlar from the fields of space and truing them into universes. The Dionysians affirmed constructiveness to be the supreme expression of the soul, and attuning themselves with the ever-visible constructive natural processes going on around them, believed immortality could be achieved by thus becoming a part of the creative agencies of Nature”

Can you draw any parallels between this and the work we do inside of the lodge room as a collective and outside of the lodge room as individuals to shape our rough ashlar into a more perfect one?

What other masonic ideals do you see alluded to in the above quotation?



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In 2026, the United States will celebrate its 250th Anniversary...

Are we ready for that? What is the common ground on which we can engage one another constructively as citizens in today's polarized America? And what about Freemasonry and the role of Freemasons?

Imagine what would happen to Freemasonry if, due to the absence of Masonic Education, its members were to become ignorant of its tenets, cardinal virtues, and core mission? A Freemason would lose the knowledge of the tools, implements and skills needed to better himself as a Free Builder.

Likewise, imagine what would happen to America if, due to the absence of Civics Education, its citizens were to become ignorant of the core principles of freedom and democratic republican self-governance? Americans would lose the knowledge of the tools, mechanisms, and skills needed to engage one another constructively for the purpose of advancing their human condition.

Tune in to a most interesting conversation with Academy Award Winner and Brother Richard Dreyfuss, 32°, who will enlighten us with his perspective as a Freemason on Civics and Civic Engagement.

The event will take place in the form of a webinar on **Friday, September 17, 2021 (Constitution Day)** from 7 PM to 8 PM EDT.

IMCAP - Did You Know?

Did you know that the Illinois Masonic Children's Assistance Program (IMCAP) offers specialized learning grants? Our Board recognizes the growing need to supplement learning skills through learning programs or equipment. This program was created to ensure children with learning disabilities receive the education they need to thrive.

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Keynote Speaker: Darin A. Lahners on:

Freemasonry & Harry Potter

A black silhouette of Harry Potter's head and shoulders, wearing his signature round glasses and having a lightning bolt scar on his forehead.

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Our Internal Cable-Tow

by RW:. Chad Lacek



The Cable-Tow is an important accessory we wear during our initiations, yet very few mentions are made of it in our ritual. We do get a few hints here and there.

The one I wish to call to your mind now is the condition, “If within the length of my Cable-Tow.”

It implies that there is a limit to our duty or obligation, as measured by this device, but there is no mention of how long it is or who gets to decide. I would like to share my experience when I discovered the extent of my own.

It was a cold winter day in 2019, with mounds of snow from previous storms piled high on each side of every sidewalk. I live on a corner lot, which means I have about four times the normal amount of sidewalk to shovel, as well as two driveways. I had just spent the last two hours clearing off the latest deposits of heavy snow. I climbed out of my many layers of protective clothing, the last of which was drenched with sweat. I took a much-needed warm shower and put on some soft flannel pajamas. I made a large mug of hot tea, sat down in my favorite reading chair, and was looking forward to spending the rest of the evening with a good book.

That’s when I caught a glance of movement outside my window below. It was the neighbor who lives diagonally across the street from me, feebly trying to chip away at the wall of iced concrete the passing snowplow erected at the end of her driveway. She lives alone, and although I don’t know how old she is, I would not be surprised if she was over eighty. Added to this, she stands about five feet tall and might weigh ninety pounds with her snow boots on.

I sat there in my newly acquired comfort looking out my window. I immediately began to create excuses as to why I shouldn’t help her. I tried every possible scenario in my mind that would allow me

to remain where I was. Perhaps she was meant to die of exhaustion shoveling snow tonight? Who was I to interfere with the Grand Plan?

It was no use. I felt it. I was almost in a panic in my effort to make excuses, but there was a small and steady part of me that knew it was useless. I understood that I didn’t have a choice--I got up, put all my layers of clothing back on, grabbed my shovel, and headed across the street.

It was almost a year later before I really understood what had happened. Anyone observing my behavior would likely have thought I was a really nice guy. The truth is that I was a really selfish guy. I didn’t want to help. I had to. I couldn’t enjoy my warm tea and comfortable chair until after I shoveled that lady’s snow. I didn’t help her, I helped myself.

Now here’s an interesting question...Does it matter? What I did was against my will, but in accordance with my character. That’s my Cable-Tow! There are so many times when we’re in a bad mood, or tired, or frustrated. There are lots of times when we just want to sit down and relax. If we had a choice, we might make the selfish choice. This is the beauty of the Cable-Tow. It removes the burden of choice.

