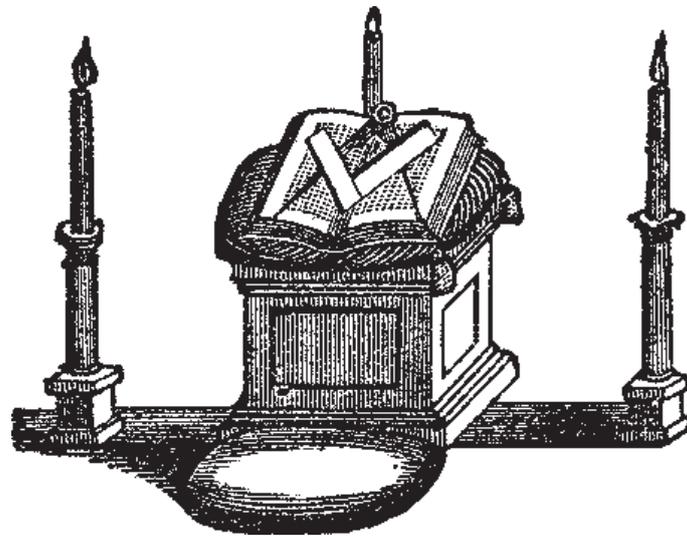
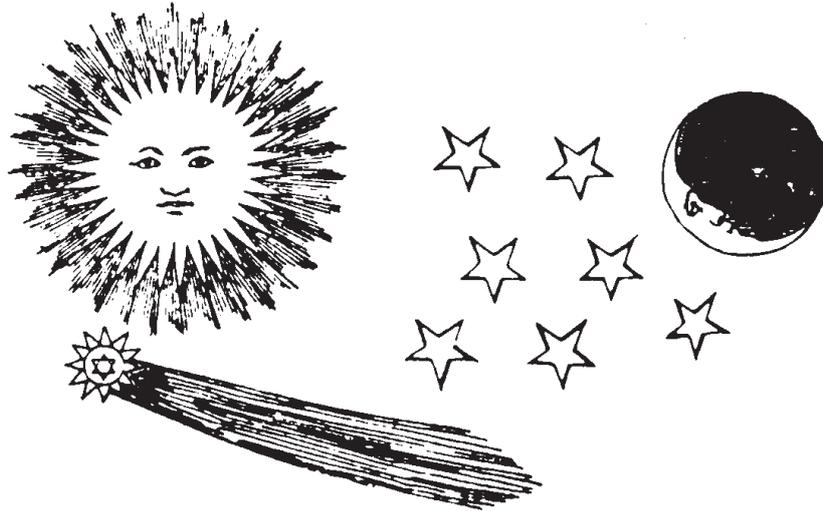

The Lyceum



A publication of the Illinois
Committee on Masonic Education



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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Brothers all,

I'm excited for you to read this month's issue of the Lyceum! We've got a full array of unique and thoughtful articles from some of our most "zen" thinkers in our fraternity.

November is about giving thanks, and I hope that the articles we've curated for you this month certainly aid you in this endeavor. Our Chairman, Michael Overturf, starts us off thinking about just what it means to break off those "rough and superfluous parts" of ourselves. WB:. Mike also provided a bit of history on our Grand Lodge Seal this month and offers a bit of contemplation on why certain symbols were used. Was it intentional? You'll have to read it to find out!

Staying true to the ever-present theme of being reflective, WB:. James Frey, DEO of the 12th NE, explores the concept and philosophy of Stoicism. What is it? How does it relate to Freemasonry? And can it be of use to us on a daily basis?

A Lodge visit turns into an epiphany for RJ Budler when he decides to grab a cup of coffee at his favorite local shop. A prayer wall and the concept of Universal Compassion is the topic of his article. In it, he asks some pretty important questions about the universality we all attempt to espouse.

RW:. Chad Lacey gives us some excellent words on the concept of Gratitude. What it means, what it is and how we can practice it to be better human beings.

I'm also excited to bring you a cipher to solve! You'll need to be regimented and follow the clues for this puzzle. The winner will receive something pretty cool.

Anyway, there's so much cool stuff in this month's issue, I can't list it all. I hope you all enjoy it.

Remember if you have something you want to be published, send it in!-- secretary@spesnovum.com

The Mountain is the way,

R.H. Johnson



From the Chairman

WB Michael Oveturf, Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee



Brethren,

As we enter our special season, the fall colors are on full display in the Southern half of the state, and our Northern Brothers are seeing their first snow flurries. For Freemasons, we're going into the season of Officer's elections and installations. As the Secretary, it's again time to prepare dues notices and for sending out dues cards.

Most importantly, however, it's a time to gather with family and friends, break bread, relax and enjoy the company. For me, it's a great time to reflect on the year and to pause and contemplate on all that has happened. It's the perfect time to break out the Common Gavel and begin to; *"divest our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting our minds, as living stones for that spiritual building that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."*

When I heard this line for the first time, I thought to myself—"Wow, this is heavy stuff! But wait, if we are good men, then what are we divesting ourselves of? And What the heck are "superfluities?"

