
The Lyceum

The Brotherhood Issue



A Publication of
The Committee on Masonic Education





October 4-5, 2024 Crowne Plaza Springfield – Convention Center

Most Worshipful Grand Master David P. Lynch welcomes you to attend the 185th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of the State of Illinois.

Schedule

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3 – EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION

Afternoon in the lobby of the Crown Plaza Convention Center in Springfield.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

7:00 a.m. - Coffee, Tea & Pastries, Crowne Plaza - Plaza Level

8:00 a.m. - Grand Lodge Session Opens, Crowne Plaza - Plaza Level

12:15 p.m. - Grand Lodge Recess, Men's Luncheon - Crowne Plaza Ballroom

1:30 p.m. Workshops

- Illinois Masonic Family Identification Program*
- Illinois Masonic Charities*
- Leader Development Workshop — Leadership Success: Maximizing Member Contributions*
- groupablem2 Training*

3:00 p.m.

- Grand Lecturer/CLI Meeting*
- Membership Development Workshop: Turbocharging Your Contribution to and Enjoyment of Freemasonry*
- OLP Basic Training*
- Lodge of Research*

5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

- "No Host" Reception, Crowne Ballroom (Attire: Black/Dark Suits; Ladies - dresses or pants suits)

6:30 p.m.

- Grand Banquet, Crowne Ballroom (Attire: Black/Dark Suits; Ladies - dresses or pants suits)
 - Hospitality rooms open following banquet and installation

*Room locations for these meetings have not yet been assigned. Locations will be announced at a later date.

Additional meetings and seminars will be announced during Grand Lodge Sessions. Times of some events are subject to change.

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Editor, Chad Lacek, 33°, Bernard Davis, Chairman

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Dear Brethren and Readers,

Greetings from the Editorial Desk of the Grand Lodge of Illinois Masonic Education Committee's The Lyceum!

It is with great excitement and anticipation that I introduce to you this month's special themed issue, "The Brotherhood Issue." As Masons, the concept of brotherhood is central to our values and practices, and in this edition, we delve into its profound implications and enrichments within our fraternity.

We have the distinct pleasure of featuring curated articles from some of the titans of Masonic education, including Ira Gilbert and Bill Hosler. Their insights and wisdom offer us a deeper understanding of the principles that unite us and strengthen our bonds as Masons.

Moreover, this issue includes a compelling message from our Chairman, Bernard Davis Jr. He elaborates on how we are advancing Masonic Education within our Grand Jurisdiction, addressing both contemporary challenges and timeless traditions. His words serve as a guiding light for us all as we navigate our Masonic journey.

As you explore the pages of this issue, you will find a rich tapestry of knowledge, inspiration, and, as promised, brotherhood. I encourage you to immerse yourself in the articles and reflections provided and to share the wisdom gained with your fellow brethren.

Lastly, I look forward to meeting and engaging with many of you at the upcoming Grand Lodge Annual Communications. It is always a joy to see our members come together, share experiences, and further strengthen the bonds of our fraternity.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to Masonic education.

Fraternally yours,
R.H. Johnson,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.H. Johnson", written over a horizontal line.

Editor-In-Chief
The Lyceum



From the Chairman's Desk

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



In today's rapidly evolving and challenging world that we live in, Freemasonry faces challenges of declining membership and member engagement in jurisdictions across the globe. This trend underscores the strong need for brotherhood, especially in the context of Masonic education. Brotherhood is at the heart of Freemasonry as it fosters a sense of unity and belonging among members, which is crucial in times of declining membership. When members feel connected and valued, they are more likely to stay engaged and active in the fraternity. Freemasonry also places a high value on education, as its teachings and rituals are designed to impart moral and ethical lessons. By emphasizing brotherhood, members can learn from each other, share knowledge, and grow together. Here are a few educational initiatives to foster brotherhood within the fraternity:

- **Workshops and Seminars:** Workshops and seminars on Masonic history, philosophy, rituals, etc., help members deepen their understandings and appreciation, while also providing opportunities to bond and share insights.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Allow experienced Masons to guide newer members which can strengthen the sense of brotherhood.
- **Community Service Projects:** Engaging in community service projects benefits society while strengthening the bond between members. Working together towards a common goal fosters camaraderie and reinforces the values of Freemasonry.
- **Digital Platforms:** Utilizing digital platforms to create online communities and forums that help members stay connected, especially those who cannot attend meetings in person. These platforms facilitate discussions, sharing of educational resources, and provide support to members.

By focusing on brotherhood and education, Freemasonry can navigate challenges of declining membership and continue to thrive as a fraternity that values unity, learning and mutual support.

Fraternally,

WB Bernard Davis Jr,

Bernard Davis Jr

Chairman - Committee on Masonic Education

Grand Lodge of A.F. & A. M. of the State of Illinois



That Noble Contention

by WB Adam Thayer



My brothers, in the past I have endeavored to reduce large sections of Masonic theory down into bite-sized pieces that would be easily understood by everyone, from the newly raised Master to the

highly knowledgeable Past Grand Masters. In this piece, I am going to attempt to do the exact opposite by examining and over-complicating a single phrase from ritual.

That phrase is: *“One sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work, and best agree.”* We all know the phrase from our degree work, but how many of us have actually tried to analyze the meaning behind the phrase?

It begins by reminding us that, as Masons, we are part of a greater society, the sacred band of Freemasons. Although each of us are from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and financial situations, each with a wealth of unique experiences, yet we all share one common experience that unites us under the banner of Freemasonry, which is the initiatic ritual that we all passed through on our Eastbound journey. The ritual goes on to give two very specific examples of our bond: we are both friends AND brothers.

Why did our ritual writers feel the need to give both? Shouldn't the fact that we're brothers presuppose that we are also friends?

This always reminds me of one of the great theological debates: can you love someone without liking them? The general theological assumption is that love has less to do with emotions and feeling, and more to do with actions. Love is wanting what is best for someone, and doing so to the best of your ability. In comparison, liking is an emotional connection to something specifically appealing to you.

Paul refutes this quite directly, in Romans 12:9, when he stated *“Let love be genuine. Love one another with brotherly affection.”* He is directly telling us that when we love, we should love with an emotional component, the affection we have for a brother.

Coming back to our ritual, it's my belief that those early ritual writers, who would have been well versed in this type of argument, which was common in their day, decided to reflect Paul's statement within our ritual, and in so doing head off any potential uncertainty by directly spelling our obligation out: we are brothers, which implies we want what is best for each other due to a connection of love, and we are also friends, which implies a sincere affection for one another. Without both components, our sacred bond could well fail.

We go on to learn that, among this group of men, no contention should ever exist. Ever, period, end of discussion. There is one exception, which we will discuss later, but excluding that, there is never a reason that any contention should exist within the lodge. Since contention and emulation are not words that most of us use in our daily lives, I'd like to spend a few moments with them.

Contention is best defined as a belief or opinion that is strongly argued. Its root, contend, generally involves a struggle or a battle. Contention appears multiple times in the Bible, generally involving strife between brothers and friends, although it is also frequently used as a warning, as is the case in Proverbs 16:28 *"A false man sows contention, and a liar separates friends."*

Emulation, by contrast, is an endeavor to equal or exceed another person in specific qualities. To emulate someone is to try to be like your perception of that person. The words are in sharp contrast; emulation is a peaceful attempt to change yourself, whereas contention is trying to forcibly change another person.