So for now I am content to look like a nice guy--and who knows, another twelve years as a Freemason and I might just become one. How about you?



From the Vault

As our Grand Lodge continually goes through files, reorganizes, and keeps us all running, sometimes the staff comes across something of value that can be used. Such is the case here in this small column called “From the Archive.” A series of District Education Officer talking points was discovered, and we thought it might be nice to have these reprinted. Each month we’ll have another one for you. Remember, you don’t have to be DEO to use these, and these are not exhaustive in their current form.

We want to empower all Master Masons in this jurisdiction to take up the charge of being an educator. One by one, we can assist each other. It also bears mentioning that these questions in this archived piece are not the only talking points in this issue. Most articles we’ve put together for you have some great discussion and contemplative questions.

District Education Officer Talking Points

WHAT IS AN INTENDER?

The term Intender was first used over 100 years prior to the formation of the first Grand Lodge in England. The term was used by Scottish Lodges of Operative Masons. The Intender took on the role of a mentor to reach the new apprentices the foundations of operative Masonry. The Intender was considered to be the most important person in the lodge since he was responsible for teaching the new apprentices and mentoring the fellow crafts until they became Master Masons.

The Agreement

by RW: Brother Spencer A. Hamann,
DEO of the 1st NE



What is the first piece of controlled Masonic Ritual that a candidate for Freemasonry in Illinois hears? Casting their minds around, many Brothers

will land on something like “whence came you?”; however, this will actually not be heard in ritual context by a new Brother, until he attends the opening of his first Stated Meeting. Perhaps more Brothers still may offer “who comes here?” as the first bit of Masonic Ritual a new candidate hears; as it is the first time the candidate is addressed ritually after knocking at the door of the lodge. These lines, which come to mind quickly, have taken on lives of their own within the larger culture of Freemasonry. As such, beyond their appeal as quick soundbites and litmus tests for identifying one’s own Masonic connection (a shibboleth, if you will), they afford the contemplative Mason much to ruminate upon. However, neither of these phrases is the actual beginning; the true “first piece” lies even earlier in our ceremony, and is delivered through the Secretary’s Interrogatories.

It’s perhaps not surprising that many Brothers don’t give a lot of thought to these interrogatories. This ritual is propounded to the candidate outside of the lodge room itself, and with the exception of the Stewards and the Secretary, the lodge doesn’t get to hear them. Unfortunately, the Brothers inside the lodge may too often be occupying their time with sharing the latest gossip, or tired “wheezer” of a joke, to even register that an important ritual is taking place just outside the lodge hall. Therefore, these interrogatories don’t become a part of the engrained “Degree script” for most Brothers, as they simply aren’t exposed to them after their own Initiation. Indeed, when was the last time you heard the ritual experts in your lodge arguing about the Secretary’s Interrogatories?

Illinois Freemasonry itself has also had a

somewhat distanced relationship to the Secretary’s Interrogatories. In fact, it was not until 2014 that the interrogatories became a required part of the Ritual Proficiency of Certified Lodge Instructors.

In many ways, the Secretary’s Interrogatories are treated like a software license agreement: you already decided on the software you want, downloaded it, perhaps paid for it, and are thinking about how you’re going to use it. Rather than carefully pondering the implications laid out in a cascading block of text, the impatient and hubristic human nature for swift gratification kicks in, and we click the “I accept” box with little thought given to exactly what we have just accepted.

In the case of the Interrogatories, the candidate has heard similar sounding questions from his investigating committee, and likely also from Brothers before that, when discussing the Craft and its requirements for memb-

-ship. In many cases, he may have even had parts of the Degree ceremony outlined for him, and thus he knows vaguely what to expect. By the time the Secretary is going through the interrogatories with the Candidate, he's already petitioned, been investigated, been balloted "clear", and paid his initiation fees. He's also taken the time out of his life to show up to the Lodge, and is, in theory, anticipating with nervous excitement the initiation he is about to receive. The software is ready, he's almost assuredly going to click "I accept".

But what has he accepted? What did each of us accept? When we study our ritual or meditate upon the symbolism and lessons of the Craft, how often does this motivate us to think deeply about the ritualistic user agreement we all promised to answer unequivocally before we even knocked at the door of the Lodge?

