

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

A thought-provoking article this month on page 4 which could stir up some controversy.

On page 12 a reunion some 23 years in the making.

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Membership e-mail address list

A list of current members and their e-mail addresses is available on request.

Why I became a Mason

R.W. Bro. Chris Reid, DDGM 2015-16 Prince Edward District Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.

I was sitting in Lodge one night watching two Brothers receiving the Junior Warden's Lecture. I took a close look at both of them. Their mannerisms were so different to each other. One was very interested in everything going on around and every word spoken. The other was very indifferent to what was happening and seeming to be a bit bored with it all.

This started me thinking of what reasons lead men to Freemasonry.

There are probably as many varied reasons why each of us chose to join our craft as there are brothers among us. Many of us would share some common ground such as having family members who were masons, or knowing friends or having met people in our community, whose conduct inspired us to seek further light. While some may have wondered about the significance of the square and compasses, curious to learn about the so-called mysterious side of masonry, particularly today when one has so much information available.

I must confess that although I am extremely proud to be a part of this Fraternity I sometimes have difficulty responding when asked why I am a Freemason. I feel my answer, although important to me, may not be convincing enough to persuade someone to join our Fraternity. It is also of great concern to me that my answer could be the cause for someone to turn away from masonry.

I do not want my answer to sound like a sales pitch promoting a product, however on the other hand I want it to be genuine and enthusiastic enough to spark some interest and promote further interest and conversation with the person asking the question.

Questions to the candidate in the first degree suggest that he is expected to have a favourable opinion preconceived of the institution. What does Masonry do to provide these grounds for an opinion, either favourable or unfavourable? Do we as masons ever attempt to foster good opinion in the community?

A few months ago, I visited a lodge and was pleasantly surprised and very interested to learn that the master had approached three of the lodge members to give a talk on what had prompted them to join masonry. Two of the brethren were long time members of the lodge while the third was a newly raised brother who in fact would later that evening very ably prove his proficiency.

The first brother an accomplished speaker rose and approached the lectern, removed his well-prepared speech from his jacket and gave a very interesting talk with a few humorous stories as to how and why he had chosen to join. When he had finished and was returning to his seat, I remember thinking well done, such an enjoyable presentation. It was nice to hear someone else's perspective; many points were similar to my own experience. He seemed to have covered all the points what more would the next brother have to offer and how relieved I was that I was not the next to speak.

Just then, the master called on the newly raised brother. He did not go to the lectern but instead approached the east, remained on the level and turned to address the lodge. I noticed that he did not have a prepared speech. He started a bit nervously but with a little humour stating that he did not know what to say as the previous brother had stolen his speech. He then soon gained everyone's attention as he made the following remarks, which I will attempt to convey to you. He began by saying that he had known very little of Freemasonry but he had learned that Masonry accepts Good Men and makes them Better.

His next remark will probably stay with me forever. He said sincerely:-

"I believe *I am a Good Man but would like to become a better man*" so I thought I would like to be a Freemason. I cannot imagine a better reason to seek out the light in masonry. He went on to explain the steps he took to enable him to join and his appreciation of the brethren who had assisted him thus far.

He then turned to address the W.M. and requested him to meet with him on the level. Reaching out his hand to the Worshipful Master he remarked how pleased he was that Masonry would accept him and, even though he was newly admitted, how impressed he was that this experienced brother, who had risen to become the master of the lodge, would still meet him as an equal. This reinforced in me that actions speak louder than words. As this brother returned to his seat I remember thinking. I would not want to be the brother to speak next.

Masonry does have a different meaning for each of us, but for all of us it includes the practice of morality. As brethren, so often we struggle to solve a problem when the solution is right in front of us. My wife often remarks to me "don't over think it just do it"

We do not need to explain masonry, just live our lives by the principles it teaches us, and masonry will explain itself. If we strive to fulfill all the teachings and values that recur so frequently in our ritual we will come closer to achieving that state of perfection of an ideal Mason outlined in the Final Charge of the Installation ceremony. It is by this example that a non-mason may obtain a favourable opinion of our order. A brother of whom I held in high regard, in his wisdom told me that Freemasonry takes care of itself and that people will find what they seek in it. At the time, this seemed as a peculiar answer to me.

However, in time I understood. I truly have to say he was right. If you only seek a ring, you will only have one. If you seek knowledge and truth, you will have a path that will guide you on a journey for the rest of your life. Though we all come for different reasons, we will find what we seek.