It is no accident that these two words are placed immediately following each other. It teaches us that instead of fighting with our brothers, we should each try to emulate those qualities within each other that will help us as we smooth our ashlar. The lesson of the final working tool is to regulate our lodge in such a manner that discontent is unable to take a foothold. This lesson is so important that it is mirrored in the Senior Warden's duties: to see that none go away dissatisfied, harmony being the strength and support of all societies, more especially of ours!

Who best can work, and best agree? This is a difficult question, and it always depends on the task to which it applies. A healthy lodge is made up of brothers with a wide variety of backgrounds and knowledge, any of which may be useful to the lodge. One of the many duties of the Worshipful Master is to assign each task to those brothers who are best suited to it, which requires an intimate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of each brother in his lodge.

The discovery of who best can work, and who best can agree, is the only exception that our ritual leaves us to allow any contention within the lodge. While I cannot pretend to know the minds of our ritual writers, I would guess that this loophole was specifically left because it is possible, even likely, that the

Worshipful Master does not know every strength and weakness of every brother within the lodge. Therefore, any brother could request extra work based on knowledge and skills that the Worshipful Master is not aware they possess.

In addition, the ritual specifically says the emulation of who best can work, and best agree. This implies an active effort to improve the abilities of each brother, to emulate and learn from those who are already able to perform those tasks. For those poor brothers who, for whatever reason, cannot learn the task, they are to passively agree and not interfere. As George Bernard Shaw once said, *"Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt those who are doing it."* Taken as a whole, the lesson of the trowel is to teach us how to function within a group, and as such it differs significantly from the other working tools. All of the other working tools within blue lodge Masonry provide us with lessons on various ways to regulate our personal lives and actions, whereas the trowel reminds us that we are but one small part of the whole. This makes sense; the brother receiving this lesson is soon to be a fully raised Master Mason, and will have a voice and a vote within the lodge, and so must be instructed in how to properly behave within that setting.

It has been said that Masonry has no room for selfishness, and the entirety of the Master Mason's degree reinforces that. The obligation gives specific forms the selfishness may take, such as Atheism, and the raising shows selfishness taken to an extreme. Even in the lecture of the beehive are we reminded that we are but part of the greater whole that is Freemasonry.

You have to bear in mind that when our ritual was codified, most men were used to working alone, or in a group consisting of their family members only. Those who did work in a group setting, such as factory workers, were working at the direction of a foreman, and had no say in the direction of their employer. Masonry was the first time that most of our past brothers were placed in a setting where their input was valued, and could influence the works of the craft. The lesson of the trowel, therefore, was necessary to provide a foundation in teaching them how to behave within a larger group.

One of the courses at Carnegie Mellon teaches students how to work within a group setting. Here are a few of the tips they provide their students with, and

a Masonic examination of them, as they apply to the lesson of the trowel.

Find things you have in common. We all belong to the sacred band of Freemasonry, and have passed through the same initiation experiences.

Check your egos at the door. There is no room for ego if we are only concerned with the facts of who best can work, as those who cannot best work can best agree.

Be open and honest. Recall the lesson from Proverbs: "A false man sows contention, and a liar separates friends."

Avoid conflict at all costs. Within our group, no contention should ever exist.

They include many other tips that, while they do not specifically speak to the lesson of the trowel, are interesting in a Masonic sense nonetheless. Here are a few of them:

Meet people properly. As Masons, we meet on the level.

Make meeting conditions good. They specifically point out to meet right after a meal, as food tends to soften people. I can't speak for anyone else, but I know I've put on a good twenty pounds since I joined Masonry, due to our great meals.

Let everyone talk, within reason. In a lodge, this is at the discretion of the Worshipful Master, and a wise Worshipful Master will know how long to let a discussion go on before it no longer benefits the lodge, and becomes a distraction.

Put it in writing. This is the reason our poor secretaries have carpal tunnel syndrome. Every meeting and every action of the lodge is recorded by our hard working lodge secretaries.

Our lodges, which have been functioning basically unchanged since the 1700s, are performing at the level that research conducted in the 1980s shows is the most efficient way to perform. The suggestions given follow so closely to how our lodges function, they could have been written by observing us directly. While most Masons today have more experience working within a group or committee setting, this doesn't mean that the lesson of the trowel is no longer

important. Indeed, with the rapid erosion of respect happening throughout all areas of society, this may be one of the more important lessons we teach! The value of respect is still taught within our walls, as long as there are men willing to display it for our newer brothers to learn it.

For being only a single sentence, the lesson of the trowel is surprisingly complex, and a thorough meditation on it could fill a book, while tonight I only had a few minutes. I would encourage each of you to remember the lesson of the trowel in all your Masonic duties, so that we will continue to strengthen the sacred band of Freemasonry.



Brotherly Love

by WB Sam L. Land, MO



A Past Grand Master Of Missouri had a motto: *“Spread the cement of Brotherly Love. That seems to me to be extremely fitting for our current times of distress and disillusionment. I hear people say “We just don’t know what to do anymore.” It does seem that things have progressed right out of an atmosphere of Brotherly Love and Relief. Truth, however, seems to be out of the question.*

We often talk in and out of Lodge of Brotherly Love, but do we really know what we mean when we say it? Worse yet, do we know what someone else means when they say it? In English we have only one word, love, to express all the differing relationships that exist between people. It seems to me that the Greek language does a much better job of telling it like it is. In Greek, the word *Sorge* (στοργή *storgē*) is the love between parents and children. A seemingly natural bonding by genetics. *Philia* (φιλία *philía*) is mental love as in affectionate regard or friendship. *Eros* (ἔρως *érōs*) is physical, passionate love. Finally *agape* (ἀγάπη *agápē*) means love in a spiritual sense or true, unconditional love. A good example of this is found in the Bible (John 21:15+) where the following exchange occurs: (Jesus shows himself for the third time after his resurrection and talks with Peter):

Jesus: Simon. . .do you love (agape) me more than these?

Peter: Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you.

Jesus: Simon. . . do you love me (agape)?

Peter: Yes, Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you.

Jesus: Do you love (phileo) me?

Peter: [Grieved] Lord. . .you know that I love (phileo) you.

With specific words for differing meaning Jesus and Peter still had difficulty telling each other what they really meant. How may we be better?

We must begin by understanding that this problem exists and know what we mean to say. If we look at the reference that we are provided we discover that we are not talking about Brotherly Love in any sense except the spiritual. We are told, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessings, even life for evermore.”* (Psalms 133)

We are given the explanation that *“By the exercise of Brotherly Love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support, and protect each other. On this principle, Freemasonry unites men of every country, sect and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.”* This is spiritual love as defined by the Greek language.

So, what must we be talking about when we say Brotherly Love? We must mean that we have put our Brothers upon an equal with ourselves. We must overrule our ego and provide all the things our Brother needs to live as we do. We must feed the sheep. We must truly care. We must provide the necessary actions that make our minds not ask. What is in this for me” but ask “What does my brother need and how may I provide it.” Only then will we truly know Brotherly Love. This is what our Grand Master seeks.

Now that we know what Brotherly Love is and even know four different definitions of love, we can proceed to an understanding of what Brotherly Love looks like.

In the First Degree, we explain to the candidate that the religion of Freemasonry is an *“Unfeigned”* belief in the one living and True God. Unfeigned is a clue work telling us that we are talking about love in its all-encompassing agape form. The emotions of agape love do not always seem to be as loud or overbearing as eros love (passionate love), or even surge love, (love for children). It is a much deeper form of love that usually simmers quiet yet very deep but is all-encompassing from a fulfillment sense. If you happen to see a little child playing with a puppy you will understand this. The emotion generated here hits us in many different ways and fills us with many differing thoughts. Some may not be as joyful as others but they all sent a feeling of deep love throughout our mind, soul, and body.