There is much to consider within the Secretary's Interrogatories which should give Brothers cause for reflection – far more than can be fully explored within this short article. A few particularly interesting requirements include that a candidate be "unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives"; which may be considered in the examination of whether the decision to become a Freemason was the choice of the candidate, or that of those around him. Indeed, our Fraternity places strong emphasis on Friendship and Brotherly Love, but also admonishes us to engage in serious reflection upon morality and our own inner work; remembering that the edifices we strive to build and perfect are actually ourselves.

Additionally, all Illinois Freemasons have professed that we were prompted to begin our Masonic journeys in part by our desire for knowledge; thereby admitting and acknowledging that increasing our education, and expanding our minds beyond our current understanding and perception, were of central importance to us. Each and every one of us has acknowledged that we're not just here for the minutes or the pancakes; we're here to learn.

Most strikingly, we are given a stunningly beautiful summary of just what Freemasonry is and what it aims to teach. A glimpse of the road ahead of the candidate is given in elegant and

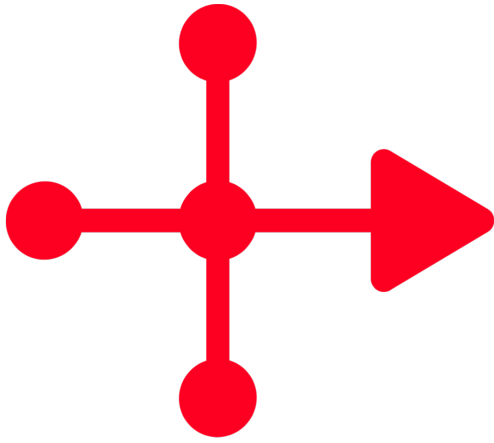
shimmering prose, ranking amongst some of the most beautiful ritual (in the author's opinion) in all of our Standard Work. The section in question is the central paragraph on page 24 of the most recent edition of the Illinois Book of Standard Work. While the candidate is still taking all of this in, the ritual continues on to practical instruction of the ceremony at hand, and by the time the Secretary finishes the ritual, this gem is all but forgotten – becoming often little more than a drop of water in the ocean into which the candidate is about to dive.

All too often in Freemasonry, it is easy for us to get caught up in the program and miss the processes. We're using the software to do truly great and beautiful things, but lose sight of the subtle underpinnings of what brought us here in the first place. Accountability is not just what we feel we owe to Freemasonry through our obligations, but what Freemasonry accounts to show us in the first place. When you put aside time to study ritual or contemplate our Craft, take the opportunity to review the Secretary's Interrogatories. As a Freemason at any part of his progression, the careful examination and reflection upon our first ritual experience will surely prove illuminating. No matter where your journey takes you, never forget why you began.

Discussion Questions for Lodge

1. Are there any of the questions in the Secretary's Interrogatories that you agreed to as a candidate that you no longer agree with now? Why?
2. Assuming all the protocols of the standard Petition for Membership are followed and the Investigating Committee takes their role seriously, are the Secretary's Interrogatories redundant?
3. Should a new Mason be given the Secretary's Interrogatories in written form for review as part of their Intender Program book and materials?
4. Have you ever experienced a situation where you feel a Brother should be reminded of the agreements he made within the Secretary's Interrogatories?
5. Do you think the description of the Masonic Journey offered in the Secretary's Interrogatories is accurate? Why or why not?





YOUR EASTERN AREA EDUCATION OFFICER



Darin Allen Lahners was born on Friday, October 19, 1973, in Kankakee, Illinois. He was supposed to be born on the 23rd, the first day of Scorpio, and his mother was so convinced of this that she bought a baby book with the Scorpio symbol on the cover. Instead, he was born a Libra and is an embodiment of that sign, and he sees both the good and bad qualities of that sign in his personality. Early in his life, he realized that his birthday was numerologically significant, October being the 10th month, his date of birth being divided and added equally $10 (1+9 = 10)$, and dividing his birth year and adding those numerals equal ten as well. $(1+9 = 10, 7+3 = 10)$. Numerologically, the number 10 has the below qualities, which define him as well:

Independence

Infinite potential

Wholeness

Self-determination

Exploration

Why is this important? He feels that he's always been drawn to learning as much about himself, the world, and his place in it from a very early age. He also feels that in doing so, one should not exclude concepts such as Astrology or Numerology to understand oneself. Educating himself was always important, and his favorite place growing up was the library. Darin was raised in the mysteries of the Roman Catholic Church and went to parochial school through the 8th grade in his hometown of Bradley, Illinois. He was always fascinated by the Latin prayers included in the missalette. He believes that his current love of ritual comes from this. Darin graduated from Bradley Bourbonnais Community High School in 1991 and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign in 1995 with a Bachelor's in

