
The Lyceum



A Publication of
The Committee on Masonic Education



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Your Publication Staff & Contributors
Robert H. Johnson - Editor-In-Chief, Darin A. Lahners -
Editor, Chad Lacek, 33°, Bernard Davis, Chairman

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the December/January edition of The Lyceum, the Grand Lodge of Illinois Education Magazine for Freemasons! With winter in full swing and the days slowly getting longer, this is the perfect time to stay warm and delve into the wealth of educational resources and inspiration offered in this issue.

In this edition, we explore many facets of Masonic Education, starting with Brother Mark St. Cyr from Ohio, who presents an intriguing discussion on “The Most Important Masonic Tool.” We’ve also got awesome inspiration from our Membership Committee Chairman, RWB: Spooner!

We will explore fascinating topics, such as “Unlocking the Secrets: Must-Read Books Recommended by Illinois Masons.” Additionally, I have written an article to shed light on “The Truth About Esoteric Masonry,” and Brother Kenneth Bealer encourages us to go “Back to Basics.” Don’t miss Ill. Brother Greg J. Knott, 33°, as he explores “What’s in Your Library,” featuring must-have literary treasures for every Mason.

In addition to these highlights, we are excited to preview future gatherings and educational events such as “Esotericon 2025” and the “Midwest Conference on Masonic Education!”

We invite you, our esteemed readers, to contribute your thoughts and articles. Please send us your responses to articles and articles you wish to be reviewed for publishing to the editor. These will be showcased in our upcoming “Letters to the Editor” section, debuting as soon as we receive your valuable input.

As you settle into the cozy confines of winter, we hope the articles within provide both warmth and enlightenment. May this season bring you prosperity and health.

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

EMBRACING MASONIC RENEWAL AND EDUCATION



Greetings Brethren,

As we step into the new year, it's a time for reflection, renewal, and recommitment to our goals and values. The dawn of 2025 brings with it a fresh slate of

opportunities for growth and learning within our Masonic community.

One of the most valuable assets we have at our disposal is the wealth of educational resources available through the Grand Lodge of Illinois. These resources are designed to support our members in their personal and professional development, and I encourage each of you to take full advantage of them.

The Masonic Education section of our Grand Lodge website, ilmason.org, is a treasure trove of information and tools. Whether you're looking to deepen your understanding of Masonic principles, seeking guidance on lodge management, or exploring new ways to engage with our community, you'll find a wealth of materials to assist you.

Here are a few highlights of what you can find in the Masonic Education section:

- **Current and Past Copies of The Lyceum:** Access a comprehensive archive of our monthly education magazine, filled with insightful articles and updates.
- **Recommended Short Talk Bulletins:** Explore a curated list of bulletins that cover a wide range of topics, from symbolism to history, providing valuable insights into Freemasonry.
- **25 Books Every Mason Should Know:** Discover essential readings that every Mason should be familiar with, offering deep dives into Masonic philosophy and history.
- **The Illinois Lodge of Research:** Engage with scholarly works and research papers that delve

into the history and philosophy of Freemasonry, produced by our dedicated research lodge.

- **Member-Only Resources:** Take advantage of exclusive materials available only to members, designed to enhance your Masonic journey and support your growth within the fraternity.

As we embrace the new year, let's commit to utilizing these resources to their fullest potential. By doing so, we not only enrich our own Masonic journey but also contribute to the growth and vitality of our lodges and the Grand Lodge as a whole.

Remember, the strength of our fraternity lies in the knowledge and dedication of its members. Let's make 2025 a year of learning, growth, and unity.

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



The Most Important Masonic Tool?

by Brother Mark St. Cyr, OH



Let's start with the usual litany of disclaimers: this doesn't represent any Grand Lodge, Lodge, Appendant/Concordant body, Brother, Sister, cousins _____ (fill in your own here) viewpoint except the authors.

So now with that out of the way, let's begin...

I read a lot of varying viewpoints from an even greater number of Masonic authors. You read about "the working tools" and their importance to both the personal as well as their greater application in the masonic and/or profane world. You'll read about the importance of one tool over another or its application in unison with another et cetera.

Many of these points I completely concur with, especially how it's originally presented in our catechism. However, with that now said, I believe the most important masonic "tool" is rarely ever mentioned, if at all: The voting box.

Sure, we all hear how important our duty is to fulfill one of our most honored and sacred responsibility, right before we cast. But does anyone really listen? Worse, does anyone dare vote against the grain? Here's where I believe many, if not most, of our current issues, are developing from. i.e., A yes vote placed in favor when they have absolutely no clue on the who, why or anything else pertaining to a candi-

date. It's all just...

Be presented with the voting box; select the appropriate marble (i.e., in-favor); then sit back and continue the side discussion; check your social media pages, or all three simultaneously. Rinse, repeat.

Here's why I know the above - I've both observed it at every single voting matter I've attended, while also following much of that script myself before I knew any better. e.g., Was presented the box; selected in favor; went back to the prior discussion.

I've also done the: was already in discussion; was presented the box; kept on talking, albeit at low volume; selected, and never missed a syllable.

I did this because I observed that was how the "old guys" were doing it, and since I was a newly minted MM, I figured this was the accepted way. It wasn't until via my own research and self-edification into such things I found, to my horror, just how much it is not.

We read and hear complaints about just how low the bar has been set for one to become a Mason, and I freely admit to being one doing precisely that. However, what separates people like myself and the others that stand on this side of the fence, is that we are willing to both call "a spade a spade" while also

voting with that other “tool” known as our own two feet. And not partaking in what should be sacrosanct acts of Masonic protocols with a “just going through the motions” attitude for enablement.

Now, what is going to be said from this point forward is going to both tick off, as well as send a few into a bout of hives and who knows what else. However, before I start let me make this point abundantly clear... I am not proposing willy-nilly to disrupt or to cause mischief into any of our most important obligations concerning the Craft.

What I am saying, is that for those that complain about the quality or many other concerning aspects of the Craft, resulting from the candidate process. Vague to no answers concerning candidates are now demanding to be questioned for the good of the Craft. i.e., Why are they really petitioning? What are they expecting once accepted, etc., etc., etc.

Now with that stated, let's continue...

There is a moment in the entire process that either allows or disallows the process to begin in the first place. And no - it is not the investigation. It is - the voting process.

I'm not sure of the rules from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, heck, let's just say I don't even know the rules for my own. This will allow my points to be made without the “That's not the way it's done!” crowd possibly having blood pressure issues. But then again, that alone might be too high of a bar, but I digress.

So in that vein, let's forget “the rules” for the moment and think about my overarching premise, which is... If you believe your Lodge is ruining itself, along with possibly weakening the fraternity as a whole by accepting candidates via the only stipulation they can fog a mirror. Then the absolute ultimate tool to stop it is - at the voting box.

It is, by far, the single most powerful “tool” available to any Mason committed to bringing about change, bar none. That's why it should also be seen as something not to be toyed with in any way, shape, manner, or form.