Merriam-Webster Defines superfluities as *"Excess or Oversupply"* *"immoderate and especially luxurious living, habits, or desires"* *"amenity, comfort, extra, frill, indulgence, luxury."* Vices are *"bad or immoral behavior or habits: a moral flaw or weakness: a minor bad habit"* (yes, I violated Masonic protocol by using Merriam-Webster).

If we go back to before we had been made a Brother and knocked on the door, our first Masonic lesson was to "wait, with patience." So, our ritual gives us a hint on how we are to be a "better man," and it's repeated every time we knock on that door. At the start of Morals and Dogma, Albert Pike instructs us to wield the Common Gavel with caution and watch the amount of force we use.

Pike's warning of the Common Gavel tells us that

if we strike too hard, we could damage ourselves or our families. Divesting or changing our habits takes patience and time. Change is best done slowly. Often time after making these changes, we think we're on the right path again. And then, we discover that we may have replaced one vice or superfluity with another. Divesting our minds of one and gaining another. In *The Mentor Leader* by Tony Dungy, he says, "You can tell the world who you are, but they will see in action the you they remember."

Find time to reflect in as we head into this holiday season and ask yourself these questions:

What superfluities do I need to work on?

What vice do I need to focus on?





ILLINOIS MASONIC CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Leading Children and Young Adults to a Brighter Future!

Emergency Relief

Helping Families Find Relief

Provide assistance when disaster, hardship, or tragedy impacts the lives of children and young adults in our Illinois Masonic families.



OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Dental
- Child Care
- Disaster Relief
- Funeral

TO QUALIFY, THE APPLICANT NEEDS TO:

- Be 21 years old or under.
- U.S. citizen or legal resident.
- Have an Illinois Master Mason relative in good standing, who is living or deceased.
- Must show financial need.
- Needs are not covered by insurance or other financial/service resources.

You can find out even more ways IMCAP is working to support children and young adults in need with developmental, social, financial and educational means, encouraging them to achieve their goals, by visiting our website!

www.IMCAP.org

The Stoic Apprentice

by WB.: James E. Frey, DEO 12th NE

We live in an age of uncertainty. Twenty million people have applied for unemployment, thus far, millions more are quarantined, and we have no end in sight for the pandemic that has ravaged the world. This makes a lot of us feel an overwhelming sense of anxiety because these circumstances are outside of our control. Many of the support systems people had as well, like friends and family, have given way to isolation. And chances are good it will get worse before it gets better. We will be surrounded by images of death in the news and our community. This will be shocking to most, but as Freemasons, we are uniquely prepared for this because we have been prepared by the teachings of our Craft. We have already learned to contemplate our own mortality when most stray away from such thoughts. We are better equipped to help those suffering--to reframe this experience into an opportunity for growth.

I will focus on the degree of Apprentice as it gives the most direct tools of understanding this feeling of dread and interpreting it through a stoic mindset. The first part of this is not often used in many jurisdictions, but its importance cannot be overstated--the chamber of reflection. This tradition arose in German lodges for existential meditations. The focal point for the chamber of reflection, as well as many other higher degrees and orders, is the skull, a reminder of the fragility of life. It is a reminder of the fact that our existence is limited in time. Through death, we are reminded of why life is so precious. Because we too, like everything else in life, must pass. There is no escape nor avoidance. We will die.

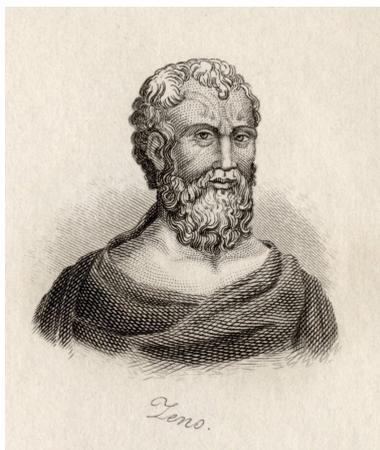
To the uninitiated, this bleak dread can turn one to fill that void with a hedonistic lifestyle, seeking a consumerist satisfaction, or ruthless service to one's sense of superiority. But like many at home right now, all the Netflix, Amazon deliveries and angry political posting won't distract you from the genuine fact that your experience will end. Even worse, others turn to nihilism, finding no purpose in their

experience. This is where Masonic truths give relief because the lessons of the Apprentice are connected to the ancient philosophy of Stoicism.

Stoicism is an ancient Greek school of philosophy founded at Athens by Zeno of Citium. The school taught that virtue is based on knowledge devised from reason; the wise live in harmony with the divine Providence--the divine force that governs nature and the fate of all men. Stoicism teaches one to be indif-



ferent to the vicissitudes of pleasure and pain. The Stoics claim many influential philosophers, including Epictetus, Seneca, and even Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The Stoics viewed death as a natural succession to life that cannot be denied. But it can be utilized as a great motivator in life. Stoics believed that through our actions, we are given the opportunity to live what the Stoics referred to as a virtuous life.



