

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

Here we are again at the start of a new calendar year—tempus fugit!!

Wishing all our readers a very Happy and Healthy New year.

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THE SYMBOLISM OF THE OFFICES OF A LODGE

When I became a Freemason I was informed in the course of the ceremony that every emblem and character within the Lodge, the preparation of the candidate, and every part of the ceremonies had deep symbolical meanings. I learned that Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. This stressing of symbolism greatly impressed me and in an endeavour to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge I have tried to discover the inner meaning of these symbols, but until I was appointed Steward in my Lodge I did not realise that the very offices of a Lodge have also a symbolic meaning.

I had discovered that the jewels of office were symbolical but so far I have not discovered any progressive or comprehensive writing on the subject. So, in setting down my thoughts on the matter, I have done so primarily to bring them into reasonable order for my own instruction and I make no pretence of being at all exhaustive in my study.

My intention is to give a general outline leaving ample room for enlargement and further study and when opportunity offers for guidance by brethren more able and with greater knowledge than I.

As every Freemason should know, Freemasonry is an elaborate allegory on human life, but it dawned on me that in the offices of a Lodge we have an allegory on the growth of a particular life, that of a true Freemason.

Each office symbolises a step upward in moral and spiritual progress, each teaches a lesson and prepares the way for the next step and the jewel of office is the symbol of its moral teaching.

STEWARD

When thinking over the duties I had undertaken when I was appointed Steward I was suddenly struck by the appropriateness of the fact that the first office to which a Freemason should be appointed is that of Steward for is it not written in the V.S.L. "that he who would aspire to become the greatest must first become the servant and minister of all." So In the allegory of the true Freemason he is appointed. and although proud of holding his first office he learns to humble himself and to serve the brethren, not with servility, nor with condescension, but with brotherly love. And in its wider application to serve all mankind.

His jewel of office, the Cornucopia between the legs of the Compasses. is symbolic of the good things of this world, provided by the All-wise Creator for the use of man but kept within bounds by the moral laws laid down for us. This teaches him one of the four cardinal virtues, *temperance*, not only in its narrow sense but in the wider meaning of moderation in all things, thought, word and deed.

TYLER

When the Tyler is invested his duties and the moral teaching are briefly explained. His duties are to keep off all cowans and intruders, symbolising the exclusion of all unworthy thoughts and actions: to keep the door of his own heart and mind, his own personal lodge properly tyled and by so doing prevent his brethren from becoming disturbed or causing disharmony among them by conduct unworthy of a Freemason.

This moral teaching is also given in his instruction to prevent the approach of every unworthy thought, and preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and man. His further, important duty of preparing the candidate for the ceremony should teach him to prepare himself with care, morally and spiritually for whatever may face him in the future. His being armed with a drawn sword, which is also his jewel of office symbolises the use of physical force if necessary, and even at the peril of his own life to guard that which is upright and true.

This should teach him that he must ever maintain his stand against the intrusion of evil and harmful forces, ridicule and persecution, with every fibre of his being, even with life itself. So the second of the cardinal virtues is inculcated, *fortitude*. The practice of this fortitude and steadfastness more clearly portrayed in the third degree will strengthen his character and toughen his moral fibre and make him fit for further upward progress.

INNER GUARD

The new duties he now undertakes are to admit Freemasons on proof and obey the commands of the W.M. His spiritual understanding will quickly show him the inner meaning of these duties, that as he has already framed to repel evil he must now permit the entrance of that which is good.

For instruction and guidance there is open before him the V.S.L.. the unerring standard of truth and justice by which to regulate his life and actions, to test and to prove that which is true and that which is false and wherein is contained the command of the G.A.O.T.U. As yet his knowledge and understanding are insufficient to instruct others or to teach, but even as one of his duties is to receive candidates in due form so too should he be ready and willing to pass on any seekers after truth to one more competent than he for guidance.

His jewel of office, the crossed swords, is symbolical of his duties, even with one point to guard the entrance of the Lodge and with the other to admit the candidate; or once again to repel evil and admit that which is good.

The cardinal virtue which this office inculcates and symbolises is *prudence*. Only by the careful and thoughtful application of the divine law can he be certain that he opens the door of his own *personal lodge* to that which is worthy of admittance. A perfect structure cannot be built by hasty judgement, the compasses of the divine law must be used with accuracy and precision.

