
The Lyceum



A publication of the Illinois
Committee on Masonic Education



Contents

From the Editor-In-Chief.....3

RW.: R.H. Johnson

From the Chairman.....4

WB.: Michael Overturf

IMCAP Updates & Information.....5

IMCAP Staff

**The Mystery of Oak Island: Masonic Connections to a
Real National Treasure Site.....6**

Ill.: Bro. Steven L. Harrison

From The Vault: The Purpose of the Intender.....13

Masonic Education Committee

Are You a Master?.....14

RW.: Chad Lacek

The Cup of Brotherly Love.....15

WB.: Robert L. Wingader

A Website for the Lodge.....16

WB.: Hilton Kaufman

Reader's Corner: A Pilgrim's Path - Book Review.....18

WB.: Kevin A. Wheeler

Grand Lodge Educational Annual Communication

Educational Highlights.....20

RW.: R.H. Johnson

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Greetings, Brothers all!

This month we have something for everyone. From adventure to mentorship to plumbing the depths of our minds--it's in this issue. Over the past month, we've all been busy. Many Lodges are getting back to work, new Worshipful Masters are getting ready to or have already begun a term in the East. Lodge Education Officers are getting their bearings.

To me, and many Brothers, Lodge Education is the most critical piece of Freemasonry. The very idea of Education encapsulates learning--and what exactly do we learn to do? Improve ourselves? But how do we do this?

Freemasonry has a unique value proposition. We have timeless philosophical lessons taught through a system of degrees, which can then be unpacked for years to come after witnessing or being a part of them. Those lessons are seasoned with the Brotherhood of the Lodge and the activities that keep a Lodge active.

Masonic Education, in short, is the reason for the Craft. And also--it's your way to retain membership and maintain and grow the attendance at your meetings. Education is the key!

We hope you enjoy this month's offerings. Our Chairman explores the 24-Inch Gauge. Sometimes it feels like we could do better managing our time.

Brother Steve Harrison takes us on an adventure to Oak Island--no punches pulled here. Steve takes the facts and lays them out. Could there be a Masonic connection?

Get cozy and settle in and get rid of your distractions. Brother Chad Lacey gets contemplative in his succinct piece--"Are You A Master?"

Worshipful Brother Robert Wingader explores the Cup of Brotherly Love--a historic artifact still in existence and kept by Evans Lodge. It traveled around the world and survived WWII.

We also have an excellent piece from Masonic guru and tech wizard Hilton Kauffman about Masonic Lodge websites, a great book review by WB: Kevin Wheeler and some Grand Lodge Annual Communication Masonic Education highlights.

We hope you enjoy it!



From the Chairman

WB Michael Oveturf, Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee



It doesn't seem possible that October is already upon us. By the time this issue is released Grand Lodge Session will be done and over. I hope this finds all the Brethren with Health and Wellness and that everyone had an enjoyable Autumnal Equinox. This Month I would like to stay within the Entered Apprentice degree and focus on the two working tools we all received. My Masonic Spiritual Mentor told me to always be aware of Synchronicity, and it's been a reoccurring discussion, so I am going with that vibe. Let us start first with what ritual defines as the working tools of an Entered Apprentice:

The Twenty-four Inch Gauge: *"...emblematical of the twenty-four hours of the day, which we are taught to divide into three equal parts, whereby we find eight hours for the service of G_d and a distressed worthy Brother, eight for our usual vocations, and eight for refreshment and sleep. The common gave, we use for the "...glorious purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluties of life, thereby fitting our minds, as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."*

Given time to contemplate on these two tools, with my current vocations, I had to seek more because when I read the purpose of these tools of a Free and Accepted Mason, it just never made sense. I never could get the three equal parts to balance, and I never knew what I was supposed to be divesting myself of. Let us, this month, focus on the Twenty-four Inch gauge.

It dawned on me that I needed to remember that the Great Light in Masonry was my Volume of Sacred Law, for me, the bible. It is the *"rule and guide of [my] faith."* I did a deep study of the Chapters in which King Solomon authored Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Songs of Solomon to see if I could understand these tools and their purposes better. [1] What I discovered was that even though I work 12, 14, 16 hours--if I work for Him that *"doeth all things well,"* I am fulfilling my eight hours of service to G_D. Checking on a Brother with a phone call or text, talking to a Brother I don't see often are all things I can fit into my schedule to care for a "distressed worthy Brother." Even gathering together for a round of golf, coffee, or an

adult beverage can fulfill that charge.

The Charge to the Entered Apprentice highlights a lesson with the 24-Inch Gauge.

"By such a prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of your faculties in their fullest energy; thereby enabling you to exert the talents wherewith G_d has blessed you, as well to his glory as to the welfare of your fellow-creatures."

The Charge had the answer in plain sight, but in haste to memorize it, I never thought about it. One day I was visiting a Brother concerning a fundraiser, and I ran into a daughter of a Brother who had passed. While we were talking, she said that the Masonic turnout for her father's funeral was amazing. She remarked, *"It stuck in the back of my mind. Daddy was always attending something Masonic."* Regarding the 24-Inch Gauge, we are frequently working for Freemasonry and likely doing the Great Work.

I came across this paragraph while researching, and I would like to end with these from Pastor Rick Warrens Purpose Driven Life and his question for Day #16 for your thoughts and discussion.

"Time is your most precious gift because you only have a set amount of it. You can make more money, but you can't make more time. When you give someone your time, you are giving them a portion of your life that you will never get back. Your time is your life. That is why the greatest gift you give someone is your time."

"The best way to spell LOVE is TIME."

"Knowing that One day you will stand before G_d, here are some questions you need to consider.

- 1.) *"How will you explain those times when projects or things were more important to you than people?"*
- 2.) *"Who do you need to start spending more time with?"*
- 3.) *"What do you need to cut out of your schedule to make that possible?"*
- 4.) *"What sacrifices do you need to make?"*

[1] I use Pastor David Jeremiah's books as a study tool 31 days to Happiness for Ecclesiastes, Powerful Principles from Proverbs, and Love, Marriage and Sex for The Song of Solomon.



ILLINOIS MASONIC CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Leading Children and Young Adults to a Brighter Future!

Lodge Partnership Programs

Youth Organization Connection

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding for youth organizations or events in Lodge communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lodge led proposal - Organization helps youth in community |
|--|---|

IMCAP understands how important community is to our Lodges. We have been able to partner with Lodges to provide funding for summer lunch programs, youth events, and youth sport teams. A perfect example is a proposal from May Lodge #718 for their community's summer children's lunch program. How can you help your community youth?

Education Grant Partnership

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to \$1000 UNMATCHED - Up to \$1000 MATCHED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 years or younger - College or vocational program - No Illinois Masonic family connection |
|--|---|

In FY21, IMCAP partnered with 155 Lodges to provide scholarships to 244 students. Next year, we want to see more Lodge's offering scholarships, more Lodge's applying for Education Grant, and more grant money going to help more young adults. With your help, we can provide more young adults with a start to a bright future!