Zeno of Citium

The Stoics defined virtue within four characteristics, known as the Four Cardinal Virtues of Stoicism. Sound familiar? It should because Stoicism alongside Aristotelian ethics are the major founding approaches to Western virtue ethics. Prudence, the innate wisdom we possess. Justice, our ability to be moral in our actions. Temperance, our self-control over our actions, and Fortitude, being courageous in the face of life's adversities. We need to embody all these virtues in every perception of life, and in all our actions. To the Stoics, this is the only life worth living—a life of meaning in which you positively impact the world. The Stoics knew that there was no point in arguing or fighting against the aspects of life for which we have no control. They knew all we can do is to control how we perceive the adversity, and what our actions are in response to it. In his moral letters to Lucilius, Seneca explains death is the unifying act that brings all humanity together.

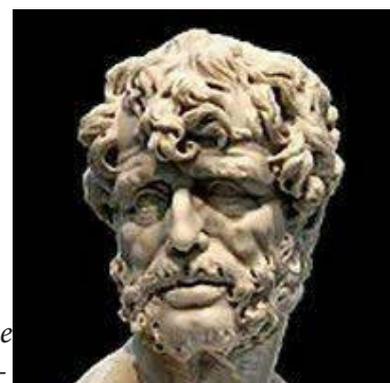
“The act of dying is equal in all... Death has no degrees of greater or less; for it has the same limit in all instances, the finishing of life.” - Seneca. Letters from a Stoic. Letter LXVI

Death is the inevitable adversity we all face regardless of race, belief, or lifestyle. It is the great uniting force of all men. It is a universal truth. We have no control over death, but we do have control over our lives, the direction we wish to go forth in. Every day that we wake is another opportunity to take steps on the path of virtue, but with every day, we inch closer to death. Time is our most precious resource because it is finite. It is a resource we must utilize to find virtue. The Appren-

tice is taught to make use of his time by the use of the 24-inch gauge. Eight hours to our vocation to bring stability in our lives, eight hours to rest to bring stability to our body and mind, and eight hours to the service of God to bring virtue into our lives. But what is the service of God? Surely it's not just charity work and prayer. To the Stoic, it's taking action to do things that create a purpose for our lives. It could be as simple as reaching out to someone in need, expressing gratitude to the ones we love, or as noble as curing cancer. It is through our actions and how we live our lives that we provide value, not through our job title, our summer home, or our baser urges. Everything we do reverberates throughout time with a compounding effect. So strive to impact the world in a way that leaves it a better place than what we found it, strive to be the perfect ashlar of the self, which is a life worth living. In book nine of Meditations, Marcus Aurelius reminds himself:

“Think not disdainfully of death, but look on it with favor; for even death is one of the things that Nature wills.” Marcus Aurelius. Meditations IX.3 This is the existential dilemma that humanity will come to face with soon. When this pandemic is over many of us will either have lost someone we love or would have known someone who has lost someone they love. We will all be soon very aware of the fragility of our physical condition. It is human nature to flee from danger, or flight of fight reflect. So we are programmed to fear our own demise. But it is an inevitability so when we come face to face with death. Face it with Fortitude.

“It is not that we have a short space of time, but that we waste much of it. Life is long enough, and it has been given in sufficiently generous measure to allow the accomplishment of the very greatest things if the whole of it is well invested. But when it is squandered in luxury and carelessness, when it is devoted to no good end, forced at last by the ultimate necessity we perceive that it has passed away before we were aware that it was passing.” Seneca. On the Shortness of Life

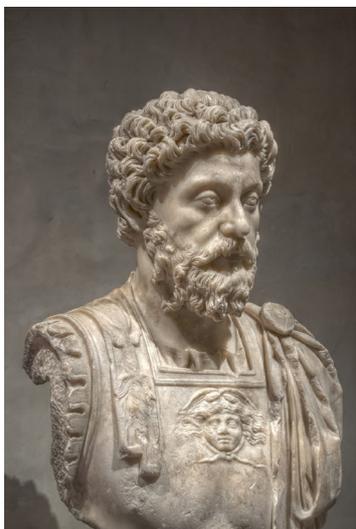


Seneca

Yes our time is finite, but our virtue is not. If only you had today what would you do to leave an impression on the world? You still have time to live a virtuous

life, to make that impact you want to make, to bring appreciation to others, and joy into this world.