So the obvious question now comes: How does one use this process without casting no votes and ruining both the process and is it being injurious to a possible

good candidate but poorly presented?

Here are my thoughts...

Remember, I am not advocating this be done willy-nilly. Anything concerning the voting process must be done with very deliberate and conscience forethought. To use an analogy: You're playing with nuclear fuel and a functioning atom smasher. Bad things happening here are not going to be something known as “trivial.”

How many times have we heard, “The investigation committee has returned a favorable report. Let's vote!” Then we do, and it's really nothing more than a going through the motions formality.

I propose doing something different from now on, again, for those that truly understand what the current issues facing the fraternity are; are dedicated to helping in the quest to doing the right things; and have the wherewithal to both articulate their viewpoints and the fortitude to back those viewpoints with sensible, constructive actions. Regardless if they'll now be relegated to “That guy!” status.

Next time the investigation committee is said to return a favorable report, it would be nice to raise one's hand and ask questions of the committee. However, in Illinois that is a violation of Code 299. Code 299 states: **Previous to the balloting the Master must read so much of the petition as gives the candidate's name, age, occupation, and residence, together with the names of the brethren who recommended him, and those who served on the investigating committee, and announce to the Lodge the nature of the investigating committee's report, and to what extent they were agreed.**

Let's pretend that the code didn't exist. Would it not be nice to be to ask: “What were the specific questions asked? And what were the specific answers of response?”

Or: “Before we vote can the committee or WM share the notes on such with the brethren before we cast?” If there are no “notes.” Ask, “Why not?” And, “If there are no notes, then surely we can have the investigation committee take questions as to try and illuminate the brethren on who this man is and why he wants to join. Sounds reasonable does it not?”

Here's what it'll probably raise: Eyebrows that hover over eyes filled with daggers of disdain. Like I said, this is not something for the timid.

Yet, why is this not asked? Why is this not freely given anyway? No, the most common thing for entry is: we sent a committee and all three concurred - he fogged the

forum questioning from the brethren before the “Get the box!” order is given, I believe, should now be a prerequisite. And if not? (Again, this is not for the timid.)

I believe someone needs to stand up and say, “With all due respect to the fraternity, the Lodge, and my brethren. I can not in good conscience vote to accept someone into our ranks blindly. Therefore, I shall abstain from voting.”

And do just that. Every. Single. Time.

At some point, others are going to start remembering precisely why they’re voting in the first place, and you may be surprised how many others might join your stance once they do.

At a minimum, it will open the conversation for possibly fixing the “west gate” issue before the “horse” as they say enters the barn rather than after.

Another stark reminder it also forces back into the spotlight is with someone (or more than just one) verbally making the arguments as to why they can not vote for such. Every time there is a call for one?

A going through the motions process immediately gets upended into the serious business that it is. Because all it takes is just one “No.” And no one knows who that one maybe. But what everyone will know is that the possibility for it now needs to be seriously contemplated.

So getting those answers in the beginning now becomes just as, if not more so, as important as getting the petition to begin with.

Think about it.