The first lecture given to our candidate from the Mentor's program informs him "*the basic principles of Freemasonry include brotherly love, relief and truth.*"

That is to say, we strive to be friendly, kind and sincere in all our dealings with others. In Masonry, you will find men of good will and high ideals men who believe in the existence of a Supreme Being. In addition, they try to live in a spirit of universal brotherhood. In general terms a Masonic Lodge is a place where all can work together looking towards a brighter tomorrow. Or as we all have heard on many occasions from the General Charge: to be happy ourselves and to communicate that happiness to others".

Brethren as I drove home that evening happy that I had attended lodge, I knew that from that moment forward if anyone should inquire of me why I had chosen to become a Freemason. My reply would be: "*because I believe myself to be a good man who wanted to become a better man*"

As our Grand Master, M.W. Bro. John C. Green said: Brethren, never be afraid to display the pride you have of being a Mason to those around you in your daily path of life.

So, Dear Brothers, at this last Official Visit of my term, I thank you all for your support, and to let you know I love you all, my Brothers. I will now ask you one last question - "Why did **YOU** become a Mason?"

Where Did All Our Freemasons Go?

I would venture a guess to say there's not one single Lodge within our (any) Grand Lodge that isn't concerned about membership and Lodge attendance. Each year on the Official Visit your Secretary and your Master fill out their report and one of the questions is about Lodge attendance.

What I believe Grand Lodge is looking for in these reports, is to know if the Lodges are active and healthy. Fortunately, I've got a few ideas of my own on this subject. I think I can explain why Lodge participation is such a problem in some Lodges. I even have a few suggestions about what a Lodge experiencing these issues might do to improve in this area.

First of all, membership and Lodge participation are two very different things. I know, I know—they are very often lumped together as one and the same, but they are most certainly not the same issue. They are very different issues. I'm sure I'll raise a few eyebrows by saying the far more serious problem isn't new membership— it's Lodge participation. Lodge participation is really the problem you must solve—nearly every other issue your Lodge may be facing from financial issues to lack of new members most likely tracks back to your participation problem.

If you think I'm wrong, ask yourself a couple questions:

- a.) how many members show up for your meetings? How many members does your Lodge have? I'll bet there is a dramatically larger percentage of members who don't attend than do. Why is that?
- b.) How many of your newer members are attending? How many have dropped off? Why? And now for the big question
- c.) What is the point of continuing to add new members to your rolls when you can't keep your old members or your brand new members involved?

I'll answer that last question for you— it's pointless to keep adding members to your roster until you figure out why you can't keep the ones you already have. And I'll tell you the most common reason why Lodges challenged with these issues can't keep members involved. It's quite simple actually.

Your meetings are boring! Sorry to be so blunt, but its true—right? If you fix that problem, you'll go a long way to fixing all your problems. As one Past Master so frequently says, "When they stop having fun, they'll stop coming." It really isn't any more complicated than that.

I have six things you can do to improve your meetings—I have many more, but let's start with six. Let me be clear—all these things are well within the constitution of our Grand jurisdiction'. And make sure they do not counter your Lodge By-Laws, please do not go against your By-Laws on any of these suggestions and say "oh the DDGM said it was ok"...as I can get in enough trouble all on my own. Do not feel you have to do any of these suggestions, as this is merely what they are suggestions.

But if these suggestions are within your by-laws and you try a few of these suggestions, I think you'll find your members will find much more enjoyment in your meeting than they do currently. Those meetings may even become something the Brethren look forward to attending again.

And here they are:

Reading of the Minutes

The purpose of reading the minutes is to make sure your Secretary is doing his job correctly. That he is recording things accurately and to ensure he hasn't left anything out or gotten anything wrong. That's it. I was in a meeting a few days ago where the Secretary spent fifteen minutes reading the minutes of a meeting that only lasted an hour the month before, right down to who sat in what chair. And all fifteen Masons sitting in that room knew exactly what happened in that meeting the month before, because it was the same fifteen guys. I sit through that every month, and it's dreadful every month. I did the same thing as Secretary in my Lodge (although I only hit the highlights in my Lodge to try and keep it short). But it's the 21st century folks. Secretaries could print those minutes and have them available for preview prior to the meeting or some Secretaries email the minutes of the meeting to members right after the meeting concludes. The minutes should take minutes.

Comment In many Jurisdictions it is permitted to share Lodge Minutes by email. By utilizing this method of sharing, not only are ALL brethren informed but it is now possible to seek approval of the Minutes as circulated.