“...look to the immensity of time behind thee, and to the time which is before thee, another boundless space. In this infinity then what is the difference between him who lives three days and him who lives three generations?” Marcus Aurelius. Meditations. IV.53



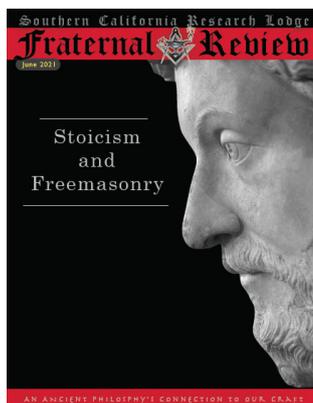
Marcus Aurelius

No matter the time left in your life, take charge of your experience. In this time of pandemic, there is no better time to be there for others, to make a difference. To relieve fear and inspire action. The world is in desperate need of leadership, and as Freemasons, we have a plethora of wisdom to call upon to strengthen us to rise to the challenge. Be a stoic apprentice in the face of this pandemic. Follow your sense of prudence, and act justly in all your experiences. Have temperance in all your desires, and in the face of adversity and inevitable decay, show Fortitude and dignity. To keep us motivated in our endeavors, I leave you with a piece of wisdom from the great Marcus Aurelius.

“Think of yourself as dead. You have lived your life. Now take what’s left and live it properly.” Marcus Aurelius. Meditations VII.56

More on Stoicism in the Media

Research:



In this issue, guest edited by Wor. Bro. Daniel Molina, we explore stoicism and how this philosophy connects with the Craft in more ways than was once thought. You can pick it up by visiting www.theresearchlodge.com

Audio:



In this podcast from “The Masonic Roundtable” episode number 245, the hosts discuss: “Stoicism, does it have anything to do with Freemasonry? Are some of the lessons in Stoic Philosophy relevant to the modern Freemason? You may never have seen the connection between Stoicism and Freemasonry before but today we find some parallels.”

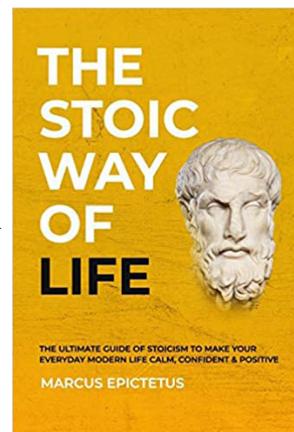
Books:



Meditations is a series of personal writings by Marcus Aurelius, recording his private notes to himself and setting forth his philosophy of life and leadership, heavily indebted to the Stoic school of philosophy. Originally written in Koine Greek and likely never intended for mass publications, the Meditations are set forth in twelve

books, compiling thoughts and reflections -- some a brief line or two long, others paragraphs in length -- that he wrote and collected mostly during his limited free time while on military campaign. For centuries, Marcus Aurelius’s words have provided readers with inspiration and insight into self-mastery and leadership and are among the finest examples and most significant academic sources of ancient Stoic philosophy.

The Stoic way of life offers a thorough insight into the most realistic and practical philosophy of ancient times - Stoicism. Happiness and serenity can be yours through Marcus Epictus’ famed writings.



December 18th, 2021

Double Eagle Con

2021

Over the course of one day, we will have nine of the most prolific men in Freemasonry. Never before has a group of speakers been assembled who've molded our awareness of Freemasonry in such significant ways. These men have made their indelible mark on not only our fraternity as a whole but also the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. This education day will be packed with presentations, fellowship, and more.



Joseph Wages, 32°

De Grass-Tilly and
The Early Supreme
Council



Robert G. Davis, 33°

How the Degrees of the
Rite Inform the Journey
to the Mature Masculine



S. Brent Morris, 33°

A Timeline of
High-Degree
Masonry



Chuck Dunning, 32°, KCCH

Shekinah, the Blazing
Star, & the Intendants of
the Building



**Darin A. Lahners,
32°**

Mature Male
Friendship & Scottish
Rite Freemasonry



Steven L. Harrison, 33°

Clash of the Titans:
Denslow V. Cowels



**Darin A. Lahners,
32°, KCCH**
The Scottish Rite
Craft Lodges of New
Orleans



**Roberto M. Sanchez,
32°, KCCH**
The Chamber of Reflec-
tion and it's Ties to the
Scottish Rite



Jeff Croteau

A Brief History of the
Library & Archives

Includes; continental breakfast, lunch & dinner.
Breakfast/check-in start at 7am.
Speakers start at 8 am. Early Bird Pricing, \$90.
After November 30th, \$120. Presented by the
Valley of Chicago AASR NMJ.

<http://www.tinyurl.com/DoubleEagleCon2021>

Universal Compassion

by Bro. RJ Budler, Member Committee on Masonic Education



Recently, my Lodge visited the Lodge in Wheaton, IL. It's one of my favorites, not only for the Lodge and the Brothers but because there's a great indie coffee house just across the street.

Every time I visit Wheaton, I make sure to arrive early, stop off for a cup of coffee, and read something interesting. The coffee house never disappoints, but at my last visit, I was surprised to find, tucked in the back, a sort of prayer/awareness bulletin board. Customers are encouraged to leave messages of inspiration, offer advice that brings understanding, and write prayers for those who are suffering. Wheaton is a very religious town with a long history related to conservative Christianity, so the prayer board didn't really shock me; however, what I found on the prayer board did.