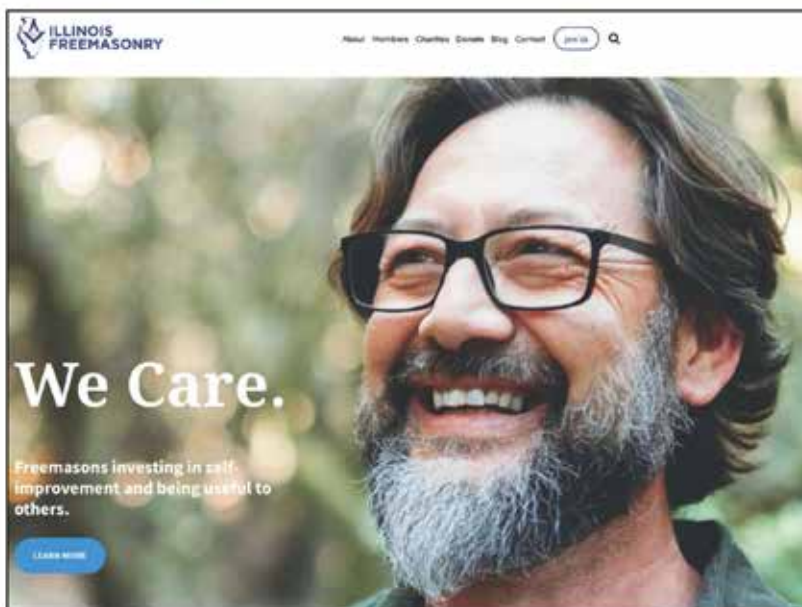
ILLINOIS FREEMASONRY

Getting Ready For Membership Growth

Membership Growth

Membership Retention + Membership Attraction

Telling Our Unique Illinois Freemasonry Story



Illinois Freemasonry website - ilmason.org

Illinois Freemasonry pages — Facebook & LinkedIn

Membership Development

“Back To The Fundamentals” — Embracing Our Roots

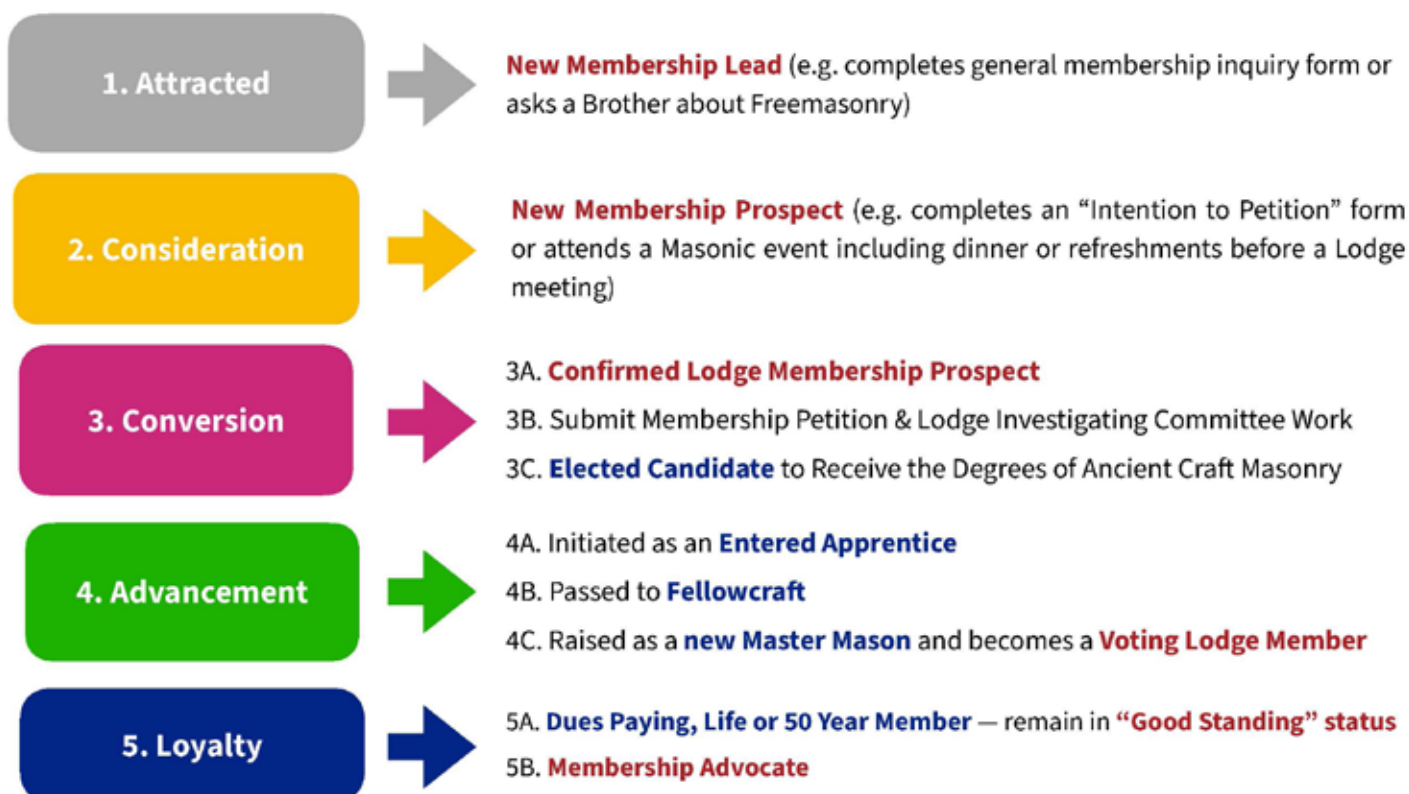
- **Mentorship & Guidance** — Our Faithful Friends And Guides
- **Independent Study** — We Are A Learning Institution
- **Dwell In A Sanctuary** — Here We Can Just Be Ourselves!
- **Management and Leadership** — To Advance Our Legacy
- **You Are Not Alone** — Mutual Love, Respect And Friendship
- **Selfless Service** — Be Useful And Positively Impact Others

An “Outside Looking In” Perspective

- In Illinois, males age 18 to 64 represent 61.2% of the male population — equates to **3.8 million men** (July 2022 Census Data).
- Throughout Illinois, our communities comprise of many good and honorable men seeking to **invest in Self-Improvement & Being Useful to Others** (along with seeking mentors, making genuine friends, and finding purpose and stability in life).
- What if 5% of the Illinois males in that age range above fit that description? — equates to **190,000 men**
- From The Path Forward Research (a **Survey of Non-Masons** age 21 to 65 from across the U.S.) — when exposed to the Values of our Fraternity, **57% would join or consider joining Freemasonry.**
- Within the last year, **we received more than 6,500 Online Masonic Membership Interest inquiries** — more than 1,800 of them moved forward to complete an “Intention to Petition” form and were **referred to a local Lodge for follow up contact.**

Membership Attraction & Retention Pipeline

Achieving Membership Growth



To advance the growth of Illinois Freemasonry with quality men who seek to invest in self-Improvement and being useful to others, **it is critical that our Lodge Officers and Brethren follow up and conduct proactive engagement with men** as they move through our **Membership Attraction & Retention Pipeline**.

Driving Membership Growth & Loyalty

1. **Membership Growth** is driven by **Membership Retention and Membership Attraction** activities that **focus on helping good men become Masons**, not just members.
2. **Membership Development through the “Back to the Fundamentals” work** has a direct positive impact on helping our Brethren achieve a valuable Masonic Membership Experience grounded in **Self-Improvement and Being Useful to Others**.
3. Our “**Outside Looking In**” perspective is fueled by facts and a solid assessment of what males need and want in their lives — **Freemasonry has what many of these males are looking for** which can be absolutely transformative to their lives.
4. We are **telling our authentic and unique Illinois Freemasonry story** — thousands of men in Illinois are attracted to Freemasonry and taking action to contact us and inquire about membership.

Driving Membership Growth & Loyalty

5. Moving good men through our **Membership Attraction & Retention Pipeline** is **some of the most important work** that we can accomplish for our Lodges and to advance the legacy of Illinois Freemasonry.
6. **As Freemasons, we are men of our word;** therefore, **we should follow up on 100% of these Membership Prospect referrals** sent to the Lodge for local contact.
7. The **local Brethren should contact the Membership Prospect** to answer his questions, get to know him, and **confirm his fit for Freemasonry or not.**
8. In every Lodge, we need to inspire and support more Brethren to become **Loyal Membership Advocates who share their talents / strengths, time and resources** to help our ancient and honorable fraternity flourish and grow in the years ahead.



**ILLINOIS
FREEMASONRY**

**Our Masonic Renaissance
in Illinois Has Begun!**





Victory Masonic Lodge & Cibolo Masonic Lodge present

San Antonio Esoteric Summit

Saturday, June 7th, 2025

8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. CDT

Speakers

**Jeff Bennett . Ben Williams . Frank Zepp . Dirk Hughes
Robert H. Johnson . Rodney McGillvary . T.J. Brumfield**

Tickets: <https://tinyurl.com/4wvkjpaf>

**Alzafar Shrine - Director's Staff Building
901 N Loop 1604 W,
San Antonio, TX, 78232**

Unlocking the Secrets: Must-Read Books Recommended by Illinois Freemasons

*by your Committee on Masonic Education,
Grand Lodge of Illinois*

In the ever-enigmatic world of Freemasonry, the pursuit of knowledge is as enduring as the craft itself. Recently, a comprehensive survey was conducted among Freemasons across Illinois, spanning our entire jurisdiction and even reaching globally.

This monumental endeavor sought to uncover which three books every Freemason should have on their shelves. The results, carefully tallied and compiled, offer a fascinating insight into the literary preferences and intellectual pursuits of Freemasons today. The outcomes were both surprising and exciting, revealing a balance between the governance of the fraternity and the profound philosophies that underpin its teachings.

The list, shaped by countless votes, showcases a harmonious blend of practical and philosophical literature. Illinois Freemasons clearly demonstrate a profound interest in understanding the craft not only from an administrative standpoint but also through the lens of its deepest philosophical doctrines. This duality highlights an appreciation for both the operational aspects of Masonry, such as lodge management and ritual precision, and a commitment to exploring spirituality, morals, and ethics embedded within the Masonic teachings.

What is particularly intriguing is the universality of the selections. Despite diverse backgrounds and individual paths within the fraternity, the surveyed Freemasons have converged on a selection that underscores shared values and aspirations. As we delve into these recommended reads, it becomes evident that Illinois Freemasons are united in their quest for wisdom and enlightenment. These books serve as a beacon for those within the craft, guiding members toward a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be a Freemason in today's world. The survey not only reveals literary preferences but also a collective desire to delve deeper into the timeless mysteries and enduring teachings of Freemasonry.