This also has consequences for us a Mason and a Brother. Let's look at that wonderful time when we have a candidate to initiate into the Mysteries of Freemasonry. We are all around the Altar and the candidate is professing his desires and intentions through his obligation. We should also be doing just that very same thing for this new initiate. We should be considering how we as a Lodge are going to fulfill

our obligation to this new Entered Apprentice.

Will we accept him with open arms, excited to hear everything there is to know about a new Brother? Will we make every effort to get to know his immediate family and make them feel welcome? How have we planned for his education and what shape will it take? Will we ensure that he learns our history so he will have a sound foundation for future learning? Will we put him right to work so that he will feel involved? Will we give him a special teacher (think mentor) who will be with him and help him through each step of his journey? Will we continue to nurture him through the first few years of his membership? Will we require proof of his learning so that he will both know that we do really care and that he is indeed learning? Will we be there for him all the way to the Masonic Home or Masonic Funeral?

As far as I can tell from my experience, we are not doing all of this. A point to examine is if we have taught all these principles to the new members, why do none of them attend Masonic funerals for Brothers they did not know? Have they been properly taught to respect Brothers who have given life and livelihood to the Brotherhood for many years? Are the newest members attending training and ritual practice? Have we not loved these Brothers enough to teach them what they need to know and do?

I charge you to know that if each Brother does not do all in his power to enhance both the Lodge and his Brothers of all ages, he is not in the grip of agape Brotherly Love. It then becomes the duty of every member who has the ability to know, to remind each member, in a most tender manner, of his failings and aid his reformation.

The new Brother, the old Brother, and the deceased Brother have need of your services. It is your duty to provide them with assistance.

The fight between the two wolves needs to be thought about just a bit more now that we have definitions and purposes of Brotherly Love. We need to look at how that Brotherly Love is demonstrated (or not) in the Lodge. It is a part of the battling wolf brothers that apply here. There are two distinct ways in which Brotherly Love is displayed; for my benefit (ego) and for your benefit (altruism); we need to understand the differences and evaluate our conduct in the light of what we discover.

The ego that drives every one of us to achieve is an uncontrolled driver who does not really care what happens to us as long as good happens also happen. The ego wants the best of everything it sees and everything it can conceive. The ego will cause things to happen to us so that those things are achieved without thought of other outcomes or circumstances. The ego can create very great things that will not last or things that will not matter much in the greater realm of things.

When we have earnestly and thoughtfully made the decision to control our passions and desires, we begin the process of change and use the tools of reason, compassion, and understanding to make our decision; decreasing the uncontrolled emotional decisions of egoism. We begin to look at how decisions that we make for ourselves will affect those around us. Our decisions become much less of what will this do for me and become very much more of how will this decision make things better for everyone.

Let's look at a few times in the life of a Brother and the Lodge and see if this distinction can be made clear. Starting at the beginning, let's look at when we manage to get to Lodge on meeting night. It would be best for all Brothers to arrive at the Lodge at least 30 minutes before the meeting begins. This is tough for us to do because our ego tells us that it doesn't matter as much as relaxing in our chair for just a few more minutes. We want to finish what we are doing and have it out of the way. We feel the need to accommodate someone else instead of letting them know we must leave. We might decide not to go at all if we are tired enough or the work is piling up and needs to get done.

But what about our Brothers at the Lodge? It is not really a matter of what they will do but what we need for ourselves to do. We need to consider how our timeliness affects them. Are we an officer so that we will need to be replaced? Do we have things that need to be said and will not? Will the Lodge just be less because of our absence? How will what we decide be an education for those who watch us and learn?

How we dress for Lodge is an indication of how we feel about the Lodge and our part in it. Our ego tells us that it is fine to dress comfortably as we have had a hard day. We deserve to relax and be comfortable. We can always dress up more when the work is more important. Even work rules have relaxed their dress code; why should we dress up for Lodge? Actually,

the correct question is, "*Why shouldn't we?*" In whom do we put our trust? Does not all work begin and end with words to deity? Are we not there to improve ourselves? Should we not be more concerned about how our dress will affect the other members of our Lodge? Will the new Entered Apprentices learn that dress is not very important from watching what we do? Will our dress take away from the spiritual atmosphere of the Lodge meeting? Which wolf are we feeding?

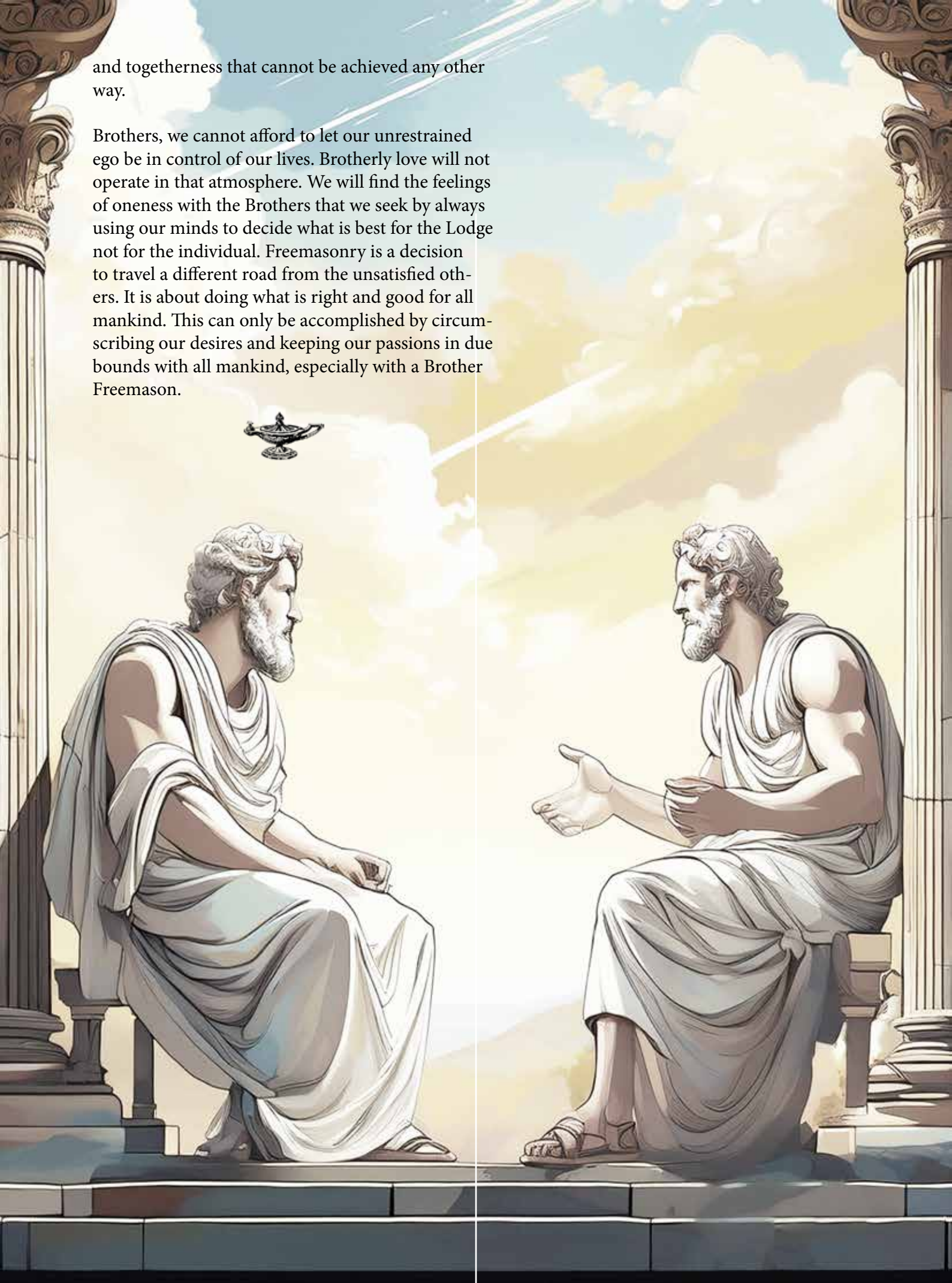
I have heard so many members talk about how hard it is for them to learn ritual. They are not as young as they once were, and their mind just seems not up to the task any longer. That is the ego talking and giving very comfortable excuses not to do the work. Some people are gifted at ritual and others find difficulty. The gifted will work up to their potential with less effort but the regular guy will just have to work at it harder. Every member can learn the ritual word-for-word and present a more professional and conversational effort that will please and teach the young that good work and square work is very important. Everyone makes mistakes but those who are not prepared will do it with more vigor and more frequently giving an improper lesson. Take a few minutes each day to study something from ritual. There are times that can be found. In the bathroom, while driving to and from work, in the exercise routine, and before sleep are just a very few. Much may be done from little if it is consistent. Again, it is the lesson to the young member that is very important here.