An apt quotation from the V.S.L. applicable to this office is: "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

JUNIOR DEACON

Having sought and found he is now advanced to the office of J.D. and by his increased knowledge he is enabled to guide an earnest enquirer towards the light and impart some of that knowledge.

His duties are symbolised by his jewel of office, the dove with the olive branch, the symbol of celerity and peace which teaches him that as within the Lodge he is the junior messenger, so in his conduct in the world, he should carry the commands of the G.A.O.T.U. in his heart and endeavour to guide his fellow man in the right paths, directing his footsteps and seeing that he cause no one to stumble through his fault.

Even as he guides and directs the initiate's steps towards the light, holding him by the hand, so should he remember that he too has always a guide at his right hand, able and willing to support and sustain him in all his undertakings and to lead him out of all his doubts and difficulties if he will but trust *Him* and ask *His* aid.

SENIOR DEACON

Promotion to S.D. corresponds with his progressive knowledge and experience, his duties being similar to those of the J.D. but more advanced. As within the Lodge he has the guidance and instruction of the candidate in the higher degrees so does this office symbolise the increased responsibilities to the brethren in particular and to the world in general.

His jewel of office, similar to that of the J.D., further symbolises his duty to act as a mediator in overcoming dissension and maintaining peace. This in turn will inculcate the fourth of the cardinal virtues, *Justice* since only by justice can peace and harmony be maintained either in the Lodge or in the world at large. By precept and example he must endeavour to raise the moral tone and by assistance and supporting worthy causes strive for the betterment of mankind *morally, physically and spiritually*.

This duty is illustrated by the crossing of the wands over the V.S.L. when the Lodge is "opened" "raised" "lowered" or "closed" and also over the candidate when he kneels in the W. while the prayer of dedication is offered on his behalf and when he declares his faith is truly founded, and later during the S.O. in the E.

The wands represent two visible legs of a tripod, the third leg, although invisible is the ever-present G.A.O.T.U. himself. Without the third leg there would be no tripod. Two legs, however strong in themselves are unstable and must fall. Even as the Operative Mason is unable to raise the blocks of Masonry into their correct positions without the tripod, so without *His* aid no Lodge can be opened in 'Due Form' nor can a candidate be raised to a position of usefulness in the craft.

In fulfilling his duties he will remember the cardinal virtue symbolised by this office, *Justice*, and will guard against any inclination to perform such good works for his own selfish advancement or self-aggrandisement.

The office of J.D. and S.D. are like a wide step which takes two paces, thus giving time for consolidation and the thorough assimilation of the lessons learned thus far before resuming upward progress.

JUNIOR WARDEN

Having learned these lessons and by a well regulated course of discipline becoming qualified he now rises to the important office of J.W. where he begins to instruct and to teach. One of the important duties is the presentation of the Working Tools with their application to life.

In this office the J.W. typifies the perfect physical Freemason, the office symbolises the physical body. The lesson taught by this office is self evident, to practice that which is explained and to be a living example.

The moral teaching of the jewel of office, the P.. R.. should always be before him, instructing him to walk justly and uprightly to exert himself in projects for the good of his fellow men and to maintain that straight and undeviating line of conduct and in all things to act as directed by the V.S.L.

The first of the principal moral virtues, Faith, is symbolised by this office. By his study of the doctrines and Divine Law contained in the V.S.L. he has faith in the G.A.O.T.U., believing that he will impartially administer justice and reward or punish as we have obeyed or disregarded His Divine Commands. The office typifies physical action in strict accordance with Divine Law.

On the J.W.'s heart should be engraved the sacred injunction, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

SENIOR WARDEN

Having completed his training as J.W. he eventually takes his next step and rises to the high office of S.W. typifying the perfect spiritual Freemason and symbolising the soul. The charges which he now gives to the candidates stress the moral and spiritual truths of Freemasonry.

As J.W. he learned to live a perfect physical life, now he learns to live a perfect spiritual life. His jewel of office, the L..., teaches him that in the sight of T.G.A.O.T.U. all are equal irrespective of material possessions and that it is the spiritual qualities of a man that are discerned by *Him*.