What I expected to see was scripture. "The Lord said THIS" or "and so commanded..." and since it's football season, at least one vague reference to John 3:16. I found none of that. Each of the messages was about universal compassion. "Be kind and gentle to those you meet," "Love costs nothing," "You may be the only compassionate person someone meets today." There were prayers for people suffering through mental illness and words of encouragement for people facing addiction. The philosophy here was clear: focus on the humanity within all of us and try to be helpful to those who are struggling. It was such a perfect idea that I'm considering creating one for my Lodge.

As I pondered universal compassion, I thought about one of the most popular sayings on the topic – The Golden Rule. "Do unto others as thou would have done unto thee" (or simply, "treat others the way you wish to be treated"). As I thought about it, I realized that the rule is well-meaning, and it presupposes that all people wish to be treated the same way; that what's best for me must also be best for you. How many Lodge arguments, I thought, have begun with, "In my year..." or "That's not the way it's supposed to be"? This mentality is inaccurate at best, and potentially damaging at worst, especially now when so many Lodges are struggling just to keep it together. I amended the saying, "Treat others the way they wish to be treated, understand them

well enough to know what that means, love them despite any differences between you."

In Masonry, this is no better expressed than in the "spreading of mortar (or cement) between the stones." Men come to Masonry influenced by various backgrounds, beliefs, and motivations. And each of us, no matter our refinement, has "rough sides"; however, the Brotherhood is able to build with certainty and strength because of what we share between us – a desire for harmony, a respect for individuality, and a belief that the good that we do serves a higher purpose. Refining our ash-lars was never about uniformity; we are not mere "bricks in the wall." We are seekers of universal truth and refined compassion. Remember the strength and support of our institution and, in the words of an anonymous coffee house guest, "...try your best to remain connected even when times get tough."

Discussion Questions

What is true compassion?

What does our ritual say about compassion?

How do we practice Universalism in Lodge?

Are there elements of Freemasonry that are not universal, that others may find inequitable?

Can we be too universal?



THE CIPHER



A cipher is not a code. A cipher utilizes replacements of letters with other letters, numbers, or symbols. Masons are

familiar with the simple pigpen cipher. But what happens when we encode the message even more? In this challenge, I have specifically made this difficult. For the experienced cipher clerk, this will be easier. A cipher requires a “key.” Many times, the key is hidden, making it more challenging to crack. I am only partially hiding the key. The answer will be published next month. The first to email me will be mailed a unique custom item. Good Luck!



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What is the Truth?



A1-S1
3-17

Email your answer to admin@wcpodcast.com

DISTRICT EDUCATION TALKING POINTS

What is the Intender Program?

“The Intender Program is one in which a brother, knowledgeable in the history, symbolism, and philosophy of Freemasonry, along with familiarity with the catechism, guides him so that he can find a place in the lodge that meets his purposes in becoming a Mason.”

The Grand Lodge Seal

by WB. Michael Overturf, Chairman on Committee on Masonic Education



As I stood at the side of the bleachers at our last Grand Lodge Annual Communication, I couldn't help but notice our Grand Lodge Seal. I suddenly remembered that in one of the many early history books on

Illinois Freemasonry, there had been a small section on the our seal.

According to A Compendium of Freemasonry in Illinois Volume 1, *"Upon our organization we had no seal and no money for a seal. The Grand Secretary was authorized to procure a seal, but he did not do it. Instead, he purchased a cheap stock wood cut and upon had an engraver distributed a miscellaneous assortment of Masonic emblems and symbols."*

But let's look at those "miscellaneous emblems" and see what story our seal tells us about our Grand Lodge.

We Have the All-Seeing Eye, which is a symbol of Deity from the beginning of all religion -- beginning always watched by the Grand Architect of the Universe. Secondly, we have the "three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder, denominated Faith, Hope, and Charity; teaching, *"...faith in God, hope in immortality, and Charity to all mankind"* Next, we have the Three Great Lights of Masonry, with the three lessor lights. We have now arrived at the trowel, *"to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection that cement which unites us into one sacred band, or society of friends and brothers among whom no contention should ever exist."* Behind the Trowel sits the Gavel of our Grand Master, *"an additional insignia of your rank and authority. Wield it my brother, with prudence and discretion."*

The Crossed Keys I have saved for last. The Key is a symbol in the "Red Degrees" and the Scottish Rite. It is also the symbol of the Treasurer. Deeper significance can be found, but it certainly took some digging. Some insightful things to share with you all are the following:

"Found commonly on the Street of York, represents the keys to Heaven, as held by Saint Peter."



"At its heart, a key is an opener of locks. Whether it's a door, a Treasure Chest, or the metaphorical heart. Keys let us into unknow worlds" "Keys symbolize freedom, they open things up and lock precious things away"

"Keys are symbols of opening and closing. Locks and keys affect our lives in various ways. Sometimes a key means the difference between freedom and incarcerations, or life and death.