Political Science and a Minor in Philosophy. He moved back home to Bradley for a few years before moving back down to East Central Illinois in 1999. Darin spent several years in various communities in East Central Illinois before moving to St. Joseph, Illinois, on December 28, 2008. Darin became involved in the community, coaching Soccer for a few years and becoming involved in the local Cub Scout Troop. It was through his involvement with the Scouts that he met Greg Knott. Darin isn't sure what Greg saw in Darin, but at some point, Greg talked to Darin about becoming a Freemason. After some thought and investigation, Darin filed out a petition to join Saint Joseph Lodge #970 in Saint Joseph, Illinois.

Darin was initiated as an Entered Apprentice on 9/19/2011, passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft on 11/7/2011, and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on 11/28/2011. Aside from serving the Grand Lodge as the Area Education Officer for the Eastern Masonic Area, he is a Past Master of St. Joseph Lodge No. 970 in St. Joseph. He is also a plural member of Homer Lodge No. 199 (IL), where he is also a Past Master. He's a member of the Scottish Rite Valley of Danville, a charter member of Illinois Royal Arch Chapter, Admiration Chapter No. 282. He is the Co-Managing editor and a regular contributor to the Midnight Freemason blog, a host and producer of the "Meet, Act and Part" podcast. He is also a co-host of the "Beyond the 4th Veil" podcast.

Outside of Freemasonry, Darin is employed as an Enterprise Systems Specialist for the University of Illinois Systems Office in the Administrative Information Technology Systems department, where he supports Payroll and Human Resources applications. He enjoys spending time and traveling with his girlfriend, Lisa, and his children, Ken and

Spencer.

When asked about Freemasonry, Darin will defer to the below quote given by his friend and mentor, Greg Knott.

“Freemasonry to me should be educational opportunities, fellowship, service to others, and work within the community, all with a purpose of individual self-improvement.”



GRAND LODGE SESSIONS 2021

by R.H. Johnson

Grand Lodge Sessions (GLAC or Grand Lodge Annual Communications) is a special time of year for many Freemasons--regardless of jurisdiction. It's a time for great fellowship, for taking care of some administrative duties of the Grand Lodge, and it's also a time for celebration.

When I joined Freemasonry, I went on for four years before realizing the Grand Lodge Sessions was open to any Master Mason. The first time I attended was when I was a Jr. Warden for my “Mother Lodge.” Needless to say, after that experience, I thought--”I’m never missing this event again.”

Since that time, I’ve encouraged every new Master Mason to attend. It truly is a magical experience. Many Brothers feel the sessions are less than inter-

esting; however-- those actively engaged with our Craft have a different opinion. I think it's safe to say we love it. his girlfriend, Lisa, as well as his children, Ken and Spencer.

Last year our Grand Lodge of Illinois held its first-ever Virtual Grand Lodge Sessions. All our programming was scrapped, and all that was left to do was the administrative sessions. The Grand Lodge did a tremendous job of keeping things professional and concise. We accomplished administratively in 3 hours what we usually take two days to do. But it wasn't the same--at all.

So much was missing from the experience. We all held on to our hopes that the global pandemic would become under control when the subsequent

Grand Lodge Sessions rolled around. Well, it's here. Next month our Grand Lodge will meet (unless governmental and state regulations prevent us due to Covid-19), and I know many of us are very excited to attend.

Yes, this year will be different, I'm sure. Masks, hand sanitizer, and as much social distancing as possible will probably be the name of the game during the event, and that's okay. I'm just happy to be able to see everyone and bump some fists.

I've got my train tickets bought, my hotel reservations are taken care of, and I'm ready to go. How about you? Please check the following page to make your reservations if you have not yet done so. Also, check out the schedule of events happening outside of the main sessions. I think you'll find that there are lots of great educational opportunities!

HOTEL INFORMATION

The MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE of A.F. & A.M.

STATE of ILLINOIS – ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 8th & 9th, 2021

All hotel reservations will be placed directly with the hotel. Hotel reservations can be made online or by phone, both requiring a credit card. Reservations must be made no later than September 16, 2021, to secure the room. Reservations are filled on a first come, first serve basis. All rooms and hotel properties are smoke free (except in designated areas). Cost per room is \$105.00 plus tax. If you wish to stay extra dates before or after the event, please contact the sales manager at the appropriate hotel. Follow the below instructions on how to make your reservations.