Campership

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Match with Lodges dollar per dollar - Summer or special camps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High school or younger - Illinois Masonic family connection |
|--|--|

Attending camp can be a great way to gain independence, teamwork, and education. Our first campership was for a young lady who uses a wheelchair to attend an independence camp. She made friends, learned independent skills, and built confidence to accomplish life goals. With our Lodges, we can provide these opportunities to more youth!

Specialized Learning Grant

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to \$5000 per child per year - Lodge sponsored - Needs related to learning disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High school or younger - No Illinois Masonic Family |
|--|--|

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 that they need in order to thrive.

Go to IMCAP's website at IMCAP.org for detailed information and applications for each service offered.



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The Mystery of Oak Island : Masonic Connections to a Real National Treasure Site

by Steven L. Harrison, 33°, FMLR

"I'm going to steal the Declaration of Independence."

Accompanied by the thousand yard stare that comes free with every epiphany, that is how Benjamin Franklin Gates (a.k.a Nicholas Cage) matter-of-factly announces where he will find the key to wealth beyond imagination... a hidden map to the long-lost Masonic Treasure.

We all know Ben got the job done in the movie National Treasure, but that was fiction. Fact is, there is no map on the back of the Declaration of Independence. There may be, however, a place where that cache is real. Treasure hunters have speculated that solid evidence about the place may lead them to nothing less than Solomon's treasure, the Holy Grail or the Arc of the Covenant; or maybe all three and even more. The place is so captivating that, along with others, high profile Freemasons like Franklin D. Roosevelt, John Wayne and Richard Byrd have contributed to the efforts to unearth the potential fortune there. It has proven to be a stubborn place, not yielding its secrets easily. Many have tried, some have died

What is it about this spot that has led to its link with the Freemasons? Let's start at the beginning...

The Money Pit

The story or, if you prefer, legend goes something like this:

Along about 1795, eighteen-year-old Daniel McGinnis found a circular depression in the ground on a small Canadian island. It was beneath an old



oak tree with strange markings carved in it, and reports say a block and tackle was hanging from one of the branches. He figured something had been buried there; something very big and very heavy. He rounded up two friends, John Smith and Anthony Vaughan, and they started digging. Today, nearly 220 years later, we're still digging. Depending on the reports you can read, the effort has led treasure hunters through nearly 200 feet of muck, mud-caked chambers with oak floors, a cement vault with walls seven inches thick, tantalizing artifacts with strange symbols and, of course, the mother of all booby traps that they still can't bypass. This isn't the fiction of Benjamin Gates. It's all very mysterious, very real and, unless a bunch of 18th century guys played history's biggest practical joke, there may be something very important down there. Legend has it that seven people will die before the treasure is recovered. It also says the treasure won't be found until there is no living oak tree left on the island. As of today six men have died in the quest and there is but one oak tree left. Still, no one knows what is at the bottom of this mysterious place, now known as "The Money Pit," located on tiny Oak Island, a peanut-shaped dot tucked into Mahone Bay, about 40 miles southwest of Halifax, Nova Scotia (or about 175 miles east of Bar Harbor, Maine).

It didn't take McGinnis and his friends very long to dig about three feet into the pit where they found a layer of carefully laid flagstones. To them, this was clear evidence that the hole they had found was not a natural phenomenon and it spurred them to continue the dig, which became increasingly difficult as the hole — 13 feet wide — deepened. At a depth of ten feet the young men discovered a layer of oak logs laid across the width of the shaft. This second discovery also encour-

aged them to keep going. They found another layer of logs at the depth of 20 feet, and another at 30 feet. Having dug down 30 feet in a pit 13 feet in diameter was all they could take, and they gave up.

The Onslow Company and the Cipher Stone

The hole sat unattended for eight years until 1803. Vaughan had a connection with the Onslow Company of Nova Scotia and, on behalf of the original trio, he arranged for it to bring in some heavy equipment to “finish” the dig. Onslow workers went down another 60 feet before they, too, gave up. At regular intervals of ten feet, just like the McGinnis group, Onslow found layers of oak logs. The crew speculated the wood layers were there to prevent the dirt filling the hole from sinking and crushing the contents below.



Onslow found no treasure, but the company made a couple of significant discoveries. At about 60 feet, the crew found coconut fibers,

which were commonly used as packing material; however, the nearest coconut trees were 1,500 miles south of Oak Island, indicating whatever was in the pit was not of local origin. Perhaps more significantly, at the 90-foot level the men allegedly found a stone slab with strange markings. Of course, no one could interpret the “cipher stone,” as it is now known, but the crew did take it as an encouraging sign. The stone has been lost, and most historians think it is nothing more than a legend. Some accounts say the owner of Oak Island took it home and used it as part of his fireplace hearth. Whatever happened to it, if it existed at all, the supposed inscription was copied. Two independent scholars have interpreted its inscription to say, “Forty feet below, two million pounds lie buried.” Legend or not, the Onslow crew figured it was on to something and kept digging... but not for long.

Booby Trap

Whether there was a cipher stone or not, digging through the 90-foot level activated a “booby trap” that flooded the pit back up to sea level (approximately the 32-foot mark). Some researchers have speculated the trap worked on the same principle as a soda straw someone dunks into a glass of water, holding a finger against the top of the straw. The

inside of the straw remains filled with air until that person removes the finger, then it fills with water. Removal of the cipher stone, or whatever was at that level, broke the seal. It appeared whoever built the pit constructed a side channel out to the sea and, when the seal was broken, the water rushed in. Upon being unable to drain the water, the Onslow Company gave up its search.

Reports on the nature of this water trap differ. Some researchers claim to have found a series of five channels leading into the main channel that fed into the Money Pit. During a 1995 survey, however, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution filled the main chamber with red dye. They then observed the dye exiting into the ocean at three different locations. The scientists there concluded that this meant the pit flooded due to a natural phenomenon, not because of a man-made trap. Others refuted the findings saying they proved there were multiple water traps, proving the construction to be extremely sophisticated for something built prior to the end of the 18th century. Adding to the confusion, in 1897, another group calling itself the Oak Island Treasure Company said it discovered the booby trap tunnel while excavating between the money pit and Smith’s Cove to the east.

Later, explorers found a “five finger drain” coming out of the island at Smith’s Cove, claiming this proved conclusively the booby trap was real. Not so, claimed another researcher, speculating the unusual drain was part of a previously unknown salt works.

More Digging

Many companies and individuals have made attempts to complete the dig since the Onslow company left. John Wayne owned one of the companies that tried. Antarctic explorer Richard Byrd also became involved in the project. In 1910, a young Franklin Roosevelt made the first of two trips to the site, and maintained a lifelong interest in it.