Serving on committees and serving at fundraisers is also very important for the life of the individual and the life of the Lodge. We need accomplishment for positive self-esteem and the Lodge needs the service and income. We can tell ourselves that we are too busy or have more important commitments but now we know that that is our ego talking and justifying what we wish to do for ourselves. It does not take into consideration that we, too, are a part of the Membership and have an obligation to work. If we do not, we leave the job we would have done to another Brother to do. We actually make the work harder instead of easier.

How about singing the opening and closing odes? Does ego tell us not to sing because we feel we have a poor voice? Do we not want to embarrass ourselves in front of our Brothers? The sound made by a Lodge full of men singing is uplifting no matter how the individual sounds. It causes a feeling of Brotherhood

and togetherness that cannot be achieved any other way.

Brothers, we cannot afford to let our unrestrained ego be in control of our lives. Brotherly love will not operate in that atmosphere. We will find the feelings of oneness with the Brothers that we seek by always using our minds to decide what is best for the Lodge not for the individual. Freemasonry is a decision to travel a different road from the unsatisfied others. It is about doing what is right and good for all mankind. This can only be accomplished by circumscribing our desires and keeping our passions in due bounds with all mankind, especially with a Brother Freemason.



Since 1949, the MCME has provided a forum for sharing best practices in Masonic Education



News



**The 2025 Midwest
Conference on Masonic
Education will be held in
Indiana**

May 2 – 4, 2025



Mission

Since 1949 we have endeavored to:

Provide a communications and support network for our member jurisdictions.

Conduct an annual forum for Masons who have a vital interest in Masonic Education.

Offer the opportunity to share Masonic experiences, knowledge, and insights.

Publish occasional newsletters, communications, and the proceedings of its annual meetings.



Join Us

Invitation to Join Us

Consider joining us in this work:

All Master Masons from recognized Masonic jurisdictions and Masonic-Affiliated organizations in the United States, Canada, or worldwide are encouraged to contact us and become part of our Conference on Masonic Education.

We also encourage recognized Masonic Jurisdictions to inquire on how to become a member jurisdiction of MCME.

[Join Now...](#)



About Us

Midwest Conference on Masonic Education

Since 1949, the MCME has provided a forum for sharing best practices in Masonic Education with each of its member jurisdictions.

Who We Are

The Midwest Conference on Masonic Education was formed in 1949 at a gathering of interested Masons from Illinois (including Alphonse Cerza) and Iowa.

The outcome was to continue getting together by establishing its first Annual Meeting which was held in December 1950 in Cedar Rapids IA. The organization is comprised of a loose and ever-changing collection of Masonic educators from Grand Lodge jurisdictions located in 12 north central States and the Province of Manitoba. Other participants frequently include chairs of Masonic Education as well as Grand Lodge officers.

What We Are About

The aim of the Conference is to promote Masonic Education, in part by providing a forum for educators to gather, freely discuss Masonic issues, socialize, and learn from sharing experiences while build-

ing beneficial relationships.

In addition, the Conference initiates special projects such as collecting data on educational practices across all North American jurisdictions, as well as encouraging Masonic research and writing by individual educators.

How We Function

The Conference meets once a year, usually in late April or early May, in one of the member jurisdictions. Responsibility for conducting the Annual Meeting rotates each year, eventually being hosted by all member jurisdictions before repeating.

A typical program schedule includes presentations by well-known Masonic speakers, experiential as well as scholarly participant presentations, roundtable discussions, and jurisdiction reports. Sufficient time is also arranged to provide informal chats among attendees. For more than a half century, our participants have expressed the view that our Conference is well worth the time, effort and cost in order to gain the many benefits from attending and participating.

For more information visit:

MCME1949.Org

Remember - Individuals and other orgs can join, that means YOU!

The Caretaker: A Photograph

RWB.: R. H. Johnson, PDDGM
Committee on MAsonic Education



A few years ago, I was regularly writing for Masonic Blogs and the like. I hit a point of writer's block, I asked my wife what I should write about. She said, "*How about that photograph of Curtis?*" I didn't think about it

for more than a second or two. I knew that's what I should write about.

Curtis was a Past Master, he was my mentor and he was a great friend who imparted to me what Freemasonry was all about. When I first became a Freemason, the Worshipful Master told me that Curtis would be my Intender. I didn't know what that meant at the time. But week after week, I met Curtis at the lodge. Every Monday, rain or shine, we sat there in the foyer of the lodge and practiced my catechism.

We'd go through it a bit then something would always come up and we'd break away from the memory work and talk instead about life. Curtis taught me a lot about life. Things I never even considered before. How to treat people, being a leader, and knowing how and when to say "no", we talked about the benefits of having hearing aids (He joked about turning his off so as not to hear his wife yell at him), but most of all, we talked about Freemasonry and what it did for him in his life. He once told me his

favorite bumper sticker said "*Whence Came You?*", because no one but a Mason would know what it meant. Now you know the backstory on the name of my podcast.

I was Curtis' last pupil. Shortly after being raised to Master Mason, the lodge got together and bought Curtis a Lifetime Membership, a token of appreciation for all he had done for Waukegan Lodge #78 over the years. I remember sitting in the dining hall thinking, "*I hope I can influence as many men as he did someday.*"

During our catechism practices, Curtis would smoke. Yes, he was breaking the rules! However, in between cigarettes, he would take multiple "hits" off of his inhaler. He was funny that way. Curtis told me one day that he knew his time was coming. I always played it off. I would say things like, "*You have another 100 years, old man.*" Of course, he knew and so did I, that I was wrong.

One morning I received a call from another Brother of the lodge. Zig was his name. Zig is still around and one feisty old sailor, I might add. He said, "*Bob, Curtis is in the hospital. Betty took him in, he was having a rough time breathing.*" I told Zig that we should go see him and of course, Zig swung by the house and picked me up. When I arrived at the hospital, he was in bed and sleeping. Betty, his wife, said

he's been tired and not able to sleep comfortably. So Zig and I sat there and just talked.