Treasurer's Reports It took the Treasurer ten minutes to give his report in the same mind-numbing detail as the Secretary (right down to the check numbers). Same thing - why not print the report and hand it to the members or email the report to them prior to the meeting? Most members don't even listen to the details of how much the power bill was, and how much they charged to fix the vacuum sweeper. They tune out. They'll be more likely to look at the treasurer's report if it's printed than they are to listen to one.

Comment In a number of Masonic bodies in which I have membership a Budget is struck in late fall & upon approval of the Membership, requires the Treasurer to simply report if the Budget is on target or not. This is saving valuable time.

Announcements (For the Good of the Order)

Announcements often go on so long they actually refer to them at the end of our meetings as "the dreaded announcements." You'll have three or four guys usually that will stand up in turn and list off one event after another after another after another—a degree here, a pancake breakfast there, a golf outing here. We had a degree in my Lodge last week, and I glanced at the clock—announcements took a full fifteen minutes. I'd been to four meetings/degrees in the last couple weeks and I'd heard the vast majority of those announcements over and over again. And of course you have the guy that has to ask three times "what's that date again" or "what time did you say that starts again." It's without question my least favorite part of any meeting, and I'm not alone there. You'll see very few Masons writing things down during announcements. There are better ways to do announcements.

First of all, social media and the internet are far better means to get the word out about events. In my own Lodge, we have a tool called "Callout List" where I can call every member of my Lodge in about two minutes to remind them of an event using a recorded message. One of the best ideas I've ever heard, however, is a little more old school. One Lodge Secretary told me that for years, they've had no announcement (or very few) during their meetings. He hangs an old fashioned desk blotter calendar on the wall of the Lodge—two months at a time with a box of markers next to it. Members and visitors of the Lodge write their events on that calendar prior to the meeting or degree. When, where, and what time. They don't do announcements during the Lodge meeting. He said many of the members just photograph that calendar on the wall with their phone when they're leaving and update their calendars at their leisure.

In my opinion, that's the best idea I've heard in years, and that Secretary is deserving of the highest Masonic honor that can be awarded a Lodge Secretary! What a fantastic idea!

Comment Personally I have not encountered this problem as I have experienced Brethren simply passing greetings from their Lodges. Possibly, the news could be shared that no advertising in open Lodge will be permitted. That could chase that type of thing to the Festive Board.

So Now What? Let's say you do these three things. You've cut down dramatically three areas that the vast majority of Masons dislike intensely. That's just saved a good forty minutes that we can now put to better uses. Perhaps since we now have a little more time we could do one or two of the following.

Education Every Meeting Education can be anything you want it to be. My suggestion is to share inspired articles from the Grand Lodge Education News Letter or the Protocol and Etiquette Newsletter, and then discuss it. If you have a Lodge instructor or somebody good with ritual, you might have him go over a point in the ritual that everyone gets wrong.

Test your Masonic knowledge. Have somebody put together some trivia questions and perhaps elected officers can compete against appointed officers. Whatever you decide to do, have fun with it.

Comment As Director of Masonic Education for a Lodge I am now experimenting with the idea of having my upcoming paper shared with the membership, by including it in the Notice calling the meeting. It saves on two counts. Firstly, the brethren now have prior knowledge of what is coming up & it just might entice attendance. Secondly time is saved by eliminating the reading of the paper in Open Lodge. The Brethren are requested to bring their own copy & a few are made available for visiting Brethren. The key here is to stimulate Discussion and eliminate the Lecture & it is working!!

Invite a Speaker One of the best meetings I recall was one a few years ago. A lodge helped a young woman go on a trip to Germany as part of an exchange program. She came and talked to the Lodge when she returned. The Lodge went to refreshment, we invited her in, and she gave an excellent talk about her adventures—she even brought the Lodge a gift. It was a wonderful evening. Speakers can be members of your Lodge, or somebody from the Shrine. Perhaps a WWII vet with a great story to tell. Got a local Masonic author, scholar or researcher—from experience I know they're very often more than happy to come and talk to your members for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Comment Wonderful idea, and could stimulate a Dinner before the meeting and inviting your ladies & prospective candidates. (Good News needs to be shared)

Topic For Discussion One Master I spoke to said that each month he announces a topic of discussion for the following month. Maybe it's about a historical event, or a famous Freemason, or the meaning of a certain symbol. The Brethren have a month to think about it. He tells me their discussions are extremely entertaining. That's a great way to spark a little discussion in your lodge. As a matter of fact, he says sometimes they announce the subject on their Facebook page and they get guests from other Lodges interested in taking part in that discussion.