One of the main goals of many of the digs since Onslow left has been to drain the shaft. Even with some fairly sophisticated modern technology, no one has been able to do it and the Money Pit remains flooded to this day. Other teams taking core samples gathered by drilling directly into the

hole have found new intriguing artifacts. At 98 feet searchers discovered a layer of spruce. On below they discovered three links of a gold metal chain

In 1897, during the same dig in which the Oak Island Treasure Company claimed to have found the booby trap tunnel, workers also drilled into the shaft for core samples. At the 153 foot level they found seven inches of cement fragments, followed by another seven inches at the 160 foot level. In between, they found a parchment fragment about the size of a dime, with the letters “w” and “v” written on it (others say the inscription is “VI”). The paper was treated with traces of mercury, assumed to be there for preservation. Given the configuration of the cement samples, the company concluded the fragment was inside a concrete vault. In the 1930s, the Chappell, Hedden, and Hamilton dig drilled through the same spot but didn’t find any cement.



Contemporary Exploration



Treasure hunters at the site have been less active in recent years. The last significant dig took place in 2010. At that time, explorers measured seismic

activity and yielded results termed “interesting,” but the latest available published results stem from a 2008 exploration. Oak Island, especially the area surrounding the Money Pit, may be the most extensively studied piece of real estate in North America. Modern researchers have discovered metal buried in several places on the island and speculate there are multiple locations where additional treasure, or artifacts, may be buried. Still, in over two centuries, except for a few tantalizing scraps, no “treasure” has been recovered.

Today, Oak Island is under private ownership. Until 2011, the province of Nova Scotia scrupulously regulated treasure hunting applications and had a history of being slow to issue anyone a “Treasure Trove License.” The province issued the 2010 license to the seemingly inappropriately named company, Oak Island Tourism, Inc., a consortium consisting of most of the property owners on the

island along with a few others. In 2011, the “Oak Island Act” came into effect which allowed treasure hunting to continue under the terms of the former license. No reports of significant activity since then, however, have surfaced.

Another group, Friends of Oak Island (friendsofoakisland.com), actually arranges tours. This group conducted several walking tours during the summer of 2013 and indicated it had plans of continuing to do so. The island is otherwise closed to visitors. The province of Nova Scotia has considered developing the island as a major tourist attraction, but that project has yet to gain momentum.

Theories

It wouldn’t be too much of an exaggeration to say there are countless theories attempting to explain the contents or purpose of the Oak Island Money Pit. As is usually the case, each of the theories has supporting documents, anecdotes and suppositions to back it up – as well as detractors. Some think either the British or the French hid funds there to keep them away from their respective enemies during the American Revolution. Others believe it to be Spanish or even Mayan treasure. Given the fact that a video probe into a secondary pit revealed grainy scenes of what may be a body, there is speculation that it is the tomb of someone important. One of the most prevalent theories is that the Money Pit guards the treasure of the infamous pirate Captain Kidd. Alleged deathbed confessions from members of his crew may support that conjecture.

Another theory claims the pit is nothing more than a sinkhole. Those supporting this theory point to recent indications that the findings on the island are more in line with a natural phenomenon. They contend the booby trap is the result of porous stone found elsewhere in the area. They also say the oak logs found at regular intervals weren’t as regularly laid out as some claim, and that they were just sucked in when the sinkhole was formed. When it comes to artifacts found there, the gold chain for example, they contend they were planted to spur additional digging.

One of the more creative theories stems from claims William Shakespeare didn’t write all of the plays attributed to him, but rather Francis Bacon did at least some of the writing (if not all of it).

Since no original Shakespearean manuscript has ever been found, some believe they will turn up at the bottom of the Oak Island pit where Bacon may have had them hidden. Proponents of this theory point to the dime-sized, mercury-preserved paper fiber for support.

The speculation rolls on and on with some theories having degrees of credibility and some careening off the wall and flailing in from left field. Various researchers have proposed the contents of the pit may have come from (among others): the Egyptians, Aztecs, Mayans, Vikings, Portuguese and even, yes... space aliens. Take your pick.

And then there are the Freemasons. Whenever there is a mystery, someone is bound to throw in a theory about how those scoundrels the Masons are behind it all. The Oak Island treasure has all the ingredients – suspected treasure, mysterious and ancient origins, symbolism and complex construction that only some of history's greatest builders could have pulled off. Many of the Oak Island researchers put the Freemasons right at the top of their list of suspects.

The Knights Templar

Historically, most Freemasons and independent scholars agree Freemasonry descended from the craft guilds of the medieval stone masons. Still, there are connections some feel indicate Masonic origins stem from the order of warrior clergy known as the Knights Templar, a name which today's York Rite Commandery members have assumed.

Originally formed as a band of knights to protect the Holy Land, the Templars took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to God. Some have suspected the members of finding Solomon's treasure while they resided at the site of his temple, although no signs of digging are apparent there. Along with that treasure, they also might have discovered the Arc of the Covenant and the Holy Grail. Over the years the Knights Templar fought, won and seized the assets of their enemies. Being a monastic order, the Templars paid no taxes and, despite their vows of poverty, became so wealthy they actually formed Europe's first continent-wide banking system. Rumors swirled about their activities, with detractors claiming they had abandoned their original vows and were engaging in forbidden

non-Christian practices.

By the beginning of the 14th century, the order had become a weakened military group but was otherwise exceedingly rich and powerful. The Knights Templar answered only to the Church, and King Philip IV of France became wary of their power and jealous of their wealth. Philip kidnapped the Pope (who mysteriously died) and eventually replaced him with Pope Clement V, whom Philip controlled. With the setup in place, Philip struck on Friday, April 13, 1307. With the blessing of his puppet Clement, Philip orchestrated a simultaneous raid on all Templar centers. He arrested the knights, confiscated their wealth, charged them with unspeakable crimes and tortured them to gain confessions.

Rumor supported by some evidence has it that some of the knights escaped, grabbed all or part of the great treasure and headed for the hills... the hills of Scotland, where they found refuge in the stonemasons' lodges. The treasure, some suggest, went directly to Oak Island, which is unlikely since Europeans didn't learn about the New World for another 185 years. Others suggest the Templars took the treasure to Scotland where it was hidden in Rosslyn Chapel.

Some suspect the treasure is still hidden at Rosslyn, but searches have yielded nothing but more speculation. Alternative theories say the Templars forged an alliance with the family of William Sinclair who built Rosalyn. Later, they contend, Sinclair or one of his descendants had the treasure moved to Oak Island.

So there you have it. It's the Templar treasure on Oak Island because the knights bugged out of France with it and took it to an obscure place not yet discovered. Or, they took it to Scotland with them and years later William Sinclair took it to Oak Island when, in fact, he apparently had a perfectly good hiding place for it at Rosslyn. If you think there might be just a couple of holes in the Templar theory, fear not. Other signs point to the Masons, too.