Soon, however, Curtis woke up and smiled. He asked how we were doing and made some small talk. He fatigued easily. He had to do some lung exercises while we were there as well. All in all, it looked as though he'd go home in a few days. I held his hand and said, "*Curtis, Zig and I are taking off. Get some rest, Brother.*"

And that was the last time I ever saw Curtis. He passed that evening and I received the call the next day. I stayed home from work that day. It was a weird feeling altogether. Feeling a sadness like that for someone I hadn't truly known for that long. But there I was, head in hands, sobbing.

I'll never forget the first Masonic Funeral I ever attended. It was Curtis'. And I will never forget what Terry Behling, a Past Master and mentor from our lodge said as he and I stood in the lounge of the funeral home. We stood there in silence, sipping burnt coffee and eating those awful shortbread funeral cookies. I'm sure we looked a mess. Terry looked up and said, "*You know who I really feel sorry for? All the new Brothers who won't get that experience.*"

He was right. Curtis brought something to the table that I have yet to see again. Years after he passed away, another mentor of the lodge was in the dining room going through some old pictures. One of them was this picture. I asked him if I could have it. "*Of course.*" Was the reply. I've kept this picture in my office ever since. In all my Masonic endeavors I think about Curtis and I guess in my own way, get approval from him.



A Tale of Two Masons

by Steven L. Harrison, FMLOR, 33°

Anthony Butler (1787–1849) was a lawyer, a politician, a diplomat, the ward and friend of Brother Andrew Jackson and, yes, a Freemason. Brother Jackson, when President, thought highly enough of Butler to appoint him United States chargé d'affaires in Mexico City. He also appointed him his secret agent in a surreptitious plan to purchase Texas for the United States.

Some say Butler was dedicated to the point of ruthlessness in carrying out this plan. Historian Justin H. Smith described him as “shamefully careless, unprincipled in his methods and openly scandalous in his conduct...In brief, he was a national disgrace.”

Brother Sam Houston, who had more than one encounter with Butler in the United States’ effort to purchase Texas, was not an admirer. “Such men as he is,” said Houston, “would destroy a country, but take my word for it, he will never gain one!”

Stephen F. Austin (1793-1836) had known Butler in the US and, although Masonic Brothers, they were far from friends. Many, including Austin, felt President Jackson’s plan to purchase Texas was nothing more than a scheme to secure Texas’ public lands at a pittance, without regard to the well-being or future of the territory. Austin refused to go along with the deal. Butler, in return, offered Austin a one million dollar incentive (some might call it a bribe) to change his mind, but Austin would have no part in it.

Butler remained in the area attempting to gain Texas for the US despite Austin’s opposition. While there, he became interested in and began courting the daughter of a prominent Mexican family. Austin was a friend of the family. Upon hearing what Butler was up to, he exposed him as a man who had a wife and three children back in the US.

Exposing Butler no doubt won the gratitude of his friends but it also sealed Butler’s animosity. Butler was delighted when the Mexican government imprisoned Austin for sedition in 1833. Andrew Jackson, however, was not at all pleased when he learned of Austin’s arrest. He wrote letters to Butler asking him

to act as a United States agent and to use his influence to secure Austin’s release.

Rather than ignore Jackson’s letters, Butler so despised Austin he made the perilous journey to Mexico City to visit Austin in

jail and taunt him with them. During that visit Butler read the letters to Austin and told him the only way he would work for his release would be if Austin gave him large land grants back in Texas. Austin refused and Butler, ignoring President Jackson’s request, left him to rot in the Mexican prison. Austin gained his own release eight months later.

The men remained adversaries for life. Austin’s place in history is well-known. Although he died at a young age he is revered in Texas for his pioneering efforts... but whatever became of Anthony Butler?

Although he definitely engaged in some questionable behavior, Butler may not have been quite the scoundrel some claimed; or, at least he may have in some measure redeemed himself. As a Freemason he was well-regarded enough to serve as Grand Master of two states, Kentucky (1812 - 13) and, indeed, Texas (1840 - 41). Then, in 1849, the 62-year-old Butler was a passenger on an ill-fated riverboat that exploded and sank on the Mississippi River. Butler died as he swam into the burning wreckage in an attempt to save fellow passengers.



Where Everybody Knows Your Name

by WB Darin A. Lahners
Committee on Masonic Education



Being a Worshipful Master is not without its challenges, but the greatest challenge that you can face as a Worshipful Master is losing a lodge member. Not only have you lost a brother, but You've also lost some-

one that as a member of your lodge, you were probably close to. On top of dealing with that loss, you're also responsible for making sure that the brother is given Masonic Funeral rites, making sure that the slate for the rites is filled, and then comes the worry that it will only be you and a handful of brethren from your lodge attending the funeral.

I had to face this challenge last week. The Masonic funeral services were held on Saturday and my apprehension was at a high upon waking that morning. My apprehension was not well-founded. Because I forgot, as I often do, that our fraternity is made up of men with high standards. Walking into the funeral home, it was so amazing to be greeted by friendly faces, by my brethren who were just as happy to see me as I was to see them. Twenty smiling faces. Twenty brethren who took the time out of their schedules to honor our fallen brother. While only a handful of these were brethren that attend my local lodge, they were nonetheless brethren that I knew. Brethren that drove in some cases more than an hour to come to pay their respects to their fallen brother.

Normally, I'm writing an article to complain about something that I feel Freemasonry is lacking or to address something that I see as an issue with Freemasonry. I know that many of you are worried that coming out of the pandemic, we will find ourselves

fighting harder to get men to come back to the lodge. If my limited sample size is any indication, these fears, like my fears this past Saturday were not well-founded. On the contrary, I see an opportunity for growth, Personal growth, and the growth of the Fraternity.

The opportunity I see for growth is this. We have men who have been locked up for the most part over the past year, who have had time for some introspection. These men are looking for an opportunity to be something greater than themselves. They're looking to get out of the house, to reconnect with friends. Some of them might want to meet new friends. Yet they might not even realize that they have a place that is like the place mentioned in the theme from the television show Cheers. A place where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came. It's up to each of us to seize this opportunity and to promote our local lodge. If this means advertising (gasp) that we're still around, then I see no harm in doing that. Ultimately, if you're doing your job in guarding the West Gate, then you're going to only let in men that meet our high standards. I see no harm in letting the men of your community know that there is a place where everybody knows your name. If this means yard signs, Facebook ads, or whatever it takes to get your lodge's name into the community again, I say do it. Let's use this time as we transition back to normal as an opportunity to get some new members.

From a personal level, I need to remember that Freemasonry, when practiced in its purest form by brethren meeting on the level, acting by the plumb, and

parting upon the square; is the greatest strength of our fraternity. Our active membership, who are those members that you can count on to show up when you need them. I also need to remember that regardless of our differences, it is our common bond of brotherhood that is the glue that binds us. I need to remember not to care so much about how others are practicing Freemasonry, because, at the end of the day, I can only control how I practice it. If brethren want to have a social club, I need to let them have their social club. If they don't want to prioritize education, I need to stop trying to get them to prioritize it. Basically, I need to stop worrying about what other members are doing and worry about what I'm doing. I won't be able to change Freemasonry, and after seeing those 20 faces on Saturday, I'm not sure I really need to. The men who practice Freemasonry in its purest form are going to continue to practice it.

So the next time I have those doubts enter my mind about Freemasonry, I need to remember the things I have laid out above. While I will probably still try to change Freemasonry, I will do so more out of a love of the Craft, and less out of trying to get my brethren to practice it a certain way. At the end of the day, if they've established a lodge where everybody knows their name, and people are glad they came. Isn't that what Freemasonry is all about? Does it really matter if they're having education or festive boards? If what they are doing is working for them, then they should continue to do it. The beauty of Freemasonry is that it can be everything to everyone, it's just a matter of finding the brethren who want to practice it the same way that you do.