Please call the hotel of your choice to make your reservations.

Wyndham Springfield City Centre
700 East Adams St. • Springfield, IL 62701 • 217-789-1530

Group Code: 10057027GL or "Grand Lodge of Illinois"

Online reservation link:

<http://bit.ly/GrandlodgeOct21>

President Abraham Lincoln Springfield – a Double Tree by Hilton Hotel

701 East Adams St. • Springfield, IL 62701 • 217-544-8800

Group Code: GLI

Online reservation link:

https://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/S/SPIASDT-GLI-20211007/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Please note: No rooms can be held without a credit card. Cancellations must be made one day prior to arrival. Failure to cancel will result in a \$105 plus tax no show fee applied to your credit card on file.

Educational Workshops and Presentations

1:30 PM - Illinois Masonic Family Identification Program - Wyndham Springfield Center, Conference Center 4.

1:30 PM - Groupable|M2 Training - BoS Center, Room B-11A

3:00 PM - Grand Lecturer/CLI Meeting - Wyndham Springfield Center, Ambassador Room

3:00 PM - Illinois Lodge of Research, Wyndham Springfield Center, Plaza Room III

3:00 PM - OLP Training, BoS Center, Room B-11A

For a full list of events, including non-educational ones, check out the Illinois Freemason Magazine.



EDUCATION = ENGAGEMENT

by Jordan Kelly

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal” 1 Corinthians 13:1.



These words, recited by our chaplain and written by the Apostle Paul, the eponym of my Lodge, St. Paul's No. 500, speak to the heart of my belief in Masonic Education. Why do we educate? Knowledge is power, we're told. Yet, we find that there is already a wealth of knowledge amongst the Craft and even the public. We have more information available than at any previous period in time. Masonry teaches us that there is more beneath the surface than we initially see. There are connections that abound. Our labor, specifically our charity, is among the greatest of our tenets.

I want to share a story of Masonic Education in action. My Lodge prioritizes education during every meeting. We open, approve minutes, and immediately jump into our monthly education topic, and for this, I am very grateful. During one of our educational discussions around 1st Corinthians--13, we realized that while we were active within our Lodge, we were missing a significant opportunity to be charitable throughout our community. We identified that often, our lodges are themselves the recipients of charity, utilizing fundraisers to raise funds for the Lodge and not for charitable causes. We then wonder why our lodges seem to be in a state of continual struggle. Instead, we decided to put the horse before the cart and redirect our focus. We now focus not on how much money we can make or how to bring in new members but on what impact we could have in our community.

Upon deeper discussions connecting the previous passage, the point within a circle, brotherly love, relief, and truth, the level, and the beehive--this gumbo of Masonic symbolism and ritual lead our Worshipful Master to appoint our first-ever Com-

munity Engagement Committee (CEC) this year. The CEC was charged with increasing our presence in the community and making ourselves known for our good works. Within the eight months the CEC has existed, we have had begun multiple endeavors, including weekly charitable giving events, hosting a golf outing to benefit needy children, a matching charitable meal fund, and have been contacted to host other major philanthropic events in our community. Many of these efforts have been accelerated exponentially by partnering with Grand Lodge's IMCAP and IMOS programs when possible. And if all of that wasn't great, we expect to wrap up 2021 by bringing in at least five new Master Masons, most doing long-form catechisms--altogether, an impactful activity that aids in the retention of our newest Masons. We have a full officer line with active sideliners, a goal of achieving Gold in our first shot at the Grand Masters Award of Excellence, and multiple members striving to become Certified Lodge Instructors with hopes of becoming Grand Lecturers.

It has been truly amazing to witness how a shift in our energy and inputs into how we can best act as Masons in our lives and positively impact our communities can provide greater results than we could have ever anticipated. Masonic Education can come in many forms and span many subjects: history, theology, philosophy, symbolism, ritual, and more. It is my belief, however, that regardless of the subject or medium, the best education comes with a charge to apply these lessons in our lives, impacting our families and communities as we continue to improve ourselves.