An Uncanny Similarity

The Bible tells us Enoch, seventh man from Adam and the great-grandfather of Noah, was a just and upright man who so pleased God that he did not die; rather, God took him directly to heaven

(Hebrews 11:5). We learn further from Jewish and Masonic legends that God saw Enoch as a man of such virtue he elected to reveal to him His true name. Enoch dreamed God appeared to him and said, "Enoch, thou hast longed to know My true Name. Arise, and follow Me, and thou shalt learn it." He transported Enoch to a mountain top where the true name of God was written in the clouds. God then whispered the name to Enoch and forbade him to say it to anyone. Afterward, God transported him into the earth through nine arches into a subterranean vault. There, Enoch found a triangular gold plate containing the true name of God.

When he awoke, Enoch took the dream as a sign from God and traveled to Canaan, where he dug the nine arch-covered subterranean apartments he had seen in his vision. The lowest was made of solid rock. There, upon a pedestal, he placed a triangular plate of gold containing the true name of God. Above this excavation, he built "a modest temple of unhewn stones" with a secret passage leading into the apartments. Underneath it all, the pedestal with the gold triangle waited for future generations to find.

And find it, they did.

The Scottish Rite's 13th Degree is a legend about "recovering that which was lost." Commonly known in the Scottish Rite's Southern Jurisdiction as "The Royal Arch of Solomon," this degree has also been called the "Royal Arch of Enoch."

In the ceremony of this degree, three candidates emulating workers Adoniram, Yehu-Aber and Satolkin are on a quest to descend through the nine apartments into the lowest vault. Upon reaching it they find themselves in complete darkness. When the workers uncover a pedestal, a bright light fills the room. In this mysterious light, they are able to see the Ineffable Name of God.

Likewise, in the Royal Arch, or 7th, Degree of the York Rite, three sojourners offer to help rebuild the temple. Once the three prove themselves to be Most Excellent Masters the council members assign them to clear the ruins of the old Temple in preparation for the laying of the new Temple's foundation. Eventually, the three workers discover a subterranean vault and two of them use a rope to lower the third into it. There, on a triangular

pedestal, the third sojourner finds "a curiously wrought box, on the top of which were three ancient squares." Later, the squares are determined to be the jewels of office of Grand Masters Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram Abif. The box contains a pot of manna, Aaron's rod and a scroll containing the long lost Book of the Law.

Although the items found in the two degrees differ, the existence of the pedestal and the pit are similar. Additionally, historical commentaries indicate an earlier form of the Royal Arch Degree was more consistent with the 13th degree in the Scottish Rite.

In other words, legend says Enoch left the ineffable word in the 9th chamber of a subterranean pit to be discovered at a later date. Then, in the 13th Degree of the Scottish Rite or (depending on your interpretation) the Royal Arch Degree, three workers discover it. This legend of Enoch bears an uncanny similarity to many characteristics of the Oak Island money pit:

McGinnis, Smith and Vaughan discovered and began excavating the Oak Island pit, corresponding to the three workers, Adoniram, Yehu-Aber and Satolkin who discover Enoch's apartments.

A temple of unhewn stones sat on top of the shaft in the Enoch legend. The money pit was covered by a layer of "unhewn" flagstones.

Enoch left his treasure in the 9th subterranean chamber. Beginning with the first layer of oak logs serving as its roof, to the bottom of the Oak Island pit, there are nine chambers.

The lowest of Enoch's chambers was made of stone. Core samples brought up in 1897 allegedly found a seven inch layer of cement at the 153 and 160 foot levels, indicating the lowest chamber contained a "stone" vault.

In the Royal Arch degree, part of the treasure found was the long lost Book of the Law, corresponding to, according to some, the parchment found within the lowest vault in 1897.

The workers in the Royal Arch degree strike a rock with a crowbar prior to the discovery of the treasure. The structure gives forth a hollow sound, which eventually reveals the underlying vault.

Likewise, just prior to ceasing operations, the Onslow Company — using a crowbar — dug up the cipher stone and reported striking a hollow sounding object just below.

Records indicate that very early on in the Oak Island digging process, workers found a rock with an iron ring embedded in it near Smith's Cove on the east end of the island. In the 13th Degree, the subterranean vault's door is a stone with an iron ring to enable its opening.

The similarities between the Masonic degrees and the characteristics of the Oak Island dig appear to be more than coincidental. Regardless of what may lie at the bottom, Masons may have, over time, highlighted or even added facts to symbolize the pit as a representation of the 7th Degree in the York Rite or 13th Degree of the Scottish Rite.

Blue Lodge and other Symbols

Even if theories corresponding to the Templars and to Enoch seem a bit shaky, many are still determined to pin the origin of the Oak Island mystery on the Freemasons. It seems there is Masonic symbolism, or perceived Masonic symbolism, all over the island. However, the Masonic connections on Oak Island, if they are real, are somewhat unique. Most other theories relating events with possible Masonic origins compare their symbolism to attributes of Blue Lodge Masonry. Although there are traces of the symbolism of those first three degrees on the island, most of what is there relates to the York or Scottish Rites.

When Freemasons leave signs of their presence, they generally don't delve into the "higher" degrees for symbols. Symbols from the first three degrees on Oak Island, however are rare. For starters, there are claims that there were Masonic markings on the tree above the pit. Unfortunately, the only surviving indication of what those signs might have been is that they were "signs by which Freemasons identify themselves." Absent the knowledge of what those signs were, we can only speculate they may have been more standard representations of the Blue Lodge.

Other discoveries of symbolism on the island, pointing to the Blue Lodge and beyond are as follows:

Letter "G": In 1967, workers unearthed a granite boulder with the letter "G" carved into it. The letter is formed inside a rectangle and was found on the east side of the island, all items of significance recognizable to Freemasons, with the "G" itself alluding to the core of the ritual with connections to deity and the geometry of operative Masons.

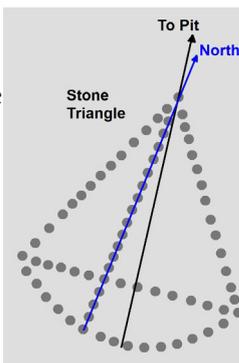
Point Within A Circle: A 1936 expedition turned up several stones on the north side of the island near Joudrey's cove. Gilbert Hedden who was in charge of the dig, reported the stones bore Masonic markings, but was not specific as to what the markings were. On one stone, however, Hedden found a carving of a point within a circle. Other markings on the stone appear to be the letter H and a cross flanked by four dots, which some researchers have concluded bear similarities to the Portuguese flag.



Heart-Shaped Stone: Another author, Mark Finnin, describes the discovery of a handworked heart-shaped stone, which he believes alludes to the sword pointing to a naked heart in the Entered Apprentice degree. (Finnan, Mark. 1997. Oak Island Secrets, rev. ed. Halifax, N.S.: Formac.)