The three spotlighted books to follow were separated into three choices based on a book you would recommend to the beginner, intermediate and advanced Masonic student. The top books in order of tallied votes follows.

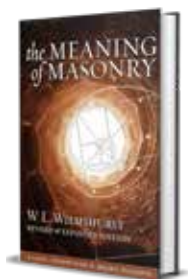
The number one book recommended by the members of Illinois and considered a book for every Freemason was: Freemasonry for Dummies by Christopher Hodapp.



Our number two pick from the constituents of our jurisdiction was one that was emphasized as, “a necessary book for every Freemason who wants to go just a little bit deeper.” So what was it? The Mason’s Words by PGM Bob Davis, OK.



The third book in our list was no surprise to some. This book was chosen by our membership as the book most recommended for Freemasons who wanted to understand the philosophy of Freemasonry. While many books were submitted, The Meaning of Masonry by W.L. Wilmshurst surpassed ALL other recommendations. It appears as number three on our list because it's higher philosophical content may not be something for every Freemason.



All books are readily available at your favorite book retail location as well as on webstores, i.e., Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.

1. The Meaning of Masonry by W.L. Wilmshurst
2. Freemasonry for Dummies by Christopher Hodapp
3. The Craft and Its Symbols by Alan E. Roberts
4. Masonic Initiation by W.L. Wilmshurst
5. The Masons Words by Bob Davis, PGM
6. The Way of the Craftsman by Kirk MacNulty
7. Initiatic Experience by Robert Herd
8. The Builders by Joseph Fort Newton
9. Observing the Craft by Andrew Hammer
10. Secret Teachings of All Ages by Manly P. Hall
11. Contemplative Masonry by Chuck Dunning
12. Lost Keys of Freemasonry by Manly P. Hall
13. Esoterica by Albert Pike
14. Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy by Robert Hewitt Brown
15. The Better Angels of Our Nature by Michael Halleran, PGM
16. A Pilgrims Path by John J. Robinson
17. Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry by Brent S. Morris
18. American Freemasonry by Mark Tabbert
19. Freemasonry, Symbols, Secrets, Significance by Kirk MacNulty
20. The Master's Word by George Plummer

Compiled from survey data collected by the Committee on Masonic Education, Grand Lodge of Illinois. The survey results presented here represent only Illinois Masons. A full list of global data is available upon request.



The Truth About Esoteric Masonry and Traditional Observance

by RWB R.H. Johnson, PDDGM, EIN



Traveling to different lodges over the last ten years has been excellent. I've presented at lodges all around the country on many topics, which are things I am passionate about: American history, old ritual practices, and even how to market our

lodges effectively. But one topic comes up time and time again: Esoterica.

Whether it's referred to as "Esoteric," "Esoterica," or "Esoterism," or maybe you go with Albert Pike and spell it with a "K"--"Esoterika," the subject matter is hotly debated. Before we dive into this, let's just define the concept quickly. Esoteric means "intended for or only understood by a few."

Freemasonry is an Esoteric society by definition. If not, then the general public would have the ability to gain our insights and teachings, apply them, and go off on their merry way. There are, of course, Masons who hold that the historical is genuinely the only part of Masonry worth studying, citing our history and where we came from as the focal points. Others will speak to the application of Masonic values as they relate to the here and now as the place we should set our sights. And still, others, although more rare, will talk about the esoteric. Each category births a variety of mixtures. The fact remains that Freemasonry has a set of concepts that it delivers through our plays on morality.

On the surface, they convey some stark realities and hopeful futures, but the sub-context, the marrow, if you will, can be said to go much deeper.

Yes, sometimes a sign is just a sign, but this, in the majority, is contested by many of Masonry's most famous authors and scholars. Masonry uniquely attracts those interested in various pursuits, which we tend to accumulate under our giant umbrella. Charity, fellowship, and, yes, philosophy. Masonry makes good men better, or at least this is the aim. Many arguments have been written regarding this statement. A complete list would take up many pages. It will be sufficient to say that Masonry makes good men better through education. That education in the philosophical is what leads a good man to become those other qualities we value--like being charitable.

The Craft today is seen by its members as a service society, a charity, and a place where men learn together. When we ask how they learn, the responses articulate that by working together or through lodge projects, by speaking, by delivering lectures, and even learning discipline through ritual and floor work will make a good man better. But when we take a step back, these qualities are nothing we can't learn anywhere else. Boy Scouts, Toastmasters, Lions, Elk, Moose, Rotary, and the military. The list goes on.

When I initially penned one of my first presentations called Esoterics 101, it was designed specifically for a lodge whose members had no clue about what the

word [Esoteric] was or what it meant. It's still hard for me to believe that we have members who are daft to the concept, members who don't understand the spiritual underpinnings of what we do in ritual.

I am frequently contacted by younger members, usually those who have been Master Masons for a year or less and who've been elected or appointed to be a Lodge Education Officer. They're very interested in the esoteric side of Masonry and want me to come out to present the Esoterics 101 keynote. The reason? So that the other members of their lodge will understand the concept and the presentation will validate the new members' interests in the topic.

At these presentations, typically, I see members who've been in the lodge for years and feel like all this education is just a fad for the new kids--there are exceptions, of course. I'll present the topic and get no questions except for those who want to have me out. Some even retire for coffee midway through the presentation. It doesn't hurt my feelings, but I'll tell you what it does. It makes the guys who organized the education night feel like no one cares and that their fulfillment doesn't matter. Education is the reason Masonry exists. Full stop.

Reality check: Come down from the clouds, put the Eliphas Levi and Manly P. Hall books back on the shelf for just a moment, and admit that Masonry has no esoteric side.

Masonry is completely esoteric—on all sides. Thanks to Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers, it was designed to be esoteric at its inception. Unfortunately, the vision was not protected, and it did not last. It is no longer the reality.

If our forefathers from the Renaissance and later the Enlightenment era hadn't injected the money, power, and influence into the guild system, we'd have no Freemasonry today. It's not like it's practiced currently, anyway. You'd have a union. That's it.

The more we critically analyze the state of the Craft today, the more we truly see it for what it is. We've significantly departed from the secondary intent that begat the current organization. The lion's share of lodges promises something we never fully deliver. We gather, take an oath, eat together, and agree to care for our widows and orphans. In this, we are, by definition, more Traditional Observant of original Masonry than any lodge that bears the moniker today.

To be truly observant, look, practice, and abide by the standards of Traditional Masonry would require us to practice as they did in antiquity --as in the guild system. Traditional is defined as "long established." That original system is, in fact, much more long-established than anything we propose to be by today's standards. And when we look at how we operate right now, it's a modern equivalent.

In truth, the TO, or Traditional Observant Lodges, that speckle the landscape of Masonry are affinity lodges. These are lodges that practice the idealized version of Masonry many are or were looking for. Lodges that ask their members to have standards of practice, dress, mandatory attendance, and higher dues to be solvent in today's economy and, above all, provide a meaningful Masonic experience. For, by and large part, these are lodges designed to be fulfilling for a specific kind of member, many of whom are what we would label "esoteric."