LODGE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE ACCELERATING HIS JOURNEY

by Right Worshipful Brother Wayne Spooner



Some of the most important work that we perform for the growth and positive development of our Lodges occurs between stated monthly Lodge meetings. An image may come to mind of a

Brother pacing in his basement while practicing ritual work for an upcoming degree or a gathering with Brethren to host a community blood drive. Yes, these scenes are important to our work as Freemasons. However, **some of the most valuable work that we perform for Ancient Craft Masonry is serving on an Investigating Committee for a man who submits a petition to our Lodge.**

No matter how tenured we are in Freemasonry, many of us vividly recall the experience of a well-executed and engaging Investigating Committee experience back when we were Membership Prospects. The Lodge Officers and Brethren who take pride in the effective execution of these critical experiences embrace a fundamental responsibility and care in accelerating the timeless educational journey made from “Prospect to Candidate to Brother.” **This committee, comprising of the three Brethren appointed by the Worshipful Master, sets out on an expedition of fact gathering, information evaluation and imparting knowledge.** Why? To determine a verdict of “favorable” or “unfavorable” by the committee members regarding the Membership Prospect, and a similar conclusion is made by that man regarding the Lodge and Freemasonry. Yes, the Membership Prospect is evaluating us as well, and that experience should provide fuel for his decision to pursue Light “of his own free will and accord.”



This committee, comprising of the three Brethren appointed by the Worshipful Master, sets out on an expedition of fact gathering, information evaluation and imparting knowledge.



A critical success factor is viewing the Investigating Committee session with the Membership Prospect as a two-way dialogue. In particular, meet at his home; it is a space that is comfortable for him and provides a literal and figurative opportunity to invite Freemasonry into his personal life. In this conversation, we want to hear about why the Membership Prospect is looking to make being an active Freemason a priority for the rest of his life. Also, we want to acquire insights about why he has chosen our specific group of Brethren to associate with and befriend. Lastly, we want to understand him, as a whole person, covering the professional / work and personal aspects and aspirations about his life including any hobbies or exceptional talents. **If we are to become Brothers, then a wise and capable Investigating Committee knows not to leave that conversation as strangers.** Therefore, the committee members should share concise personal stories about their individual Masonic journeys, talk about why they actively invest their time with fraternal activities, cover information about their professional / work backgrounds, shed light on our complex fraternal organization, and outline specific next steps on the journey to become a full member of the Lodge and fraternity.

A critical success factor is viewing the Investigating Committee session with the Membership Prospect as a two-way dialogue. In particular, meet at his home; it is a space that is comfortable for him and provides a literal and figurative opportunity to invite Freemasonry into his personal life. In this conversation, we want to hear about why the Membership Prospect is looking to make being an active Freemason a priority for the rest of his life. Also, we want to acquire insights about why he has chosen our specific group of Brethren to associate with and befriend. Lastly, we want to understand him, as a whole person, covering the professional / work and personal aspects and aspirations about his life including any hobbies or exceptional talents. If we are to become Brothers, then a wise and capable Investigating Committee knows not to leave that conversation as strangers. Therefore, the committee members

should share concise personal stories about their individual Masonic journeys, talk about why they actively invest their time with fraternal activities, cover information about their professional / work backgrounds, shed light on our complex fraternal organization, and outline specific next steps on the journey to become a full member of the Lodge and fraternity.

Even if clear “red flags” arise in the discussion or during probing questions asked regarding independently discovered information about the Membership Prospect, the Brethren on this committee have a duty to the Lodge and fraternity to set realistic and clear expectations about the balloting and degree completion processes. The Membership Prospect should not wonder about next steps; those items should be covered including expected time investments and financial requirements as an active Candidate and Master Mason. He should know about the requirements to study the history, philosophy and degree ceremony experiences including taking the oral proficiency exams. Also, the Membership Prospect should be informed that he will have a Lodge Intender, a teacher, mentor and coach by his side to help him through that learning journey. **Fundamentally, inspiring a Membership Prospect to approach his perfect entrance into the new world of Freemasonry with confidence is part of the Investigating Committee's work.** His concerns should be addressed and questions answered. Said differently, the Membership Prospect should acquire a fundamental trust in the process and ceremonies to follow.



Inspiring a Membership Prospect to approach his perfect entrance into the new world of Freemasonry with confidence is part of the Investigating Committee's work.