Equilateral Triangle: There was (most reports indicate it is no longer there), on the south side of the island, an equilateral triangle measuring about ten feet on each side. Rocks laid out at about one foot intervals formed the shape of the triangle as well as a semi-circle beneath it. Through the center was another line of rocks pointing due north, with the triangle itself pointing directly toward the money pit. Some have said the triangle also resembled a crude depiction of a sailing ship.



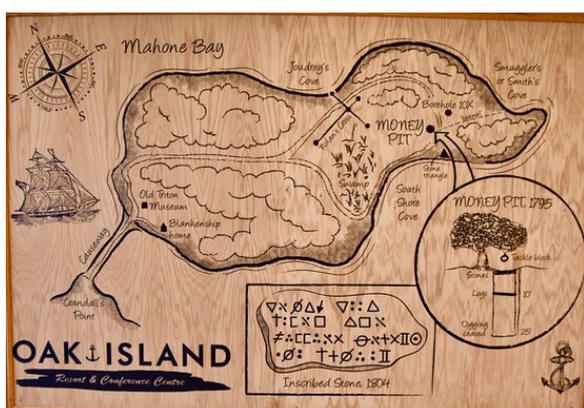
The Cross: Five large conical stones on the north side of the island form the shape of a Christian cross with a sandstone marking the center point of intersection, apparently alluding to the connection between the Masons and the Templars. The cross is situated from northeast to southwest with a span

of 720 feet and a height of 867 feet. Due to the distance between the stone markers and the fact they were partially hidden in island undergrowth, the cross was not discovered until the early 1980s.

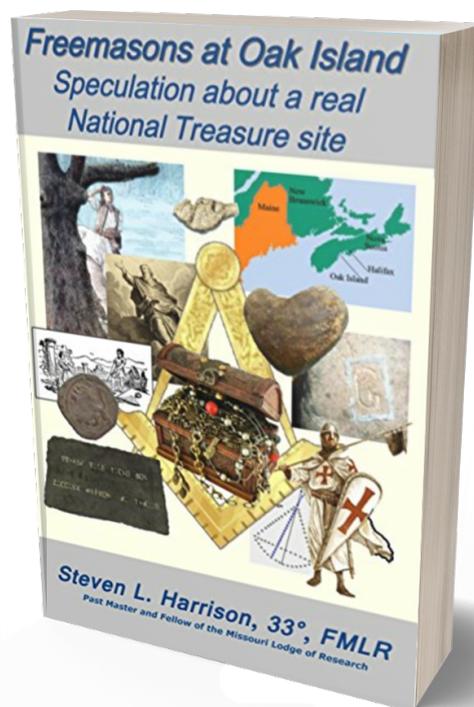
The Cypher Stone: Reportedly found at the opening to the final deep chamber, the cypher stone itself bore no Masonic markings, but told of a treasure buried below. Some ascribe Masonic symbolism to it just by the fact that it was encrypted, seemingly implying that where there is encryption, there is Masonry. Most notably, however, they relate it to the use of the Royal Arch cipher, although the coding on the stone as described was not that of the Royal Arch.

Those are the main items, but there is even more. Various workmen's tools, corresponding to the working tools of a Freemason, have been unearthed on the island. Most notably, searchers found a square underneath the finger drains in Smith's Cove. Of course all Masons are aware of the place the square holds in their ritual, but not all squares are Masonic. Author Dennis J. King, a Freemason, postulates that separately, the tools might not mean much but together they seem to represent signs and symbols of Freemasonry. (*The Oak Island Legend: The Masonic Angle*, 2010).

Oak Island is at the very least an intriguing mystery. Buried within the legends that have built up around it are certain facts that have made it an enigmatic and captivating place. From a discovery made by three curious young men over 200 years ago, to the technology fueled digs of today, we still know nothing for certain. All we do know is there may be absolutely nothing in the pit, or it may be the greatest treasure of all time. Where is Benjamin Gates when you need him?



Illustrious Brother Harrison is a life long learner and has written several books. Of note to those who've enjoyed this article, his book on the topic can be purchased from Amazon.com.



Before you go purchase this book, consider this -

What if we told you that using this Amazon link, you raise money for your Grand Lodge Charities? It's true! Amazon is a global leader in sales, and because of this, by going through this link to do your shopping, a percentage of each sale goes to the Illinois Grand Lodge Charities. It's called, Amazon Smile. It's an all-around WIN! You get what you want at the prices you want--and the Illinois Grand Lodge Charity Funds grow--allowing us to help all those in need.

If you're reading this online - [just click here!](#)

If your reading this in print, go to www.amazon.com/smile and choose The Illinois Grand Lodge Charities from the selectable charities. It's that easy!

Then, enjoy Steve's book and know that your purchase assisted your Brothers in need!



DISTRICT EDUCATION TALKING POINTS

Purpose of the Intender In Speculative Masonry:

“In modern times the Intender mentors the petitioner through the three degrees, teaching them the foundations of Freemasonry, including the catechism, and explaining the materials in the Intender Manual so that after being initiated the new Mason progresses through the degrees with a basic knowledge of the ritual and symbolism of the degrees.”

The above statement was part of the rollout of the revised Intender Program in the mid-to late 2000s. It still rings true. Freemasonry has a rich tradition of many things, but it all hinges on our relationships. The Intender Program is one that allows each Brother to experience learning through a guided process and framework with someone he can trust—a Brother.

F R O M T H E V A U L T

ARE YOU A MASTER?

by RW.: Chad Lacek, Committee on Masonic Education



You have just been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

Well, what exactly are you Master of? Since we are speculative Masons that do not work with stone, where and on what are your supposedly expert skills being employed?

The Senior Warden in a Master Mason's Lodge claims that his purpose for attending is to learn to subdue his passions. As you advanced through the three degrees, you were shown changes in the position of the square and compasses on the Great Lights.

At first, the square, representing the Earthly or terrestrial realm, was on top of the compasses, which represent the heavenly or celestial. Finally, in the third degree, the celestial had moved to the forefront, overtaking the terrestrial.

This is a clue that we have moved our focus from the tangible and temporary to the ethereal and eternal.

Before exploration of the celestial can begin, the material self must be brought under control. We must master ourselves. The voice in your mind must become your voice, not the voice of your fears and doubts. The drives and desires, habits both good and bad, must serve you, not the other way around.

Only when the Master Mason is Master of himself can he be receptive to the higher thoughts and subtle influences of the divine.

So I ask you again, what exactly are you Master of? Are you a Master Mason?



The Cup of Brotherly Love

by WB.: Robert L. Wingader, DEO 4th NE



The Cup of Brotherly Love is a Masonic artifact of great significance; its story is emblematic of the global nature of the fraternity.