VIRTUAL FRIENDSHIP,

Real Life Brotherhood

by Bill Hosler, PM †



Every Freemason knows that feeling. That feeling when you are out in public, often with your wife or partner, and another Mason will approach you and mumble a couple of words, and the next thing you know both of you are smiling and shaking hands and talking. A few minutes later your significant other will ask you, "Does he belong to your lodge?" and you reply back "Nope. Never met him before." It's a feeling that even though you never met the man before you share something in common that makes you feel like you have known him all your life. It's not something you can explain and seems weird to others, but it is a special thing between brothers.



Not long ago, I had the opportunity to visit Saint Joseph Lodge #970 in Saint Joseph Illinois. The lodge is located in a century-old building that meets with a coffee shop in the downtown area of a small town

full of shops, restaurants, and a winery in main street America. It's a vital part of this beautiful little town near Champaign.



As wonderful as the town was the real reason, I was visiting this lodge was to finally meet in person several of the Brethren I have been working with for over a half-decade.

This little town is where I was to meet Midnight Freemasons and fellow co-hosts of the podcast Meet, Act, and Part, Todd Creason, Greg Knott, and Darin Lahners. After all these years we were all physically going to be in the same room and attend the same lodge together. I was excited since this is only the second time, I've met a Midnight Freemason in real life since I met Steve Harrison when he drove through my little Oklahoma town a few years ago.

That afternoon, Greg Knott picked me up at my hotel and after meeting Darin, we had a great dinner outside at Roch's where I was able to try a local Illinois delicacy called "The Horseshoe" (Google it). We spent a great meal talking and laughing after the meal was done we walked the half block to the lodge building.



Since Darin is the Master of the lodge this year, I watched him open the lodge, while Greg and Todd served as Stewards for the evening. As always when you visit a foreign jurisdiction you look for the differences and similarities to the ritual you learned.

Once the business of the lodge had been completed, Worshipful Brother Lahners asked me to approach the East. Brother Lahners presented me with a lodge lapel on Saint Joe had commissioned during the year Greg Knott was Master of the lodge and Saint Joe had the honor of winning the Mark Twain Award for Excellence in Masonic Awareness. It was a beautiful pin, and I will keep it as a souvenir and as a reminder of such a great evening.



After the meeting, the group of us stood in the parking lot and talked for a little while. Discussing future plans for the podcast and the possibility of getting us

all together in one place for a symposium-type meeting. It's amazing how we all work together, for years now connected by light and fiber optic cables all over from our locations all over the work the transformational real life was seamless. As if we all have been next-door neighbors for decades.

One thing we all agreed on the time we all had together was too short and we would all have to get together again very soon. Much like the line in the Tyler's Toast used in English festive boards "Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again."



The Tyler's Toast

'Are your glasses all charged in the West and the South?'
the Worshipful Master cries.
'All charged in the West!' '
All charged in the South,'
came the Wardens' prompt replies.

Then to our final Toast tonight, our glasses freely drain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

The Mason's social Brotherhood around the festive board,
Reveals a Truth more precious far, than the miser's hoard.

We freely share the bounteous gifts, that generous hearts contain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

We meet as Masons free and true, and when our work is done,
The merry song and social glass is not unduly won.

And only at our farewell pledge is pleasure mixed with pain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Amidst our mirth we drink to all poor Masons o'er the Earth,
On every shore our flag of love is gloriously unfurled.

We prize each Brother, fair or dark, who bears no moral stain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

We Masons prize that noble truth, the Scottish peasant told,
That rank is but a guinea stamp: The man himself the gold.

We meet the rich and poor alike, the equal rights maintain,
Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.

Dear Brethren of the Mystic tie, the night is waning fast,
Our work is done, our feast is o'er, this toast must be the last.

Good night to all, once more good night, again that farewell
strain,

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again.



It's Not About the Food.

by Erik Marks, MA



At breakfast of my first day in the Scottish Rite, a Brother welcomed me and said: “don’t you worry, you’ll make back your dues in the meals...the food is great.” I thought to myself: “I didn’t come here for the meal.” Later the same evening in recounting an amazing day of deep insights and new friends to my partner and sons. I explained with slight dismay of my newfound Brother’s welcome serving. It was disappointing the first fare of the day was the extent of his and my conversational fodder. My spouse exhorted: “Erik. You know this: it is not about the food!” Light. In her inimitable way, Corinna conducted me with laser precision to the heart of what is my problem, not his: our breakfast banter is my bread and butter.

Food is the metaphor for the nurturing, Love, we never received in our families or denied in our co-construction of society. In every culture, we have traditions, ceremony, and rituals around or about food. The Seder plate has foods with metaphoric meanings. We eat specific foods on designated days to remember aspects of divinity, honor ancestors, and celebrate the ample freedoms we enjoy. We break fasts with specific foods. Certain foods are used as medicines. In traditional Chinese Medicine, Vedic and Tibetan medicinal systems, foods are prescribed for myriad ailments. A doctor with an integrated approach prescribed warmed garlic oil for an ear infection I kept having, along with the standard amoxicillin in case the natural method didn't work. I never had to fill the penicillin prescription...

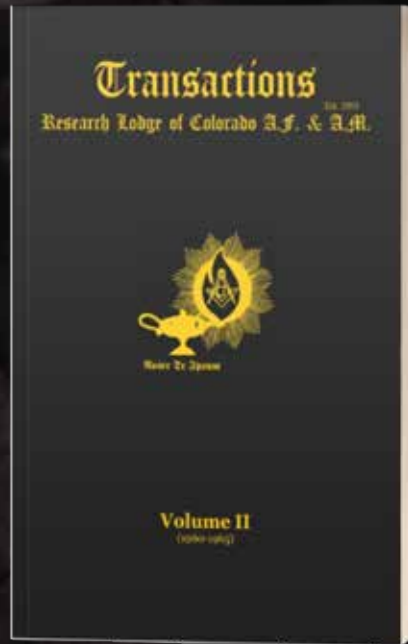
Foods are sometimes misused as a substance for emotional management or control. People restrict intake to feel a sense of control over their body. Some overindulge regularly or at intervals in order to generate strong bodily sensation to mask emotion, divert attention from emotion, and create an emotion to manage another. Often, anxiety creates an empty sensation people try to fill or blunt with food. When sad, lonely, or depressed, we use foods that boost positive feelings: chocolate, carbs, fats, and sugars. We use food to fill emptiness and it's encouraged through marketing. "I'm an emotional eater..." is a common phrase I hear. This can be a difficult pattern, habit, or symptoms to change since we can't simply encourage abstinence as we can with alcohol or drugs/substances used recreationally or to self-medicate. Food is essential for life, so other approaches to change problematic eating are needed.

Food has always been a part of Freemasonry—as it has in every tradition. It is both material relief and metaphor. In our second degree, part of our traditional wages. Lodges set aside days of the year or month to serve those less fortunate. We provide meals to brethren with thought and care. Men, cooking or providing for, and nurturing, one another... and cherishing every moment. To be clear, at the core of every meal is not always about the food. The primary ingredient is quite often, Love. I can't blame lack of coffee the morning of my initiation for the fact I wasn't ready to ascertain the meaning in my newfound Brother's gift to me: "Welcome. You will not be taxed or punished for getting what you need

here. I've felt welcomed and cared for by the fraternity. Don't worry Brother, it can happen for you, too." He is getting what he needs for his development through the way he serves and is served-literally-in the Scottish Rite. Who am I to disrupt or disparage his path?