Keys also affect our lives in other ways; they give us security- we can lock our door and know that no one else has the key."

Discussion Questions for Lodge

1. Take a moment a piece this together. Let's think about the significance of our Grand Lodge Seal—especially given the contents of the "Miscellaneous emblems and symbols".
- 2) Could the engraver have been a Brother?
- 3.) Take time an contemplate on the Seal. What could it help reveal to you?
- 4.) Find the charter for La Fayette No. 18 and compare. What are the differences and similarities of our seals?

- i The Craft and its symbols by Allen Roberts.
- ii Standard Work Grand Lodge of A.F.&A.M. of Illinois.
- iii Standard Work Grand Lodge of A.F.&A.M. of Illinois.
- iv Book of Ceremonials The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M.
- v www.historyofyork.org.uk
- vi www.stepheneinhorn.com.uk
- vii www.historicallocks.com



The Exercise of Gratitude

by RW.: Chad Lacek, Committee on Masonic Education



As Autumn arrives with beautiful colors, cooler temperatures, and the bounty of the harvest, our thoughts seasonally turn to giving thanks. We have formalized this practice into a national holiday aptly named Thanks-

giving. But what would happen if we thoughtfully practiced gratitude more than once per year?

When we make note of things we are grateful for, our family's health and the ability to provide for their wellbeing usually top the list. The holidays are an excellent time for reflection on these matters since tradition directs us to gather with family and friends around tables filled with food to share. But the benefits of exercising gratitude can be, and perhaps should be, enjoyed every day of the year.

When was the last time you took a deep breath and felt fortunate? Do you marvel at your prosperity when you turn on the water faucet? Please don't roll your eyes. There are places in the world today where the air is unbreathable, and water is distant and dirty. There are dozens of comforts that go unnoticed in our daily routines, which many millions of people have never known.

You have a great life. The purpose of the practice of gratitude is to remind us of that fact. It is easy to overlook benefits taken for granted and focus only on setbacks and challenges. If the only items on your list are negative, then life looks accordingly bleak.

What if we took a few minutes to consider all the things we are grateful for? All of them. Not just the big ones. The sound of the bird outside our window. Our ability to read. The taste of our favorite foods. There is nothing too small to add to this list. Now compare it to your list of problems. Suddenly the negative list barely compares in size or importance.

What would happen if we did this exercise once a week? If we set aside a few minutes to mentally review everything wonderful in our life, would the

world we live in seem more beautiful? How might that affect you and those around you?

This holiday season is the perfect time to make a commitment to yourself to continue the exercise of gratitude throughout the year. Will you give it a try?

Quotes on Gratitude

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." - John F. Kennedy

"Gratitude is riches. Complain is poverty."
- Dorris Day

"I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for my friends, the old and the new." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well." - Voltair

"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has." - Epictetus

"Wear gratitude like a cloak, and it will feed every corner of your life." - Rumi

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others." - Cicero

"Gratitude looks to the Past and love to the Present; fear, avarice, lust, and ambition look ahead." - C.S. Lewis

"What separates privilege from entitlement is gratitude." - Brené Brown



Jim DuBridge

Our New Area Education Officer of the Southern Area

Jimmie' Jim' DuBridge, was raised in Blazing Star lodge #458, carrier mills, Illinois, on April 19th, 1991.

Jim retired from the trucking industry after working for several years in that segment. He moved to the Southern Area of Illinois, settling in the 3rd Masonic district in Farina, IL. He got involved with Greenland Lodge No. 665 in Beecher City, then Edgewood Lodge No. 484 in Edgewood, IL. And finally, Watson Lodge No. 602 in Watson, IL.

Jim is a family man. He enjoys time with friends and family, children, and grandchildren. He says, "I've been blessed with a heard of them." He's a lover of music, having played since he was just 15 years old. He's a licensed pilot as well and loves playing golf and fishing.



As a brand new AEO of the Southern Area, he's looking forward to all that comes with it—helping lodges in the Southern Area with all things Education and enabling his DEOs. Jim's been to the East four times in his Masonic Career and has "Loved every minute of it." Jim is a massive proponent of the Illinois Intender Program. In speaking with him, he relished that his lodges are filled with capable intenders—something he is particularly proud of.

Jim goes to every meeting he can and tries to make each one special. He says becoming an AEO is an honor and is slowly wrapping his head around the job. It will take time to figure it all out. It's a large area, having 16 districts and 111 Lodges. As a past DEO, he can rely on this experience and knowledge. "There's so much out there—Masonic History and Philosophy...although you do have to be careful what you read." Jim recounted.

When asked about the future, Jim says, "I'm looking forward to the future of Freemasonry and continuing to experience all it has to offer. I'm looking forward to learning with my Brothers."