So the second of the great moral virtues is also symbolised by this office, *Hope*. The faith of the physical Freemason naturally creates the hope of the spiritual, to partake of those blessed promises contained in the V.S.L. The hope that by living an upright and moral life, and by the practice of benevolence and charity he will qualify for admission to the G . . . L . . . above.

WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Thus, by seven steps, he has been trained and prepared for the highest office within the Lodge typifying the perfect Freemason, the highest perfection to which human nature can attain and man's nearest approach to the Divine. His jewel of office, the S..., is symbolical of this perfection.

This implement of architecture means so much to the Craft that it was even used in ancient times as the symbol of the G.A.O.T.U. Himself. To be S . . . with God and man is perfection. Open before him the W . . M . . has the V.S.L. with its command, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Still further, the office symbolises the third and greatest of the moral virtues, *Charity*, with its wider meaning, *Love*.

For does not the V.S.L. tell us that "God is love." Let us then as Freemasons endeavour by

- (1) service,
- (2) guarding against the intrusion of *evil*.
- (3) permitting the entrance of good,
- (4) guiding our fellowmen according to our knowledge and ability,
- (5) showing by *precept* and *example* our *duty* towards our *fellowman*
- (6) serving the G.A.O.T.U. with all our hearts and minds, to smooth and prepare the facets of our own ashlar so as to make them perfect and worthy of inclusion in the G . . L . . above.

Brotherhood

Masons come from all walks of life, we are plumbers, professionals, salesmen and CEO's. We are fathers, uncles and sons. We are also brothers. When you become a mason, you become part of a brotherhood of men committed to family, engaged in ongoing personal growth, and providing care for others and families in need. While our backgrounds and interests may be diverse, what binds us together are shared values and a desire to have fun, do good and build bonds that last a lifetime.



DECEMBER ANSWERS



- Q1. What is the very first question a Candidate is asked in the first degree? "Do you feel anything"? by the Tyler.
- Q2. Who are the Principal Officers in a Lodge? The Master and Wardens (during Installation the I.G. is regarded as a principal officer).
- Q3. When was the VSL first introduced into a Masonic Lodge? We don't really know but probably from the very beginning due to the influence of the church in those days.
- Q4. The Order of architecture used for the Junior Warden's column is named after the people in ancient Corinth. What is the reason for this? The people in Corinth grew beautiful flowers which they used as decoration.
- Q5. The Junior Deacon is the first mason to teach a Candidate during initiation, what does he teach the Candidate? To step off with his left foot,
- Q6. What are the 'ornaments' of a Freemason's Lodge and why are they 'ornaments'? Ornaments make things beautiful and in our Lodges these are the Mosaic Pavement, The Blazing Star, the Indented Tesselated Border.
- Q7. What is the Masonic symbol of the second degree? The SQUARE
- Q8. What is it that the honour, reputation and usefulness of a Lodge depend on? The skill and assiduity that the Master uses to manage Lodge affairs.
- Q9. What is the danger that traditionally would have waited for any mason until his latest hour? The stain of dishonour.
- Q10. What would cause a suspension of Masonic membership? Non-payment of annual dues; criminal conviction; continually disrupting the harmony of the Lodge.

With acknowledgement to the Craft Masonry Knowledge Website New Zealand



DID YOU KNOW?

Question: Is there further information to be obtained of the working tools of a Fellow Craft than is to be found in the ritual?

Answer. Decidedly so; it is half concealed, half revealed in the association of the level with the Senior Warden, the plumb with the Junior Warden and the square with the Master, particularly in the ceremonies of closing a Lodge. In a Lodge all brethren meet on a level of exact equality, which is not concerned with brains! Or education, or wealth, or position; men are equal in a Lodge in manhood, and in Masonic right and Masonic character. "We meet upon the level" means just what it says; Masons trust each other, believe in each other, help each other because they are, Masonically, level with each other We "act by the "plumb" in accord with Amos VII--the plumb line God said He would place "in the midst of my people Israel." In other words, they were to be judged by their own plumb line, not another's. Masons are to judge their fellows, if at all, by their fellows' plumb lines, not their own. One brother must not condemn another by his own personal standards; he may inquire into those standards but only when a brother is false to his own standards can he judge him.