On September 7th, 1929, In honor of his son's Raising in Evans Lodge No. 524 (Evanston, IL), Worshipful Brother Norman B. Hickox (PM, 1923) donated to the Lodge a beautiful chalice wrought of silver and gold, and expertly engraved with the symbols of our craft.

The brethren of Evans Lodge decided to send the Cup of Brotherly Love on a trip around the world, always in possession of a Master Mason and traveling ever eastward, with the idea that the journey would foster international goodwill and friendship among freemasons all over the globe.

A book of travel was prepared, with a proclamation addressed to each Lodge which might host the Cup. The proclamation was written in English, Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian, Danish, and Portuguese and, in English, read as follows:

TO THE GLORY OF THE GRAND ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE:

To All and Every our Most Worshipful, Right Worshipful, Worshipful and Loving Brethren of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons throughout the World to whom this message may come

GREETINGS:

Know you that upon the Raising of his son to The Sublime Degree, a Brother has given to the Lodge this marvelously wrought token of Gold and Silver; Receive from us this Cup, befittingly Dedicated to the Mothers of all Men and Consecrated forever to Brotherly Love and Affection between all Mankind, but more especially our Brethren in Freemasonry;

Drink you, all our Brethren, from this Cup in acceptance of the Fraternal Wishes for your Health, Prosperity, and Continuance, of all whose lips have touched its brim;

Inscribe upon its golden surface as you choose, your Name, Time and Place in the endless Circle of Travel, and write upon a Page in the Book such Message as you consider appropriate, Posting to us by mail directly, news of your actions;

Hand on to our Brethren toward the East, Where and Whom as you may Desire, this Symbol of the Glorious and Mystic Tie, giving it Safe Conduct by the Hand of a true and trusted Brother, that it may Completely Encircle the Whole World and Return to us within Seven years, bearing Witness to the Universality of our Beloved Fraternity;

Blessed be all you who shall Welcome this Cup of Brotherly Love and Expedite its Travels in Foreign Countries, and may your Names be forever Honored among Masons.

With our Brotherly Love and Affection, The Brethren of Evans Lodge No. 524, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Evanston, Illinois, U. S. A.

IN THE YEAR OF LIGHT FIVE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE

It was a long, long journey.

Seven years the Cup was to take to traverse the globe. It should have been back in Evanston in the 1930s. In fact, it took until 1958, having stopped at more than 150 lodges around the world, survived the 2nd World War while still on the European leg of its journey.

Legend around Evans Lodge has it that at the returning of the Cup in 1958, so many dignitaries and "important" guests came that the lodge hall, which had been built only in the late 1920s to hold hundreds of Masons, was overwhelmed. Even members of Evans Lodge couldn't be in the room, except they be officers of the Lodge.



A Website for the Lodge

BY HILTON KAUFMAN

Information about Freemasonry was difficult to find a few decades ago. Many members would not even mention the existence of the institution to close friends unless they happened to ask. While the buildings where Lodges met were usually marked, many people had no idea what the square and compasses with a G in the middle indicated. Today most, if not all, regular Grand Lodges, as well as many Lodges, have websites with information about the organization and how to seek to join.

While some of us nerds and techies understand what is involved in putting out on a website, others might appreciate a brief overview. This is partially specific to Illinois Masonry, but it can be of some interest to brethren in other jurisdictions.



The Grand Lodge of Illinois encourages Lodges to use websites and even provides an easy to use one, called Our Lodger Page (OLP), at no extra cost to the Lodge. Some Lodges also have more striking sites. My own Lodge uses both. While the OLP site works well for keeping members informed, the other is aimed at attracting potential members. Another Lodge has a very attractive public site which has a link to its OLP site for information which is intended for members only.

The OLP website is largely programmed by checking or not checking boxes. Because OLP ties into the membership database, it is possible for a lodge with little technical expertise to just check a few boxes and let the website run. The location, the regular meet-

ing times, and the officers could then automatically appear. Lodge news and calendar items, if published, can be set to appear to anyone who looks at the site, any Mason who signs in, or only by members of the Lodge. Members who sign in can be permitted to add comments or be prevented from doing so. There are other features that make it useful to communicate with and help retain members.

While this application has its good points, there are some negatives that can be of concern to Lodge website administrators. For example, features have been changed by the developer with little or no warning. There is also a generic look to websites using the OLP application. Some graphics or other features are as the Grand Lodge, rather than the local Lodge, wants

While there is a computer coding behind all websites, various applications permit development and maintenance to be done much more easily. Most websites use something known as a website builder, WordPress, OLP, or other products. A few specialized

websites are created directly in HTML to permit full flexibility in appearance. Even many very large corporations go the easier way.

Every website requires an address and a computer that is on all the time to hold the programming; Our Grand Lodge contracts with a vendor to take care of this for OLP. It is best to work with a hosting service if you use another website.

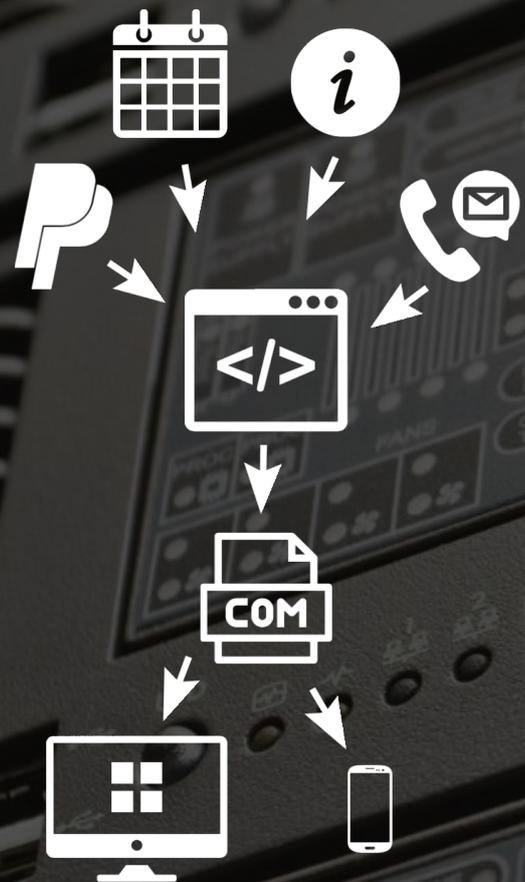


There are companies that do this for a fee. They range from large international organizations to little local shops. Some will provide more support than others. The cost can be about \$200 per year if a member does much of the website development and updating work. If you want extras, such as e-mail addresses or special assistance, the cost will be greater. Most hosts can provide WordPress or a website builder technology to create and maintain the website.

If you are an officer of an Illinois Masonic Lodge, I strongly encourage you at the very least to set your OLP site to provide basic information about your Lodge. It is pretty easy to do.