Jim says he's grateful for the opportunity to serve Illinois Freemasonry and that he got the call from Mike Overturf. AS Jim moves into his new position, he's appointed a new DEO, Brother Nicholas Webb, with who he is looking forward to working.



THE CARDINAL VIRTUES DECISION TREE



by RW: R.H. Johnson, Member Committee on Masonic Education

People make choices countless times a day. Well, not exactly countless. What if I told you that the average human makes around 35,000 semi-conscious decisions each day? Not bad for not being a machined computer. These decisions, for the most part, are simple. Notice I said, semi-conscious. The majority of these choices are very passive and are based on experiences that have embedded visualized outcomes within the subconscious mind. It's like a computer's Random Access Memory (RAM). Frequent things that your mind uses all the time are stored in a way that makes them easily accessible. This makes making the decision easy.

In our day to day lives, while just moving through our day, how many times would you say you stop and think about the outcome of a choice you're about to make? Perhaps the big decisions--sure, you think about them. But those everyday choices, the ones that don't seem so big--the ones that add up and have outcomes that seem to be just a part of daily living. Are we giving those decisions the thought and foresight we would when making other decisions?

When we think about the big decisions, we often think about how those outcomes will impact our lives first, and if we're extra mindful, we take the extra step of thinking about how those choices impact our friends and family. It's kind of like Chess. In Chess, you're always thinking about the next move. The best players think about the next several moves and the outcomes. I love Chess, but I'm terrible at it.

What makes choices easy? When we think about whatever choice we're going to make, we immediately process the previous occasions we made similar choices. Our brains determine the probability that things will go the way they did previously. This gives us comfort in our decision. "This is just like last time. I'll make the same decision, and the outcome will be

the same." A warm fuzzy blanket. Emotional complacency is born.

Rather than think about each choice we make and deal with the emotional and sometimes headache-inducing internal debate, we develop an easy road--scratch that--a lazy road. The lazy road allows us to develop an unwillingness to rationalize scenarios and outcomes and instead, always rely on similar situations we've experienced ourselves, or within our peer circles.

Not every choice needs this deep dive. But some of them, we may benefit from taking the time to calculate the outcomes. "I should water my plant. Well, maybe not. I didn't water it yesterday, and it's fine." We know where this leads. Get up and water the plant. "Extra tablespoon of sugar in my coffee today. Well, I'm supposed to watch the sugar. Nope. Just one tablespoon today." These are small decisions. But they have a measurable impact when we think about them and their long term or cumulative effect.

What does Freemasonry say about making choices? Well, it gives us a few virtues that give us some good insight. Fortitude allows us to stick to our guns once we've made a choice. In the classical sense, justice will enable us to weigh in on an outcome's equity—selfishness versus selflessness. Temperance allows us to remain moderate in our decisions. But Prudence--prudence is what we're talking about here. Prudence is deliberation. It means to take into account all possible perceived outcomes of a situation and make your choice based on the aim of the person making the decision. Do you want to affect the most people? The least people? The questions are innumerable.

My charge to you is to attempt to bring prudence back into your life by taking small pauses when you recognize that you're about to make a decision. Think about the outcomes. Maybe you do the thing you always do. Maybe, you change your mind. Remember, not every single thing needs a panic-inducing brain cloud. Just be mindful and try this out when you can.



Reader's Corner

The Exemplar: A Guide to a Mason's Actions

by William A. Carpenter PRWGM Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania F.&A.M

A Book review by
Bro. Kevin Wheeler

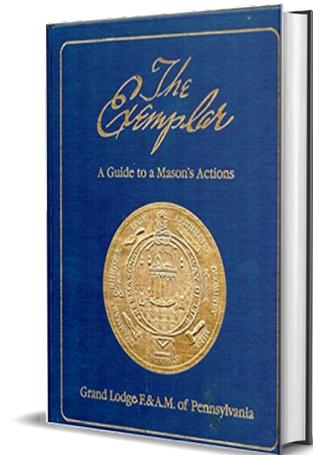


I believe the book titled *The Exemplar: A Guide to a Mason's Actions* is a great work. This book would serve well if it were a required read for every Freemason. This book helps explain the contents

of Masonic Law, as well as some of the words and terms that are useful for Freemasons throughout our journey, and further, by explaining some of Freemasonry's great symbolism. As for Pennsylvania Masons, it goes further by serving as the title suggests; A Guide to a Mason's Actions, by explaining some of the rituals and the laws and edicts issued by the Grand Lodge. I think it's conducive for Pennsylvania Masons because, in Pennsylvania, there exists no printed ritual—the book somewhat serves as a bridge or tool to better understand the laws and rules while reminding us of some of the content found within our ritual.

The book covered several topics of importance that I will address by chapter as the author did. In chapter one, we are reminded of the origins of Freemasonry and some of its rules, laws, and courtesies that Masons should extend to one another and humanity. In the Ahiman Rezon, the significant concepts for Freemasons to understand are reiterated--to have a belief in a Supreme Being (Grand Architect of the Universe (GAOTU)), ever being faithful to his country, being able to refrain from intemperance and excess, and lastly the importance of secrecy.