To "part upon the square" signifies that while a square points in different directions, and men "part" to go each his own way, it is a known way, not a devious way--a wrong way, a bad way--but a "square" way. The Mason who goes his own way, so it is the square way, is never alone, even if out of sight of his Lodge and his brethren. The square is the fundamental tool of the operative Mason; without its use no building would stand. It is the fundamental tool of the Speculative Mason; without square thoughts and actions, no spiritual building can stand.

Question: Masonic dates are written "A L." before figures, which never correspond with the number of the year in which we live: why?

Answer. Freemasonry's practice has followed the ancient belief that the world was created four thousand years before Christ; that when God said, "Let there be light", the world began. Therefore Masons date their doings four thousand years plus the current year, "Anno Lucis, " or "In the year of Light." It is but another of Freemasonry's many ties with a day so old no man may name it.

The Working Tools of an Online Mason

As the World changes around us, by necessity we must adapt ourselves to keep pace. This is equally true with Freemasonry.

In addition to the many physical lodges around the world, there is now an online lodge that many brethren are members of. This is an excellent choice for those who cannot attend a regular lodge for any number of reasons.

Many of us communicate online through email or social networking sites, enhancing our ability to keep in touch and share relevant information. Though it brings us closer, it also has its own cautions, for nothing launched onto the net ever truly disappears.

Throughout the many ceremonies in which we participate, we are introduced to the working tools of each degree. We, of course, understand that each tool is symbolic of both a moral lesson and a technique to aid in self improvement. In this modern era I believe there is a set of tools that is unique to the online world.

And so, my brethren, I now present to you the working tools of the virtual, or online Mason: the mouse, the modem, and the keyboard.

The mouse is used to navigate and interact with the online world. The modem enables our computers to connect to networks both local and worldwide, and the keyboard allows us to input text and commands through various programs.

But as we are not operative, but rather free and accepted or speculative Masons we apply these tools to our morals.



In this sense, the mouse demonstrates that the smallest of gestures can contribute to larger actions, and that even a single touch can put great things into motion.



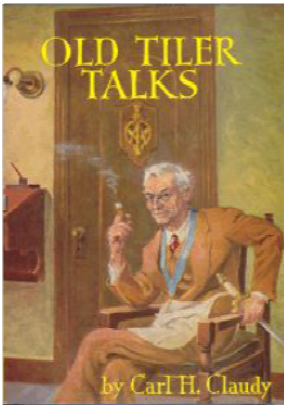
The modem reminds us that, like the Great Architect of The Universe, the cyberspace forever saves and stores words and actions which can never truly be undone.



The keyboard teaches us that, with effort, our thoughts and words can be translated into any language, and so must be used with care, for words are both a tool for good and a weapon.

Thus with a steady hand, a greater connection, and patient words, we hope to log on to the Great Architect's network, from whence all goodness emanates.

By Bro. Ryan McKay, Prince of Wales Lodge No. 14, Masonry in Manitoba magazine.(this setup by SRA76)



Old Tiler Talks— PEP

"It's a wonderful idea! I'm strong for it, strong!" cried the New Brother to the Old Tiler in the ante-room.

"Tell me about it!" begged the Old Tiler. "Wonderful ideas are rare!"

"A lot of us think the old lodge needs pepping up. We go along in the same old way, never doing much of anything different, just making Masons and having little lodgeroom talks and all. So we thought - Smitty and Bunny and Wilmot and a few others and I - that we'd start something. We plan to hire a boat and take the lodge down the river and have a special dispensation to hold a third degree and feed out on the water. We'll hire a band, all Masons, of course, and probably have an entertainment afterwards; maybe we can get some high divers and hold a swimming race, too."

"It is a wonderful idea," commented the Old Tiler, "but you don't carry it far enough."

"I thought maybe you could add to it," said the New Brother, enthusiastically. "What would you suggest?"

"I think a small boat in the river is undignified. Why not hire an ocean liner? Why not go halfway to Europe, and instead of having diving and swimming matches, get a couple of whales and have a real whale of a time? Or you might be able to get Uncle Sam to lend you a couple of submarines."