Comment _Love the idea and it works.

Author Sometimes Masons get so involved in the business of Masonry we forget why we became Masons to begin with—to learn, to serve, and to become better men. Business is an important part of a meeting, but so is learning, discussion, and fellowship. If you want established members to keep coming, and new members to get involved and stay involved, your Lodge has to engage them. You have to give them something they'll look forward to. They have to feel like they're getting value from that time they spend in the meeting, and the only thing dull meetings provide are reasons for Freemasons to stay home and watch the game. If you can build a Lodge like that—they will come. And they'll talk about it and invite their friends to join as well. A lack of petitions won't be your problem, scheduling all the degrees will be. And that's a problem every Lodge would like to have.

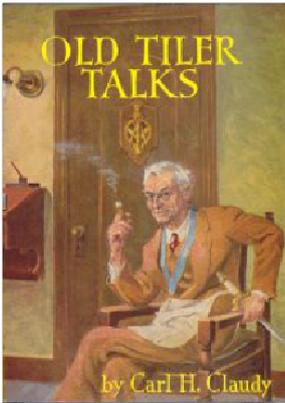
Comment _Think about creating a "Caring Committee" This kicks in when a Brother has missed two meeting in a row. A simple phone call to inquire if all is well. IT WORKS

Closing Comment

We Live by Brotherly Love; Relief and Truth & must always remember to practice it!!

Adapted by V.W. Bro Norman McEvoy from a paper presented by R.W. Bro. Gordon Crutcher. Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario (Canada)





Old Tiler Talks— OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

We are coming to a pretty pass in our Masonry!" announced the New Brother, disgustedly.

"That has a familiar ring! No times like the old times, no days like the old days, everything going to the diminution bow-wows. They uncovered inscriptions like that in King Tut's tomb!" grinned the Old Tiler. "What's wrong with our Masonry now?"

All these extras in the lodge. First, we have a choir; that's all right, since music adds to the solemnity and beauty of the degrees. Now we are forming a lodge glee club. There is to be a saxophone quartet and there is talk of a lodge band. A brother in lodge long enough to know better is organizing a dramatic society. If he has any dramatic instinct he should put it into the degrees.

The Master is interesting some brethren in forming a Masonic club, and a lot of brethren are talking of a camping club, for summer fishing! This scattering of effort is a shame. We ought to put it into the work of the lodge; don't you agree with me?"

"I sure do; I think all our effort Masonic should be Masonic effort!" answered the Old Tiler.

"That's the first time I ever started a discussion with you and found you were on my side!" laughed the New Brother, triumphantly.

"Oh, I wouldn't go as far as to say I was on your side this time. Our efforts ought to be Masonic, but I don't see un-Masonic effort in a glee club, saxophone quartet, camping association, dramatic club, and so on. What's wrong with them as Masonic work?"

"Why, Masonic work is putting, on the degrees well, and making an impression on the candidate, and charity, and . . . and . . ."

"Go on, son, you are doing fine!"

"Oh, you know what I mean! Masonic work isn't going camping or playing a saxophone!"

"Isn't it?" asked the Old Tiler, interestedly. "Now, that's a plain statement about which I can argue until tomorrow morning! But explain why playing a saxophone in a lodge for the pleasure of the lodge isn't Masonic."

"Oh, the time spent could be better spent in – in listening to the degrees."

"Granted, if there were degrees to listen to. But you wouldn't put on a degree without reason? If the lodge neglects its degree work to listen to a quartet, the quartet does harm. But if the quartet brings down brethren who like music, and to whom we can then give Masonic instruction, why isn't it good Masonic work?"

"How about the dramatic club and the fishing association?"

"They are the same in intent. The dramatic club will gather together brethren interested in plays. It will develop histrionic talent which now doesn't exist. It will train men for sincere and well-managed degree work. But if it never led a single man into our degree teams, it would still be a bond of union between men who would thus get better acquainted; the better members know each other the more united the lodge.

"Fishing is an innocent and delightful sport. When Masons congregate to enjoy it and prefer the company of each other to others, it speaks very highly of the bonds of brotherhood. If I can afford it I will surely join. I'd much rather tell a fish that he has passed the other anglers, but me he cannot pass, in the presence of my brethren, than have to keep my thoughts to myself before strangers!"

"You think these extra growths on the body of the lodge don't sap its strength?"

"I don't think they are growths on the body of the lodge at all!" growled the Old Tiler. "Brethren who do these are not taking strength from the lodge! Banding together to sing, play musical instruments, fish, act in plays together, shows a real feeling of brotherhood. The more such activities, the more united we will be.