Again, looking at Masonry today and from afar, we see a single color. A swatch of beige. It's a social organization with charities and fellowship, unified by a belief (in most cases) in deity and who've all experienced (for all intents and purposes) the same thing. In practice, the overwhelming majority of lodges operate without true education--without esoteric understanding. We might do some real thinking when we read articles that state, as I have above, that Masonry is esoteric. Looking at the landscape of Masonry today, we reflect on the situation's reality, which I would consider a hard-to-swallow fact. Saying that Masonry is esoteric, is a false quip because it doesn't reflect reality.

As it exists, Masonry is not Esoteric. It is a fantastic club that brings together members who sometimes form additional groups or even lodges that focus on a topic of interest because of common interests. Thus, we have appendant bodies or Craft affinity lodges: Traditional Observant, Past Master, Military, pick a flavor.

The varied styles of Masonry that exist are a danger to its very survival. Not only does it prove to make the Masonic fraternity bland, but it also puts the Craft in a rather precarious place, one of comfort, safety, and complacency. I once wrote about the old greasy spoon restaurants we tend to find in our towns. Places that have everything on the menu but nothing great. It's where you go when you're looking for something good, cheap, and, honestly, what you'd expect--a safety blanket. No surprises. No variety. No growth.

What Masonry needs is the challenge to get rid of the old axiom, "Masonry is many things to many people." Masonry is one thing; it is education. We need to embrace this at all costs. By picking one thing to focus on, our skill in it becomes greater, and by proxy, so does the caliber of its men.

Many of us are in the quarries today, building, cutting, measuring--trying to make the craft better, to raise it to the lofty heights we were told it sat. Is it so bad that we want it to be what we expected it to be? To be a place where there is equal emphasis on education, fellowship, and charity? The sad truth is that while we all work for change, we likely won't see the true impact of what we've done. Our children's children might, but we won't.

One of my best friends and Brothers is a luthier. That's a violin maker, restorer, repairman. He makes wonderful pieces of art that sing like nothing you could imagine. I asked him once, "What you do is so amazing. It takes both skill and craftsmanship and, yet, is somehow still artistic. How do you get on top and be the best? How do you become the luthier that people talk about?"

Spencer took a breath and said, "Well, that's the thing. You don't. Every piece I work on has a mark. Long after I'm dead, maybe people will see my works and rave about them the way people rave about the 300-year-old violins today. I can only leave a mark in the industry. Small influences. People might not know or care about the work today, but in 100 years or more, they'll know my name."

And so it will be for us, Brothers. As we work in the Craft today, we make small marks. Every time we make something a little more meaningful. We raise the bar every time we operate within our rules but add value to some part of the degree experience. Every time we set a standard, we raise the expectation. Every time we do something impressive in the presence of a new Entered Apprentice, it will impress upon them that what they just witnessed is the standard. The above-and-beyond efforts of today become the standards of tomorrow. Just think about the Masonry in 200 years. If we decide to go in a singular direction, we'll make that difference. If the status quo is maintained, you'll find yourself on a horse galloping down the beach, and George, you might not like what you find.



Back to Basics

by Brother Kenneth Bealer, CO

Have you ever heard something that changed your outlook on something? At a Masonic symposium I recently attended, I listened to a presentation that did just that. The presentation was on the working tools of the Entered Apprentice. The brother giving it talked about the working tools that you know of and those working tools within the degrees that you wouldn't think of. He went over 15 working tools with evidence as to why this working tool is needed by the Mason. What really affected me during his presentation was his idea that an Entered Apprentice must fill his toolbox with these tools, but it is up to us as Master Masons to also explain why and how these tools are used to work on our rough ashlar to turn them into the perfect ones. He explained that through the degrees, the brother is shown these tools, but they also must be explained further. We all remember going through the ritual; there is no way that one could grasp all of that at once and be ready in one day. That is when the mentor must help the brother understand and be a guide on his journey, not just to help memorize the memory work. During and after this lecture, it really got me thinking back on my own experience of going through the degrees. After this reflection, I felt that this brother was totally right.

I want to make it clear that this presentation did not make me think badly or ill of my own lodge or the mentor who helped me through my degrees. After hearing this presentation, I discovered that some working tools were missing from my toolbox. I now knew that there were deeper meanings to the ones I already had. I wanted to ensure I had a complete toolbox because I felt that the perfect ashlar could not be formed without the tools I was missing. I also felt that I needed the knowledge to use them properly so that I could, in turn, help mentor the next generation of Masons who would come after me.

How was I going to do that? Well, I was going to have to go back to the basics. I was going to have to go back and re-read the 3 degrees, go back over the ritual, the lectures, and the memory work. I would have to attend my lodge more and ask for assistance from my brothers if I still didn't understand some of the above. I understood that it would be a process and that it would take time, but as we all know, Masonry is a long journey that takes a lifetime. Hearing the presentation allowed me to realize



that during that journey, you must stop and help others who may come along the journey as well.

I'm so glad that I went to this symposium because, to tell you the truth, brothers, I was on the verge of leaving this fraternity. I thought that I was no longer getting anything else out of Freemasonry. I now know that I had just skimmed the surface, and it was my duty to dive deeper to gain the light I needed to work in the quarries of everyday life. The Grand Architect of the Universe was not letting me quit, and I praise him for this. We must have the tools to work on the ashlar, and we need to set the steps that we will need to climb the stairs of knowledge, which is needed to one day be able to draw out our temples upon our trestle boards. I would like to thank brother and author John S Nagy for this lecture he gave and for giving me a new light on my purpose for my masonic travels.



What's in Your Library?

by Greg J. Knott, 33°



Many new Masons are eager to learn all they can about the craft when they are first raised. You hear many unfamiliar terms during the ritual and lectures that require further study to understand their meaning

within the entirety of the ritual. One of the duties of a Freemason, is to educate yourself further on the craft by studying the history, meaning, and philosophy of this ancient and honorable fraternity. Engaging in this course of study can be done in several ways and achieved through a large variety of available resources.

I wanted to establish my own home library of Masonic resources. I've always loved books, so this was an easy excuse for me to expand my personal book holdings. But I really didn't have any idea where to start. I visited my local Barnes & Nobel bookstore and perused their offerings and bought a few titles and used Google Books to discover many older books that were available digitally. I later found Masonic book publishers such as Macoy and Michael Poll's excellent Cornerstone Book Publishers.