The author describes several things that should guide a Freemason's actions. In many cases, this is considered universal Masonic law. These laws include, but are not limited to, the belief in the GAOTU, loyalty to G-d and Country, Punctuality, refraining from being disruptive in Lodge; including interrupting the Worshipful Master, not passing in front of the Altar on its East side, rising and giving the appropriate sign before addressing the Worshipful Master, proper placement of the Altar and



lesser lights, proper attire, and the wearing of the square and compasses. All of which greatly enhance a Freemason's inner workings of the Lodge's day-to-day activities and expectations.

The second chapter is equally as important. It assists in helping the Freemason develop an instructive tongue. The author does this by teaching the reader how to correctly pronounce and understand some of the words and abbreviations used throughout the craft, thus enabling the Freemason to gain a deeper appreciation for the ritual.

In chapter three, the author reintroduces some of the symbols of Freemasonry and provides a detailed explanation, which further aids in comprehension. Lastly, the author describes the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania's origins and its great uniqueness throughout the Masonic World.

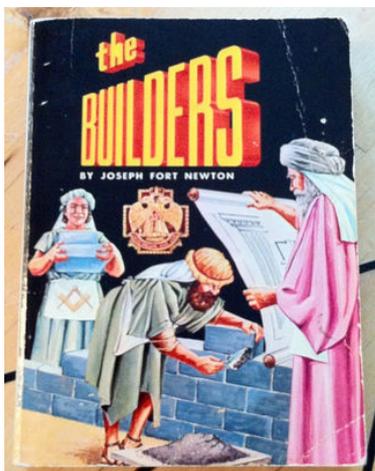
While reading this book, I did come across some differences and similarities regarding other Masonic jurisdictions. For example, some of the things that are mentioned are, Freemasons were once called Noachia, that Pennsylvania does not allow for plural memberships, has issued its own warrants world-

wide, the beehive and Jacobs ladder are not part of Pennsylvania Masonry, a Mason cannot join the Order of the Eastern Star, and that there are no printed rituals.

Some of the similarities to the other Grand Lodges include schools of instruction and obtaining Masonic Proficiency. However, every Master Mason is entitled to a ritual book in Illinois. The ritual is accessed through a secure server in the Internet Lodge of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Overall, this book was an excellent read, and I would recommend it to all Masons. Whether you are a first-year Freemason or a fifty-year Mason, one can and will learn something. This book is one for every Freemason's personal library and an excellent beginning for the teachings of the craft, covering history, manners, the proper pronunciation of words, and symbolism.

Next month, Bro. Wheeler will review **The Builders-A Story and Study of Masonry**-the acclaimed book by Rev. Joseph Fort Newton!



If you have a book review you'd like to submit, send it to secretary@spesnovum.com and we'll work with you to get it in The Lyceum!

*"The reading of all good books is like conversation with the finest (people) of the past centuries."
- Descartes"*



MASONIC WEEK 2022

FEBRUARY 9TH — 13TH

HYATT REGENCY CRYSTAL CITY
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Adapted from Masonic Week for the Uninitiated by Bro. James Hodgkins (Published 2011)

On February 9th, 2022, just outside of our nation's Capitol in Alexandria, Va., Masonic Week will commence. A 5 five-day Homeric Odyssey of meetings, lectures, dinners, and degrees. To those who have never had the luxury of attending Masonic Week, are not members of the York Rite, or are simply new to the Fraternity; this vast array of bodies can be extremely confusing and even intimidating. Since I fall in that middle group and know that my confusion is not unique, a synopsis of these bodies could perhaps be of some use to the "uninitiated."

While ostensibly active since 1932, Masonic Week first convened in Washington, D.C., on February 21, 1938; where it has met continuously in the greater-metro area for 72 of the past 73 years under the auspices of the Grand Council of Allied Masonic Degrees.¹ Now, at this point, some of you might be asking yourselves "What on earth are the Allied Masonic Degrees and how does someone join?" Nearly all of the bodies meeting during Masonic Week are "invitation only," and their particulars are given below. For 2011, there were eighteen Masonic bodies listed as meetings at Masonic Week. They range in purpose from the extremely prestigious and invitational Blue Friars to my personal favorite, Ye Antiente Order of Corks; which likely needs no explanation as to their *raison d'être*. The following is a very brief synopsis of each of these eighteen bodies, from an outsider's perspective. Please note this article falls far short of doing any of these bodies there due justice. My hope is simply to provide a jumping-off point for further research by the uninitiated.

For more Information on the upcoming Masonic Week, including how to view the Original 3rd Degree, visit

<https://www.amdusa.org/MasonicWeek>

If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or dietary restrictions, please contact the Masonic Week Co-ordinator:

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