Past Masters, Lodge Officers and Brethren, we have an important question for you to ponder — **Will the next Investigating Committee experience that you conduct be one in which the Membership Prospect will remember favorably as a positive launching point in his Masonic journey that helped accelerate his understanding, love and admiration for our Speculative Craft of Builders?** The importance of this committee's work cannot be overstated to impact the positive health and welfare of our ancient and honorable

fraternity. **May your work be Square, Level and Plumb during these Investigating Committee discussions to advance the discovery and reveal of the Perfect Ashlar that resides within the Rough Ashlar whom you encounter that day.**

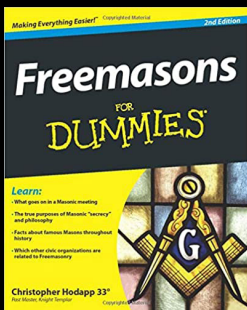


THE READER'S CORNER

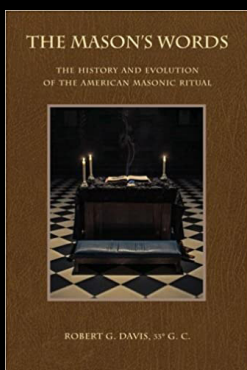
Did you know that your committee on Masonic Education conducted a massive inquiry--a survey of the entire constituency of Illinois Freemasons about which books are recommended for Brothers? We did! In addition to asking our Illinois members what books were recommended, we also asked members from all over the world.

The results were astounding. However, after compiling the results of more than 3,000 submissions, we had clear winners in every category we were looking for. Those categories were based on how in-depth a member wanted to get.

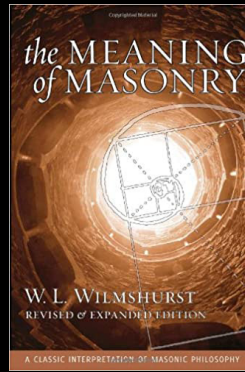
In both sets of survey data, the members of Illinois and abroad, the message was evident. Your committee at that time reviewed each book and also agreed with the recommendations. Those books are the following:



Recommended for all Freemasons at any level -
Freemasonry for Dummies
by Christopher L. Hodapp
33°



Recommended for Freemasons with an intermediate interest in history and philosophy - The Mason's Words: The History and Evolution of the American Masonic Ritual
by Robert G. Davis, PGM,
G:.C.:



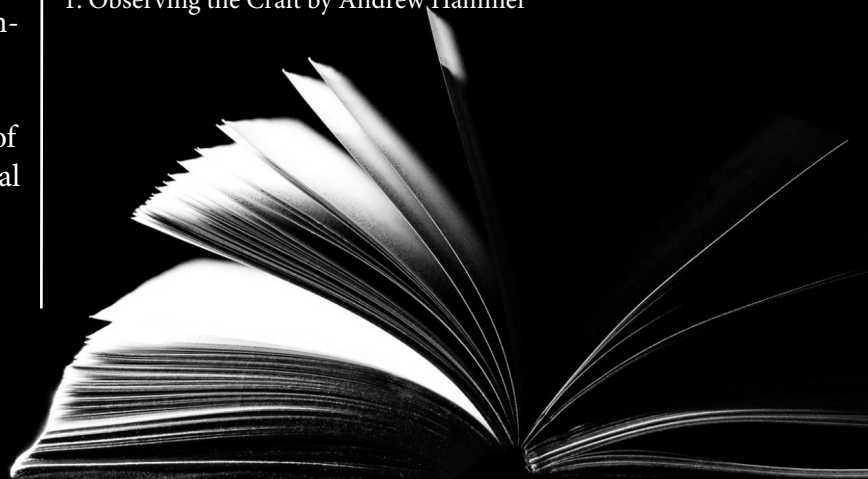
Recommended for Freemasons with a search for spiritual and philosophical interest - The Meaning of Masonry by W.L. Wilmshurst