"All work and no play makes a Mason a stay-at-home. Our ancient brethren specified the usages of refreshment. They understood that playing was as necessary as working. If part of us can play together for our own pleasure, well and good. If, at the same time, we can give pleasure to others, well and better. And if we can pleasure ourselves, please others, and benefit the lodge by increasing its unity, why, well and best of all!"

"You sure are a salesman!" cried the New Brother. "I ought not to afford it, but . . ."

"What have I sold you?" asked the Old Tiler, interestedly.

"Memberships in the glee club, the Masonic club, and the fishing club!" grinned the New Brother.

Lodge Birthdays

Rex Kersley	19
Ian Martin	16 HM
Greg Whitford	13
Bryan Death	8
Andrew Hibgame	6
Mike Piggott	3
Greg Walton	1

News from the South

W. Bro. Adrian Carpenter has tendered his resignation from the Lodge. Adrian worked for Cable & Wireless in Independence Park and was 2 I/C of Vanitel before it became Telecom.

Adrian was initiated into the LOD in January 1987. He is not totally lost to Freemasonry as he a member of three craft lodges in England, three Royal Arch Chapters (one of which is in Scotland), two KT Preceptories and two Rose Croix Chapters.

Congratulations this month to our Senior Warden, Bro. Andrew Hibgame, on his marriage to Christina.



This picture of "Working Tools" was sent to me by Jock Hannaford.

Wonder where this old craftsman took his first step?

THE EMBLEMS OF FREEMASONRY

The First Degree

The All-Seeing Eye

The All-Seeing Eye is to remind the Freemason of the Omniscience of God under whose watchful Providence even comets perform their stupendous revolutions. Nothing is hid from God who knows our every thought and action and who will reward or punish according as we obey or disregard His divine commands.

The Blazing Star.

The Blazing Star in the Centre refers us to that grand luminary the sun which enlightens the whole world, and by its benign influence, dispenses its blessings on all mankind. It is an emblem of Prudence which should be the guiding star of life. It is placed in the centre to be ever present to the eye, that the heart may be attentive to its dictates. It commemorates the Star which appeared in the East to guide the wise men to Bethlehem to proclaim the birth and the presence of the Son of God.

The Seven Stars.

The Seven Stars which form so prominent a figure in a Masonic Lodge allude to as many regularly made Masons, without which number no Lodge is perfect, nor can any candidate be legally initiated into the Fraternity. By representing the perfect Lodge they are emblematical of that ethereal mansion above which is veiled from mortal eye by the starry firmament.

Pavement.

The mosaic pavement is the beautiful flooring of a Freemason's Lodge. By reason of its being chequered and variegated it points out the diversity of objects which decorate and adorn creation, alike in its animate and inanimate parts. The Great Architect of the Universe out of his bounteous Liberality has spread the earth with a beautiful carpet. The mosaic work is an emblem of the world chequered with good and evil, pain and pleasure, grief and joy. Mosaic work was introduced into Freemasonry to remind the brethren of the uncertainty of all earthly things. To-day man may tread in the flowery meads of prosperity; tomorrow he may totter along the uneven paths of weakness, temptation and adversity. By such an emblem the Freemason is taught not to boast of anything, but to give heed to his ways, and walk with humility before God.

Taken from William Harvey's book "The Emblems of Freemasonry 1918"

With acknowledgement to SRA 76

A reunion after 23 years

We were honoured to have had a visit by W. Bro. Brian Mott who left Port Vila some 23 years ago. Brian requested to do a Charge and presented the Working Tools to our new initiate. Brian and his wife Pat were in Vanuatu for the wedding of their daughter, Alison, which took place at Erakor Island.



W. Bro. Brian Mott
PPrAGDC

W. Bro. Allan Sands
OGR

W. Bro. Jean-Luc Bador
OGR

W. Bro. Alan Churchill
PGStB

Humour

I changed my iPad's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

When chemists die, they barium.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.

How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.

A girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play-on-words.

They wrote me a letter and said I had type-A blood, but it was a Type-O.

PMS jokes aren't funny; period.

Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.

We're going on a class trip to the Coca-Cola factory. I hope there's no pop quiz.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

Broken pencils are pointless.

I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

All the toilets in New York 's police stations have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

Velcro - what a rip off!

A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.

Venison for dinner again? Oh, deer!

The earthquake in Washington obviously was the government's fault.

Be kind to your dentist. He has fillings, too.