I may not see what he gains through the degrees or deserts. I may not need what he needs to be nourished towards perfection. Labor, physical, psychological, or spiritual can be draining and requires sustenance. Just because he doesn't reflect his experience back to me in an esoteric or philosophic frame does not mean he isn't affected in the ways I may want for me and would like to discuss. Growth can take time, and our path cannot be everything to all men at the pace we think they need. Nor should we try to be so for everyone. It seems we offer a tremendous amount to some; for others our overtly esoteric and philosophic explorations may go unnoticed, for now and we remain persistent. So, the problem is my own. He welcomed me in his way, and I missed the chance to engage him: due to my insistence on a particular mode of communication, we both lost out...or maybe it was only my loss. Thank you, Brother. I hope to see you at the next reunion's wonderful breakfast.





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Where Ever You Go, There You Are

by Bro, Evve Kuykendall, TX



Quite a while ago, and at the time of originally writing this, two well known celebrities had taken their own lives. Kate Spade, a well known fashion designer and Anthony Bourdain, a celebrated chef and television host, both died by all available accounts, at their own hands. For most, the depths of despair they felt as a result of their depression is unfathomable. They were, by almost any standard, successful, having fame, money, and strong carriers that have influenced millions of people worldwide.

And yet, they differed enough to resort to suicide. Why couldn't they see everything they had to live for and all the good things in their lives? Why couldn't they just "*snap out of it*" by practicing an "*attitude of gratitude*"? I mean, they had everything, right? Money? Check. Fame? Check. They had friends and family...why couldn't they just get over it, especially for those they loved? They had the ability to travel anywhere and do anything...why didn't they just take some time off to get happy?

Most of the those things had been posted on social media by people who were hurt or confused by their deaths.

What is that old saying?... "*Where ever you go, there you are.*"

As a younger man, I never really understood that saying. As far as tautologies go, that one really never landed for me. Until it did.

When I left active duty Air Force, I started dealing with a deep depression coupled with suicidal thoughts. I didn't really know why nor did I have any real coping mechanisms with which to handle it. I started pushing people away and didn't want to see my friends because I felt even more alone and depressed when I was around them and other people. I could be in a room surrounded by people and feel completely alone. It took an incredible amount of psychological energy to be social, even for short periods. So, I stayed home alone. A LOT. My friends eventually stopped calling and inviting me to go places.

I blamed it on my having gone back to school full time and of course working full time in order to pay my bills. I was exhausted and just needed sleep.

After I graduated and started my new career, I expected things to change and to have the energy to be social and reconnect with all my old friends—but they didn't. I was starting a new job so I blamed the depression on the stress of financial insecurity and the loneliness. I blamed my friends for abandoning me when I needed them during school. In retrospect, that wasn't the case at all.

I worked hard and after some time, received a job offer in another city and state and thought to myself, "*Here is my chance for a clean break to start over in a place where I can be anyone I want to be!*" So I loved.

Where ever you go, there you are.

The depression and suicidal thoughts followed me, which surprised me. I thought it was because my friends had abandoned me and the city I used to live in was lame. My job had me traveling 20-25 days a month, so once again, I blamed it on the long hours, jet lag, and loneliness.

A call came in that I would be moving again to an even more desirable city, at least socially speaking. I jumped at the chance for another change to move back to my home state of Texas, where I knew people and might have a leg up meeting people. I mean, there has to be a place meant for everyone, right? So, I moved again.

Where ever you go, there you are.

The travel stayed the same, but I was determined to be a happier person; to find fulfillment in my personal time and maybe even find someone special. So, I took some chances socially, connected with someone and started dating. It was slow going and we dated for almost a year before it was time to make the next step.

We moved in together and I started a business with the hopes that we would eventually run the business together. I thought I had finally overcome to darkness from which I had run so far. But the shadow was still there...and that someone special didn't understand why I was angry and moody and sleepy, and didn't want to be social. Predictably, everything fell apart. As a result, all that darkness that I thought had gone away or that I had locked away hadn't gone away at all. It was just behind the door that had been thrown open with my breakup for me to deal with, all at once.

One night soon afterwards, I was texting with an old friend. I mentioned how bad things were going and that I only had one reason for not killing myself: my mother. I couldn't stand the idea of knowing that I had hurt her with my actions, but that after she passed, I would have nothing tethering me to life. His response sticks with me to this day.

"You need to get help. Fast."

I realized I had been too honest with him. He just didn't get it. Doesn't everyone feel like this from time to time? Isn't depression normal? But, he got me thinking.

So, I decided that I since I was due for my annual checkup anyway, when I went to the doctor in a few days, I would bring this up to him and put it all behind me. He was going to tell me it was normal and that I just needed some sleep or to take some vitamins or prescribe me something that would turn me into a walking zombie.

I went to my doctor and as his assistant prepped me for the doctor, she peppered me with some questions. I told her that I had been feeling...depressed. She asked if I was having any suicidal thoughts.

"Well, yes," I explained, "I think about killing myself all the time, but not in one of those 'I'm gonna actually do it' kind of ways. It's more of a comforting, 'I'm just thinking about it' kind of ways." As I heard myself saying it, I realized how crazy it sounded. And so did she.

I came to find out that I have post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Its symptoms include social anxiety, depression, mood swings, suicidal thoughts... everything I had been dealing with for a decade or longer.

My doctor said, that along with treatment, I needed to begin working on myself. I needed to do things that I found enjoyable and helped me get out of my anxiety and depression. I had to find a way to start enjoying life again.

It had been so long since I had even considered life as something to be enjoyed. One would think such a task would be easy, but nothing was farther from the truth. I had difficulty finding anything that made me want to get out of bed, much less enjoy life again.

Across the street from where I worked was a Masonic Temple. *"Wasn't there a time when I was in the military that I had wanted to check them out or heard something good about those guys?"* I could check them out now. I worked across the street, for crying out loud. I have no excuse. And if they are weird or if it's some kind of cult, I could just say, *"Thanks, but no thanks."* There was a possibility I might not even be invited to join the group. So I emailed the lodge secretary and made a subtle inquiry. I was told to come to fellowship night before the next stated meeting.

The night came and I was terrified. I. Was. Terrified. The anxiety of PTSD almost stopped me from walking across the street, but I was determined to

stop letting this illness rule my life. So, I got up and walked across the street into a room full of strangers. Now, looking back, Freemasonry, the fraternity I love so much, was (and remains) part of my treatment.

So, I understand better than most what Kate Spade and Anthony Bourdain were dealing with.

Where ever you go, there you are.

Depression is a part of you that cannot be escaped with vacations or fancy clothing, or great food, or friends. It isn't a switch that can be turned off. It follows you everywhere you go, it influences every conversation and thought you have. It hides for periods of times, then re-emerges in different clothing, but it is the same old depression. It isn't sadness. It is an emptiness—for me it is in my abdomen—a void that cannot be filled by food or alcohol or material stuff. It consumes everything good in your life and convinces your mind that you are alone and would be better off dead.

So, where ever you are, your depression is there, too, inevitably making it feel like everything would be better if it just...stopped

This is the first time I have ever spoken to anyone but family and close friends about my PTSD or my ongoing battle with it. I do so to implore our brethren to look out for one another. Look past the smiles and handshakes and self-deprecating jokes. There are brothers among us dealing with exactly what I am dealing with, some more successfully than others.

It was my brethren that have kept me here, even when they didn't know it.