So the question comes down to, what are the basics to place in your home library? I asked several people including some of my fellow Midnight Freemasons and here are some starting suggestions:

- Short Talk Bulletins by the Masonic Service Association

- Famous American Freemasons Volume I and II by Todd E. Creason
- Morals and Dogma by Albert Pike
- Hidden Keys to Freemasonry by Manley P. Hall
- Secret Teachings of All Ages by Manley P. Hall
- The Book of Words – Lawrence Kushner
- Royal Masonic Encyclopedia
- History of Freemasonry by Albert Mackey
- Ancient Freemasonry by Amblain
- Freemasons for Dummies by Christopher Hodapp – especially valuable to loan new members
- Mackey's Encyclopedia Pre 1911 edition
- Your Grand Lodge Proceedings - Illinois Grand Lodge Proceedings
- Egyptian Mythology
- Books of the Sacred Law – Holy Bible, Koran,
- Roberts Rules the Masonic Edition by Michael Poll
- A Bridge to Light by Rex R. Hutchens
- Born in Blood by John J. Robinson
- A Pilgrim's Path by John J. Robinson
- Dungeon, Fire & Sword - by John J. Robinson
- Laudable Pursuit – Knights of the North
- Observing the Craft – Andrew Hammer





Esotericon 2025

6.14.2025

ABOUT ESOTERICON

The Premier Esoteric Conference

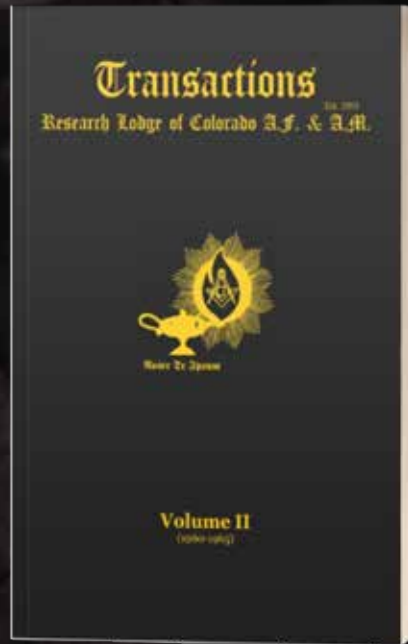
Founded in 2019 to bring together like minded individuals with an interest in the Esoteric, Esotericon is the preeminent conference serving esoteric minded individuals. Topics of our previous conferences have included 'Hidden Symbolism', 'Enochian: Learning to Talk with Angels' and 'Sacred Spaces' among others. We also include special activities such as tarot and natal chart readings.

PURCHASE TICKETS

Esotericon 2025 Ticket Sales are live!

Tickets for Esotericon 2025 are now available for purchase. We are offering two options for attendance this year; in-person which includes an attendee swag bag and virtual only.

Conference takes place on Saturday June 14th (we will have our annual social event on Friday) in Manassas, VA at Manasseh Lodge.



Volume II is out now!

Since 1953, the Research Lodge of Colorado has been producing quality Masonic Education papers. Over the last three years, the Lodge has worked tirelessly to compile the transactions into an amazing volume that is beautifully curated and printed.

\$20

RLCOLO.Org/Items

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.



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.

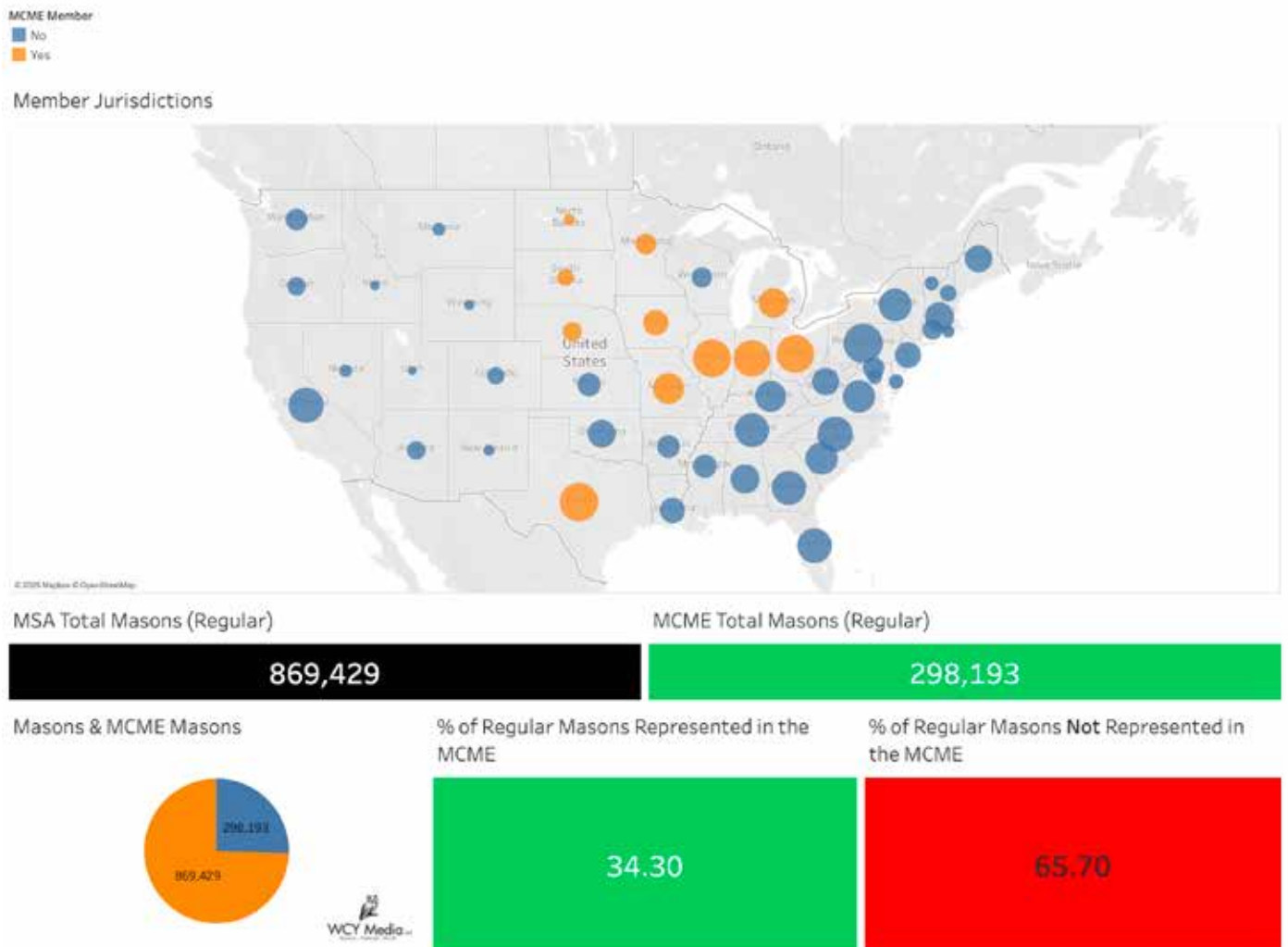
A typical program schedule includes presentations by well-known Masonic speakers, experiential as well as scholarly participant presentations, roundtable discussions, and jurisdiction reports. Sufficient time is also arranged to provide informal chats among attendees. For more than a half century, our 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!