Hilton Kaufman is currently the Secretary of Chicago Lodge #437 and has served in most other Lodge offices. He has been around computers in various ways for a long time and was trained as a programmer. Before retiring, he was a career bureaucrat who made heavy use of computer applications and taught others how to use them. He has been around computer work off and on for so long that he developed skills along the way which are now considered a bit archaic. While he tries to avoid technical language in his writing, he is pretty good at computerizing when needed.

He can be contacted at hkaufman2713@live.com.



Reader's Corner

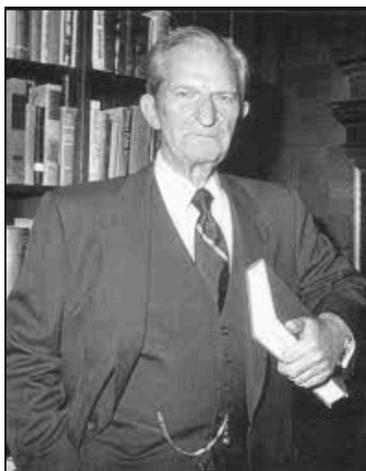
A Pilgrim's Path

A Book review by
Bro. Kevin Wheeler

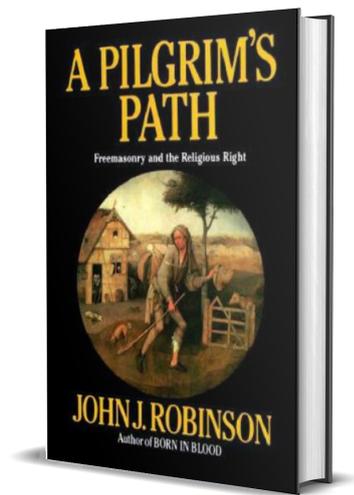
Honestly, when picking the book entitled A Pilgrim's Path by [Bro.] John J. Robinson, I did not know what to expect. However, it became clear to me quite quickly that I had come across a great and precious piece of work.

This book is unique in that it provides a deep understanding of Masonry on all levels and provides options, ideas, and methods to increase participation, membership, and interest from the public and throughout Masonry. One interesting aspect of this book is that Bro. Robinson wrote it before becoming a Mason. In fact, the book itself may have been one of the influencing contributors to his joining the fraternity. He did so just before the book went on sale.

Unlike most Masonic books, this book was written so that anyone and everyone could gain a better understanding of Masonry. The author incorporated a unique approach in targeting his audience. He wrote the book for those people on the threshold of becoming a Mason while on the threshold himself. Additionally, he was able to both resonate with Master Masons, who've been in the fraternity for days or years, as well as causing the public to view Masonry from the inside through an outsider's eye. The book covers many Masonic topics--the very definition or definitions of Masonry, varying origin theories, and some controversies, including some anti-masonic authors from that movement.



At the beginning of this book, we are introduced to John J. Robinson, the well-known non-Mason Masonic author responsible for writing the famed Masonic book entitled Born in Blood. He then describes his years of traveling with Masons while researching his various books before



explaining what a Mason is. He describes the symbolic lodge and the difference between the United Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Lodges in America. After Robinson described the difference between the two countries, he needed to explain that there is no Grand Lodge of America. Instead, each individual state has its own Grand Lodge under its own jurisdiction, sharing mutual recognition. Other topics covered include notations like, "Each Mason shares the belief that charity and love are in keeping with the wishes of his G_d, whether he calls his G_d Jehovah, Yawhew, or Allah." He also explains and introduces various organizations affiliated with Masonry, including the Grand Orient of France, the story and start of Prince Hall Masonry, the definition of a Clandestine Masonry, as well as the York Rite, the Ancient Order of the Mystic Shrine, and Scottish Rite and its jurisdictions, Order of the Eastern Star, Order of DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow Girls.

Once the author establishes what a Mason is, he discusses how freedom, especially the creation of the United States of America, was influenced and conducted by Freemasons. He goes on to identify a significant number of prominent Masons who helped to shape this great Country. These men and Masons were involved in every critical aspect of the War of Independence, from doing paperwork to acquiring allies and fighting the front lines. From the Boston Tea Party to the creation of the American Constitution. One area that became important to me was that Freemasonry in America started at a bar in Philadelphia, PA, called Tun Tavern, the very same place where Capt. Samuel Nicholas, a Freemason, created the United States Marine Corps and becoming the first commandant. Robinson continues by describing how Masonry has had influence in nearly every revo-

lution for freedom from tyranny throughout history.

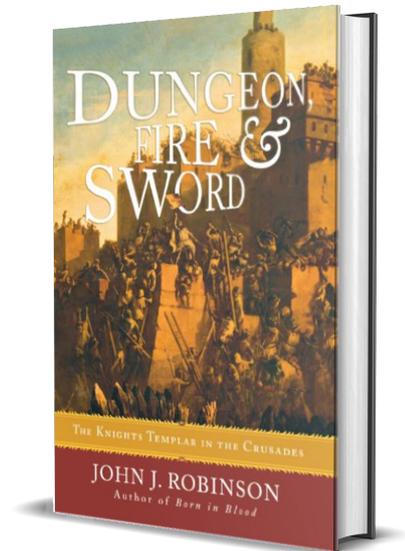
Later in the book, the author covers whether or not Masonry is a religion and how and why Masonry was viewed as evil or devil-worship at certain times throughout history. The author also discusses one of the most prominent Masonic writers, Albert Pike, and how he was targeted during the anti-Masonic era. However, when talking about Pike, although he was the Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite Masonry Southern Masonic Jurisdiction, he clarifies that he does not favor him. In fact, in the following sentence, it is clear what Robinson really thinks about Bro. After stating how prominent a figure he was in American Masonry, he goes on to say, "What he was not was a Grand Master of any Grand Lodge, who alone is the final authority in basic Masonic practices and jurisprudence."

One notable thing to me was how the correct use of the name Lucifer when used by Pike in *Morals and Dogma*, sparked Leo Taxil's forgery and the anti-Masonic movement. I did disagree with Robinson's belief that Pike's use of the word Lucifer was "...showing off. Pike must have known that Lucifer was Satan. He should have explained his use of the name, or he should have avoided it". The reason I disagree with this statement is that if holding true to what Bro. Pike believes about Masonry and its Adepts; regarding the self-study search for further knowledge, it would make sense why he used the word as such. He wanted the reader to conduct the research for oneself.