For those brother who are suffering, thinking there is no where to turn and no one that cares...there is hope and help, even when that voice is telling you that you are alone. You are loved. You are valued. You are a brother.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255



BROTHER, WORSHIPFUL BROTHER, RIGHT WORSHIPFUL BROTHER, MOST WORSHIPFUL BROTHER

by RWB.: Ira Gilbert, FILOR, †



As soon as a candidate takes his obligation in the first degree, he changes his designation from candidate to brother. At the moment that the candidate detaches his hands and kisses the Bible, he is embarking on a journey that is a long and difficult, although rewarding journey through our fraternity. There are many paths that a brother may follow as he progresses from Brother to Most Worshipful Brother. He may not aspire to, nor achieve all of the designations listed in the title to this article. But nevertheless, the journey will be a gratifying one that will make his Masonic life satisfying and enjoyable.

This is an article about aspirations. How one achieves his aspirations is dependent on the new Brother's thinking, but even more so, on the aid given to him by the brethren in the lodge to help the new Brother along the way.

Last week I participated in a Grand Master's Class as the Mentor for the candidates from my lodge. The candidates entered the lodge hall and as they stood before the Wardens and the Master the Junior Deacon was asked at each station if the candidate was "duly and truly prepared" Now most brethren think that being "duly and truly prepared" means is he properly attired in the costume and has the cable tow and blindfold been properly affixed. But if the candidate has really been "duly and truly prepared" this also means in his mind as well as his body. Has the candidate studied the Intender Manual for the Entered Apprentice Degree? Has the candidate learned and been properly examined on the Catechism? Has

the candidate been schooled by his Intender on the meaning and symbolism of the ritual in the Entered Apprentice degree? I fear that in many cases the candidate was not really "duly and truly prepared" in his mind to be raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason.

As the candidates were raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason they were embarking on a life of study. They were starting on a journey where, depending on their aspirations, they were beginning their advance from being a Brother to becoming a Worshipful Brother, and then, perhaps, to become a Right Worshipful and possibly even a Most Worshipful Brother.

To progress in many organizations there is a preferred route to the top. In the corporate world, this may be by becoming proficient in marketing, sales, or finance. In the military, the route to the top might lie through experience in combat. In Freemasonry, the path upward lies in proficiency in the ritual.

Proficiency in the ritual not only means that the Brother is capable of memorizing the words. But it also means studying and becoming proficient in the history and symbolism of the material presented in each of the degrees.

The path leading from brother to Most Worshipful Brother starts with the learning of the catechism in each degree. To achieve recognition in the catechism the new brother must learn the long-form catechism

for all three degrees and then be examined in open lodge on his proficiency in these catechisms. Upon a satisfactory examination, the successful candidate will be recognized for his accomplishment by the Grand Lodge.

The next step in one's Masonic advancement is the procurement of three books from the Grand Lodge of Illinois. The first book to acquire is the Book of Standard Work. Next is the Book of Ceremonials. The third acquisition is a pamphlet that is chock full of information. That pamphlet is The Handbook for Officer Advancement. The latter publication contains a listing of what a Brother should learn at each position and station as he progresses through the chairs once he achieves an appointive officer in the lodge.

If a Brother is fortunate enough to have been appointed by the Master to a chair in the lodge he starts his progression in the hierarchy of Freemasonry. The Brother starts to learn the material from the Book of Standard Work and the Book of Ceremonials appropriate to his position in the officer's line of the lodge. The progression of learning as a brother moves through the chairs is outlined in the pamphlet Handbook for Officer Advancement.

It is at this point in the Brother's advancement toward the Master's chair that he should consider attending one or more of the excellent schools in the area. He should also attend the Grand Lodge Officers Schools that are scheduled throughout the Masonic year.

Learning the ritual in the Book of Standard Work or in the Book of Ceremonials is but a start to Masonic education. It is at the schools that the brother will learn the floor and rod work that is essential to performing a good ritual. If memory were the only route on the path to advancement, the brother would have a relatively easy road to the top. When the brother feels comfortable enough to really delve into what Freemasonry means, he can now start to look into the many available books that teach the history, symbolism, and philosophy lying behind the ritual that he is now mastering. It is the understanding of our ritual and the application of these principles that make a man a Mason and prepare him to become an officer in the fraternity.

The next stop on the way to the top of our fraternity is to achieve the title of Master. The trip from Brother to Worshipful Brother can take as long as seven years if one fills each station on the way. Starting at Mar-

shall the Brother fills the stations of Junior Deacon, Senior Deacon, Junior Steward, Junior Warden, Senior Warden, and perhaps Chaplain, before achieving the station of Worshipful Master. At each station, there is the prescribed material that must be learned and mastered.

If the Brother has done well and learned the ritual, floor, and rod work, the next step to Right Worshipful Brother is not too difficult. There are two routes to this title. One can become involved with the Grand Lodge and perhaps become a District Deputy Grand Master. Along with the title comes the satisfying job of working with several lodges in your district helping them achieve a good working lodge. Another way to become a Right Worshipful Brother is to be appointed to a station in the line of Officers in the Grand Lodge.

A different way to become a Right Worshipful Brother is to attend one or more schools that teach the ritual, rod, and floor work and become proficient enough to pass the rigorous test to become a Grand Lecturer. Prior to achieving this prestigious position, the Brother may become a Certified Lodge Instructor. This title can be attained by being skilled in the ritual of the first section of all three degrees. To become a Grand Lecturer, it is necessary to achieve perfection in all of the material in the Book of Standard Work along with the floor and rod work that goes with the ritual.

Right Worshipful Brother may be all that one wishes to accomplish. However, the road to Most Worshipful Brother comes with another long and difficult path. The Brother may be appointed to the station of Junior Grand Deacon. Then, after the passage of two years at each station, that is ten years total, I will be able to call the Brother Most Worshipful Grand Master. The trail is a long and demanding one to follow. But I can assure you that the long, hard years are well worth the effort to gain the position that only a few can achieve.



COMPETENCY > FEELINGS

*MAKING THE RIGHT
CHOICES IN LEADERSHIP*

HARD TRUTH

OCTOBER 4TH, 3:00 P.M.



The Illinois Lodge of Research Proudly Presents

A Special Discourse by
Robert H. Johnson, FILOR

CROWN PLAZA,
SPRINGFIELD, IL



OPEN TO ALL MASTER MASONS

127 N. Genesee St
Waukegan, IL 60085
Waukegan Masonic Lodge

09
28
24

175th Anniversary

1849-2024

September 28th, 2024

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Ceremonial

Reception at the Historic Genesee Theater

2:00 PM- 4:00 PM



**Commemorative Coins, Ties, and Lapel
Pins will be available.**

Masonic Educational Conferences

Illinois Lodge of Research Annual Meeting– October 4th, 2024, 3PM Crown Plaza,
Springfield, IL
www.IllinoisLodgeofResearch.org

New York Masonic Con – January 17th-19th, 2025 – New York
www.nymasons.org

Masonic Week – Annual Event – February, 2025
www.AMDUSA.org

Midwest Conference on Masonic Education – May 2nd-4th 2025, Indiana
www.MCME1949.org

Esotericon – June 13th, 2025 – Virginia
www.esotericon.net

South Pasadena Masonic Con (SPML) – July 25th, 2025 – California
www.MasonicCon.com

Masonic Con South – October 18 & 19th, 2025 – North Carolina
www.MasonicConSouth.com

Yes! Masonic Con Chicago will be back in September of 2026.

For more visit, MasonicConferences.com

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

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