"I wouldn't hire just a Masonic band. Get three or eleven bands, and have a competition to see which can blow the loudest. Hold all three of the degrees at once; the first in the hold, the second on deck and the third up in the crow's nest. That would be different and exhilarating. Don't be a piker! If you are going to innovate, innovate right!"

"Why, you are laughing at me! Don't you think it's a good idea to put pep in the lodge? Didn't the Shriners hold an initiation in a cave, and another in the locks at the canal, and didn't our ancient brethren hold their lodges on hills and in valleys and . . ."

"The Shrine did, and does, and will again, more power to it. The Shrine is a modern organization, with no need to uphold ancient traditions. The Shrine is a fun-loving organization, the playground for Masonry and Masons; it thrives on the new, the different, the novel, the startling, I love the Shrine, and everything it does. I love a good comedy, too, but I don't like to see a minister pulling funny stuff in the pulpit. And what is fine for the Shrine is poor for the lodge."

"If our ancient brethren held their meetings on hills and in valleys, it was because they had no buildings. Had we no temples we would do the same. But our ancient brethren didn't go out under the stars to be 'peppy,' nor should we."

"Somewhere or other in Shakespeare (I think it's Henry IV) are the lines, 'Fickle changelings and poor discontents, which gape and rub elbow at the news of hurly-burly innovations.' There are 'poor discontents' who are dissatisfied unless they are amused, but they are not devoted lodge members.

"I can't say much for your idea. Trying to put 'pep' into Masonic degrees is like painting a statue or putting perfume on a flower, or having red fire and a brass band at a funeral. "Masonry is sacred and beautiful. It is beautiful with age that has mellowed and softened it, and given it the tints and colors of the glory of service. Could you improve the Grand Canyon with better colors than nature gave it? How can you improve a lodge meeting with a boat, a brass band and a diving contest? When you go on your knees to your Creator, do you play the phonograph, dance a jig and tell a funny, story to put 'pep' in the performance?"

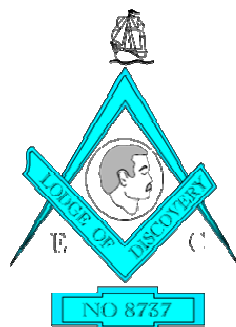
"Masonry is much more than lodge meetings. It is selflessness, brotherhood, charity, tolerance, veneration; it is the sweet and quiet influence which makes a brother more than a mere lodge member; it is an expression of the divine will to make men better. You cannot aid it with a boat trip or a brass band, my son; you cannot help it by innovations. You must take it or leave it as it is; that which has endured for centuries needs no such artificial stimulation."

"But don't you believe in entertainment or excursions or play?" asked the New Brother,

"Of course! Hire a boat, get a band, hold a diving contest, make merry, by all means. Have a lodge picnic, blowout, whatever you will, and I'll help you. But don't spoil it by trying to make it into a lodge meeting, and don't spoil a good meeting by trying to make it a picnic. "We are taught to have refreshment. But we are not taught to mix labor and refreshment. It is first of the ancient laws that it is beyond the power of any Mason to change ancient laws. Find me any authority in the ancient laws for holding a third degree in a boat with a brass band and a diving contest and I'll help you. Otherwise, I'll try to keep the old lodge just as she is and save your pep for the excursion you want to give and don't know it!"

"Something tells me this proposition will not be popular if I bring it up in lodge, unless I make it plain it's an excursion and not an attempt to put 'pep' in the degrees," answered the New Brother.

"Something tells you right, son," answered the Old Tiler.



DID YOU KNOW?

Question: Is it expected that I do business only with a Mason?

Answer: *This is one of the biggest misconceptions about freemasonry and is perfectly answered here. Ed.*

A problem which confronts a newly made Mason is his supposed obligation to give his business to fellow Masons rather than the profane. Masonry is most emphatically not a back scratching organization, a Board of Trade, a Chamber of Commerce or a mutual admiration society. There is no obligation, actual or implied, which demands that, because you have become a Mason, you must forsake all those with whom you have been doing business who are not? And give your orders to brethren who may? Or may not, be equally satisfactory as tradesmen.

Other things being equal, it is brotherly to give your business where it will help a fellow Mason. But other things must be equal. If the twin born with you sold poor shoes at fancy prices, while your neighbour's son sold good shoes for reasonable prices, you would not buy off your own blood brother. To do so would be to injure yourself and your family, since you would be wasting your money. Exactly the same idea applies to your fraternal brother.