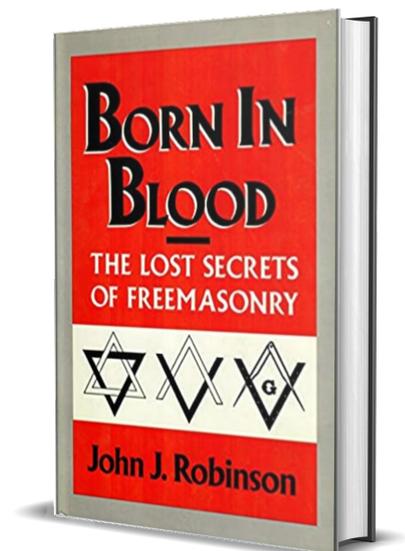
Several chapters in this book covered aspects of anti-Masonry, explaining who and how those movements started, including Leo Taxil, Pat Robertson, The Southern Baptist Convention, and Dr. James L. Holly. Various other topics are very useful for new and old Masons alike. Some of these include Masonic Origins, be it Egyptian, Builders of Solomon's Temple, or the Builders of the Medieval Guilds, how many people and Masons alike regard Masonry as secret despite there being very little that is actually secret, the realities of creating change within the local lodges and throughout Masonry, appendant bodies. Lastly, Robinson tells the reader how worthwhile his research and interactions with Masonry inspired him to knock on that door three times, becoming one of our Brothers in this great and ancient fraternity we call Freemasonry.



Other works by John J. Robinson you may be interested in are the following. Please remember you can find these books on Amazon.com and by using Smile, you can get your books and support the Illinois Masonic Charities.



Dungeon Fire and Sword - The Knight's Templar in the Crusades



Born in Blood - The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry



GRAND LODGE ANNUAL COMMUNICATION EDUCATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

by R.H. Johnson

Grand Lodge Sessions, or Annual Communication, 2021, was a big success. Brothers from across the state come out in droves. I'll be honest--I wasn't sure if it would be a ghost town or not due to the Pandemic. However, Brothers masked up and respected distances--Things looked good logistically.

As we reported last month, there were many sessions to "get your learn on" on Friday afternoon. Our CLI and Grand Lecturers had sessions; there were leadership and membership forums and the Illinois Lodge of Research meetings. There's always some competition with these meetings. Brothers all need to pick and choose what they want to go to.

CLIs and Grand Lecturers typically have to miss the Illinois Lodge of Research since they have the same



time slot in two locations. It's a bummer--but we all make due.

On Saturday morning, our new Grand Master, Michael E. Jackson, announced the Educators of the year for 2021. These Brothers were both instrumental in disseminating Masonic Education both around the state and in digital forums.

The recipients were WB. Darin A. Lahners and Bro. Justus Fischer. Their efforts do not go unnoticed by our Grand Jurisdiction! WB. Darin was also the recipient of this year's Andrew Torok Award for Masonic Education, presented by the Illinois Lodge of



Research and the Torok Foundation.

As we begin 2022--in the quarries together, we must recognize the efforts of our Masonic Educators at all levels. The District and Area Officers support the Lodge Education Officers. Working together, we can aid our members in becoming better men through the study and contemplation of our history, philosophy, and tenets.

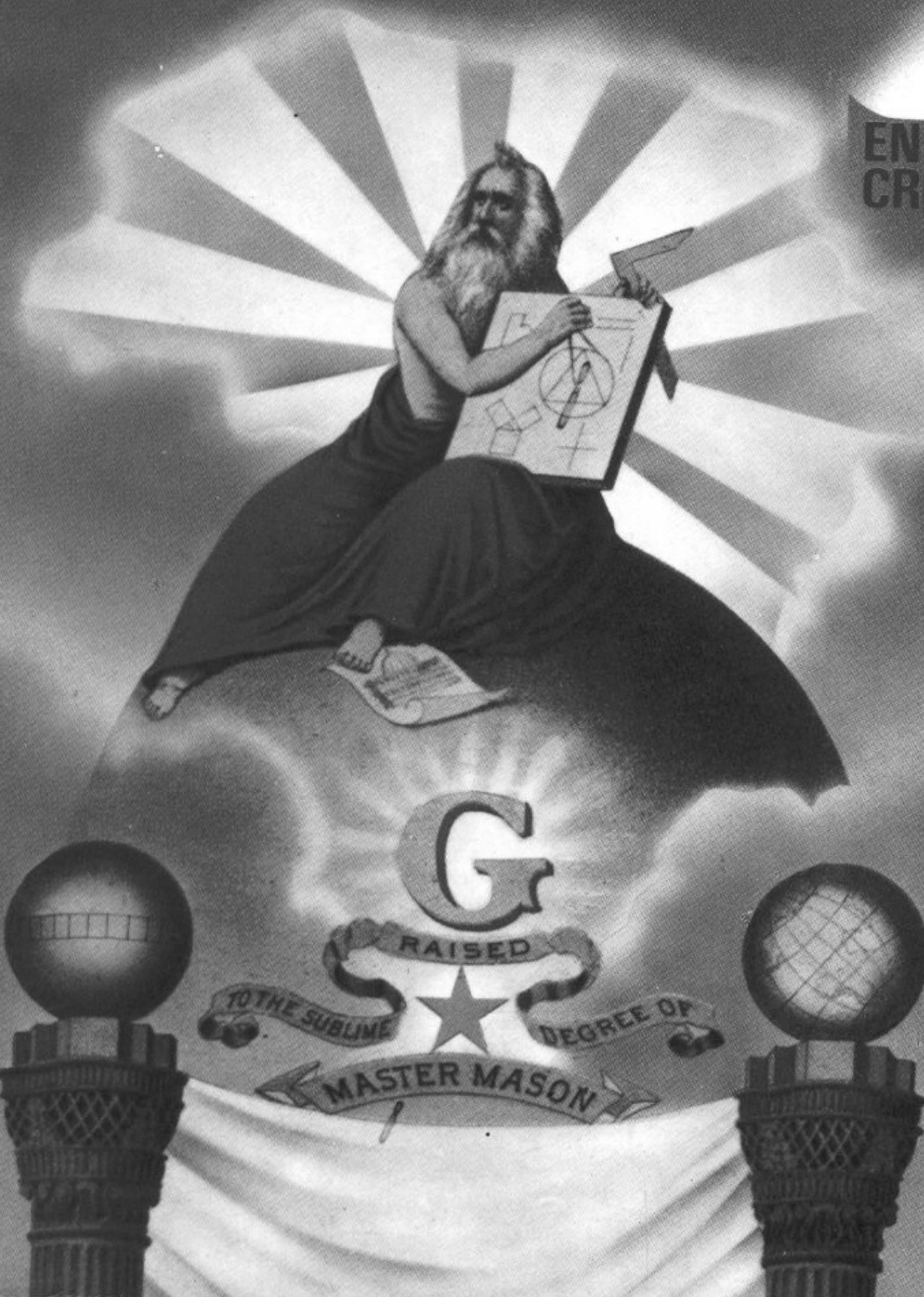
Thank you to all our Masonic Education representatives across the state. You're the reason someone stays active!



WM: Mark Nokes, R.H. Johnson and Award Winner, Darin A. Lahners. The award was a custom and original piece of commissioned art from famed Masonic Fine Artist, Juan Sepulveda.



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RAISED

TO THE SUBLIME

DEGREE OF

MASTER MASON