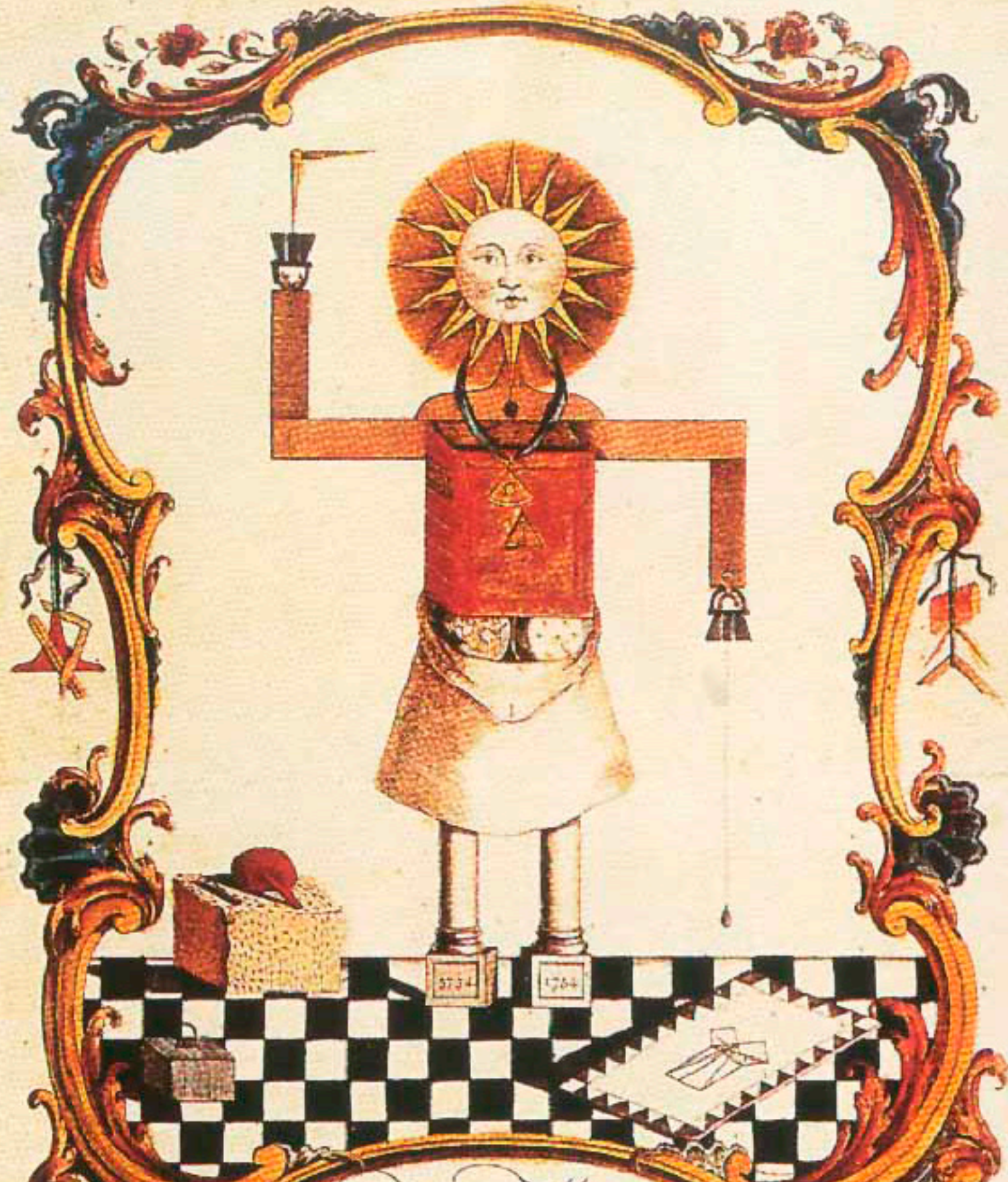
This list is truly remarkable and is still wholly relevant considering that two of the books were recently awarded spots on the top 10 books of the new millennium book poll put out by the Southern California Research Lodge's publication, The Fraternal Review (September 2021 Issue). A complete list of the books that made their top ten are below. For more information on the Fraternal Review, visit their website at:

www.theresearchlodge.com

The Top Ten Books of the New Millennium So Far

10. The Three Stages of Initiatic Spirituality by Angel Millar
9. The Way of the Craftsman by Kirk Macnulty
8. Operative Freemasonry by Kirk C. White
7. Myth Magik Masonry by Jaime Paul Lamb
6. Exploring Early Grand Lodge Freemasonry edited by Christopher B. Murphy and Shawn Eyer
5. Freemasonry for Dummies by Christopher Hodapp
4. The Mason's Words by Robert G. Davis
3. Contemplative Masonry by Chuck Dunning
2. Approaching the Middle Chamber by Jaime Paul Lamb
1. Observing the Craft by Andrew Hammer





*A Free-Mason &
Formid out of the Materials of his Lodge*

*Behold a Master-Mason rare,
Whose mystic Portrait does declare
The Secrets of Free-Masonry,
Fair for all to read and see;
But few there are to whom they're known,
Tho' they so plainly here are shown.*