Are YOU Represented?!

- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Ohio
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Texas



The 2025 Midwest Conference on Masonic Education

Hosted by the Grand Lodge of Indiana F. & A. M.

May 2 – 4, 2025

What is the Intender Program?

*by your Committee on Masonic Education,
Grand Lodge of Illinois*

The Intender Program has but one major objective: To teach the fundamentals of Freemasonry to every candidate, so they may become a Master Mason in fact as well as in name. It's as simple as that!

Please note particularly the word fundamentals, for this program does not go beyond those elements which are basic to our Craft, i.e., the principles and practices with which every Craftsman should be familiar if he is to bear with honor the proud title of Master Mason. It is not the purpose of the Intender Program to produce Masonic "scholars" or to give the candidate advanced Masonic education. It seeks to have him understand the Masonic way of life, that he may properly conduct himself as a Mason before his Brethren and before the world at large.

This program supports the traditional maxim that the Fraternity has the inherent right to insist that each of its votaries shall be well grounded in his Masonic duties and responsibilities, and it also embraces the equally important idea that he should understand clearly the Fraternity's obligation to them.

If, during this process, there is ignited within the candidate that "spark" that urges them to seek for more and more Masonic Light, and thus to become an earnest and diligent student of Freemasonry, then the program will have an added value for him and for the Fraternity, for among such Masons will be found the future leaders of our Craft.

In this fast-moving age, with its many demands on every man's time and the numerous opportunities afforded him for spare-time diversions, we find Freemasonry in the position of competing for his attention. Failure to realize this can only result in dues-paying members who never come to lodge, receive no positive benefit from their membership, and whose help to the Craft is limited.

It is necessary to capture the interest of the candidate from the start, and there is no better time to do so than when he is receiving the degrees and imme-

diately thereafter. This is when he is most receptive. This Program for Masonic Light will do much to arouse the candidate's interest and increase his desire to take an active part in the work of the lodge. The use of this program will make the candidate a better Mason and a permanent asset to Freemasonry and to the community.

The term "Intender" comes to us directly from the old operative lodges of Scotland. More than 119 years before the first Grand Lodge was formed, the Intender was an important official in the lodges in Scotland, entrusted with the instruction of new candidates. At that time, the word "intend" meant to stretch out, extend, expand, increase, and intensify. Therefore, the Intender was a faithful companion and teacher whose duty it was to stretch out, extend, expand, increase, and intensify the knowledge and understanding of the younger craftsman in the Science of Masonry.

The Schaw Statutes, an elaborate code of organization first drawn up in 1598 by William Schaw, Master of Work and General Warden of the Masons of Scotland, are found in the minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No. 1. These Statutes provided that an Intender be chosen for each new Fellowcraft, while the Lodge of Aitchison's Haven provided Intenders for both new Entered Apprentices and new Fellowcrafts. In time the office of Intender became so important that the youngest Master was chosen for this exacting service.

In recent decades the emphasis has been changing from merely producing "bright" Masons, i.e., those proficient in the ritual, to that of producing intelligent Masons - Masons who not only love their ritual and know how to present it effectively but who also have an ample knowledge of the background, the aims, and the purposes of the Fraternity. It is here that the Intender becomes an important factor in developing an intelligent membership and a capable leadership to sustain and advance Freemasonry throughout the coming ages.

Following the receipt of a petition, the Worshipful Master appoints an Investigating Committee that meets the candidate and his spouse. If not already provided, they should leave a copy of On the Threshold for the candidate to read and share with his spouse.

After passing a favorable ballot in the lodge, the Worshipful Master sets a degree date and appoints an Intender who then contacts the candidate, introduces himself and his duties, and may invite the candidate and his spouse to the temple for the orientation session. Here, the Intender will have an opportunity to become better acquainted with the candidate and his spouse.

At this time, the Intender should explain that there is a traditional catechism as well as a limited catechism, describing the process and benefits of both approaches. The candidate should have a say in his choice between the traditional or limited catechism.

If a candidate chooses to learn the full catechism but then finds he would prefer the limited catechism instead, he is permitted to shift to the limited catechism. After he becomes a Master Mason, the new brother should be encouraged to learn the traditional full catechisms and pass the Third Degree proficiency examination.

All candidates must be assigned an Intender, receive a copy of each Guidebook at the appropriate time, and be encouraged to participate in the full Intender Program (IP). The District Deputy Grand Masters have been trained to assist in this educational experience.

Finally, this Committee extends its heartiest congratulations to you upon your preferment. The duties of an Intender are some of the most important in the lodge. From among all of your brethren you have been chosen to carry forward a task upon which depends much of the future welfare of Freemasonry in Illinois. This is a rare opportunity that comes to few Masons, rich in its vision of service to our Craft and equally rewarding to those who serve.

The rewards are without limit.

May every success attend your labors!

-Illinois Committee on Masonic Education

Intender Program Resources are ALL available via the Groupable/M2/MORI system.

Once logged in, simply click on “Documents,” then “Additional Files,” and then “Intender Program.”

As a special note, there is nothing wrong with the current editions. However, they are under revision, with new versions coming out in 2025.

- The Intender Program Guide Book
- On The Threshold
- Entered Apprentice
- Fellowcraft
- Master Mason

There are also In-Person Workshops which are under development and will be coming to a Lodge Near you in the coming months!



Masonic Bucket-List

Travel Edition

*by your Committee on Masonic Education
Grand Lodge of Illinois*

Exploring the world through the lens of Freemasonry can be an exhilarating journey. As a Freemason, the opportunity to travel opens doors to a rich tapestry of history, culture, and brotherhood among diverse communities across the globe. Imagine the excitement of visiting historical lodges, renowned landmarks, and hidden gems that have shaped the fraternity's legacy through the ages. The world is peppered with extraordinary sites that hold special significance for Freemasons, each offering a unique glimpse into the past and present of this esteemed brotherhood.

In this brief article, we will embark on a journey to uncover some of the more popular bucket list locations that attract Freemasons from far and wide. From grandiose architectural marvels to understated yet meaningful retreats, these destinations promise to enrich your understanding and appreciation of Freemasonry's profound impact. Whether you're planning your next adventure or merely daydreaming, let this exploration inspire your Masonic travels.



Location No. 1

The Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Valley of Chicago

How to contact them:

Phone: 630-439-3400

Toll-free: 800-774-3467

Fax: 630-439-3401

Email: webmaster@scottishritechicago.org

383 E. Lake Street

Bloomington, IL 60108

The Museum's collection holds more than 10,000 objects and framed artworks while the Library collection is comprised of over 20,000 books, magazines, journals, and periodicals along with primary and secondary archival materials. The Museum & Library showcases this collection by presenting changing exhibitions that foster a deeper appreciation for American and Masonic history.

You can take a virtual tour here:

<https://vimeo.com/728177260>.