The man who says: "Buy of me because I am a Mason! Is not anxious to serve you but to serve himself. If he is a good businessman, he does not need to depend on mutual membership in any organization, whether Lodge, church or club, for his business. If he is not a good businessman--that is, if he sells poor goods--he has no moral right to attempt to offset poor quality by whining that you both belong to the same Lodge. Similarly he who comes to you and says, "I have come to you because I know you are a Mason; now I expect a discount because we both belong," is also using his Masonry to promote selfish interests and should be discouraged.

Lodge Birthdays

Gavin Struthers	17
Kevin Green	11
Jorg Schwartz	7

News from the South

Paperwork for the formation of a Royal Arch Chapter is being processed.

Minds are now being focused on the new Masonic year.

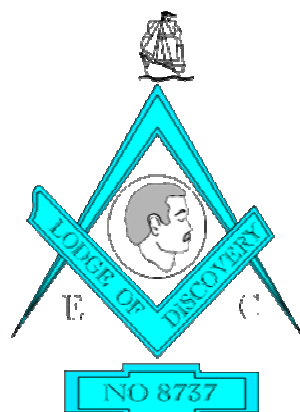
FAMILY TREE OF VINCENT VAN GOGH

His dizzy aunt ----- Verti Gogh
The brother who ate prunes----- Gotta Gogh
The brother who worked at a convenience store ----- Stop N Gogh
The grandfather from Yugoslavia ----- U Gogh
His magician uncle ----- Where-diddy Gogh
His Mexican cousin ----- A Mee Gogh
The Mexican cousin's American half-brother ----- Gring Gogh
The nephew who drove a stage coach ----- Wells-far Gogh
The constipated uncle ----- --Can't Gogh
The ballroom dancing aunt ----- Tang Gogh
The bird lover uncle ----- Flamin Gogh
An aunt who taught positive thinking ----- Way-to-Gogh
The little bouncy nephew ----- Poe Gogh
A sister who loved disco ----- Go Gogh

The brother with low back pain-----Lum Bay Gogh

And his niece who travels the country in an RV --- Winnie Bay Gogh

I saw you smiling . . . there ya Gogh



CALLER: Is this Gordon's Pizza?

GOOGLE: No sir, it's Google Pizza.

CALLER: I must have dialed a wrong number. Sorry.

GOOGLE: No sir, Google bought Gordon's Pizza last month.

CALLER: OK. I would like to order a pizza.

GOOGLE: Do you want your usual, sir?

CALLER: My usual? You know me?

GOOGLE: According to our caller ID data sheet, the last 12 times you called you ordered an extra-large pizza with three cheeses, sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms and meatballs on a thick crust.

CALLER: OK! That's what I want ...

GOOGLE: May I suggest that this time you order a pizza with ricotta, arugula, sun-dried tomatoes and olives on a whole wheat gluten free thin crust?

CALLER: What? I detest vegetables.

GOOGLE: Your cholesterol is not good, sir.

CALLER: How the hell do you know?

GOOGLE: Well, we cross-referenced your home phone number with your medical records.

We have the result of your blood tests for the last 7 years.

CALLER: Okay, but I do not want your rotten vegetable pizza! I already take medication for my cholesterol.

GOOGLE: Excuse me sir, but you have not taken your medication regularly. According to our database, you only purchased a box of 30 cholesterol tablets once, at Drug RX Network, 4 months ago.

CALLER: I bought more from another drugstore.

GOOGLE: That doesn't show on your credit card statement.

CALLER: I paid in cash.

GOOGLE: But you did not withdraw enough cash according to your bank statement.

CALLER: I have other sources of cash.

GOOGLE: That doesn't show on your last tax return unless you bought them using an undeclared income source, which is against the law.

CALLER: WHAT THE HELL?

GOOGLE: I'm sorry, sir, we use such information only with the sole intention of helping you.

CALLER: Enough already! I'm sick to death of Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and all the others. I'm going to an island without internet, cable TV, where there is no cell phone service and no one to watch me or spy on me.

GOOGLE: I understand sir, but you need to renew your passport first. It expired 6 weeks ago...