Location No. 2

Iowa Masonic Library and Museum, Grand Lodge of Iowa



How to contact them:

813 First Ave SE, PO Box 279

Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

Phone: 319-365-1438

Fax: 319 365-1439

Email: bill.kreuger@gl-iowa.org

Open Monday through Thursday by appointment only at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Please call 319-365-1438 for an appointment, or email bill.kreuger@gl-iowa.org.

org.

Housed in a gleaming white marble structure, the library is recognized as the most complete Masonic library in the world.

The museum also has three main collections on display:

The Masonic gallery contains an original Grant Wood painting, titled "First Three Degrees of Free Masonry." It also includes Civil War flag, carried into the Battle of Vicksburg in 1863 by an Iowa regiment, along with Masonic pins and regalia, swords, and a piece of stone from the original White House.

The non-Masonic gallery contains: Asian armor and shoes, Native American weapons and pottery, tiny perfume vials, woodcarvings, shells and doctor's tools. The museum's oldest artifact is a small clay tablet marked with wedge shapes, dating to biblical times.

The small gallery contains a collection of fine china, jewelry and decorative arts donated by the Swab sisters. Part of a wealthy Cedar Rapids family, they traveled the world amassing their collection, later donating it to make sure it stayed intact.

Location No. 3

The Masonic Library and Museum of Indiana, Grand Lodge of Indiana



How to contact them:

The Masonic Library and Museum of Indiana is located on the 5th floor of Indiana Freemasons' Hall.
525 North Illinois Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

The building is usually open from 10 AM until 4 PM, Monday through Friday.

Walk-in visitors may access the Library and Museum during these hours by checking in at the Security Desk. Volunteer staff members and interns may be available for tours by prior arrangement.

Monday through Friday, 10 AM – 4 PM

Saturday by appointment

Sunday – Closed

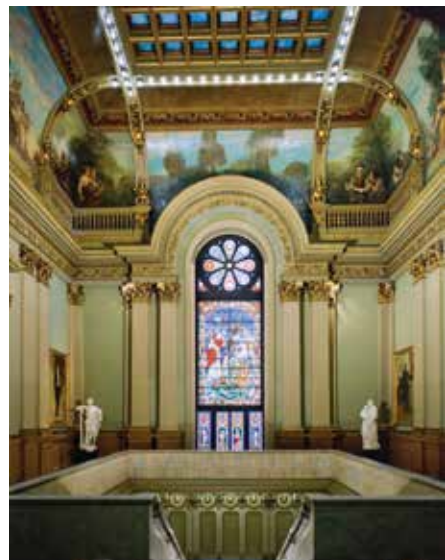
Masons, lodges and members of the public seeking special access or guided tours should contact the following:

- Christopher L. Hodapp, Director
Phone: (317-443-9354)
Email: hodapp@aol.com
- Michael D. Brumback, Assoc. Director
Phone: (765-744-0424)
Email: mike.brumbback@icloud.com

The Masonic Library and Museum of Indiana, Inc., is a special not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation operated by the Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Indiana. Founded in 1987, and incorporated in 1989, the MLMI is the Grand Lodge's official repository of Masonic artifacts and printed materials pertaining to the Masonic history of the Hoosier State. It also contains items of interest from other Masonic jurisdictions around the world, and other fraternal organizations, both Masonic and non-Masonic.

If you're in the mood to drive a little, then think about checking these out:

Pennsylvania Masonic Temple, Library and Museum



How to contact them:

Address:

One North Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Phone:

215-988-1900

One hour tours are offered Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. No tours on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and major holidays, or when Pennsylvania Masonic functions or special events are happening.

Admission:

ADMISSION TYPE ADMISSION FEE

Pennsylvania Mason with Dues Card FREE

Non-Pennsylvania Mason \$10

Active Military and Veterans (with ID) FREE

First Responders FREE

Children Under 5 FREE

Adults \$15

Students with ID \$10

Children 12 & Under \$5

Senior Citizens 65 & Over \$10

Family (up to 8 people) \$35

The Masonic Temple in Philadelphia was constructed in 1873. It is considered one of the great “wonders” of the Masonic world. Resplendent with artwork, frescos, stained glass, murals and sculpture, it is a visual treasure just waiting to be discovered by the public. It connects both Masons and non-Masons alike to an inspirational world of art and architecture, history and grandeur. In addition, there is an exhibit hall, featuring a wide assortment of treasures from Philadelphia’s, America’s and Freemasonry’s past.

Take a virtual tour here:

<https://youtu.be/t3fY2JhTstw>

Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library (NMJ AASR)



How to contact them:

33 Marrett Road

Lexington, MA 02421

Monday through Friday from

9:00am to 4:00pm.

Open Certain Saturdays

9:00am to 4:00pm

(781) 861-6559

info@srmmml.org

Established in 1975 by the Scottish Rite Freemasons of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library in Lexington, Massachusetts tells the story of Freemasonry and fraternalism in the context of American history.

Unique in the nation, the Museum aims to be the “historical society” of American Freemasonry by collecting, preserving, interpreting and celebrating the history of fraternalism. They pay special attention to the history of the Scottish Rite and strive to serve the Masonic community.

The House of the Temple (SMJ AASR):



How to contact them:

The Supreme Council, 33°, SJ, USA

1733 16th St. NW

Washington, DC 20009

T: 202-232-3579

F: 202-464-0487

E: council@scottishrite.org

The House of the Temple has been open to the public for guided tours since it opened in 1915. They offer free, guided tours Monday–Thursday at the following times:

10 am

11 am

2 pm

3:30 pm*

The House of the Temple, located in Washington, D.C., stands as a majestic monument to Freemasonry and a testament to the enduring appeal of classical architecture. Designed by renowned architect John Russell Pope, the building serves as the headquarters of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, and embodies the organization's rich history and symbolism.

Completed in 1915, the House of the Temple is a striking example of Neoclassical architecture, drawing inspiration from ancient Greek and Roman temples. Its imposing facade features a grand staircase leading to massive bronze doors, flanked by sphinxes symbolizing wisdom and power. The building's exterior is adorned with intricate carvings and inscriptions, further emphasizing its connection to ancient traditions and esoteric knowledge. Inside, the House of the Temple is equally impressive, with soaring ceilings, marble floors, and ornate decorations. The building houses a variety of spaces, including a grand reception hall, a library containing an extensive collection of Masonic texts, and numerous meeting rooms. These spaces are imbued with Masonic symbolism, reflecting the organization's values of brotherhood, charity, and intellectual pursuit.



Masonic Educational Conferences

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

Masonic Week – Annual Event – February 5-9, 2025
www.AMDUSA.org

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

San Antonio Esoteric Summit - Saturday, June 7th, 2025
San Antonio, TX, Alzafar Shrine - Director's Staff Building
Tickets are for sale! - <https://tinyurl.com/4wvkjpaf>

Esotericon – June 13th, 2025 – Manassas, Virginia
Tickets are for sale! - 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.





אנש סחר צא סאלרשט סחר