

The District Light

**The information bulletin
of Niagara B District**

March, 2016

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In The Lodge

The ritual and work done within the lodge becomes familiar and we tend to overlook what is being communicated.

We ask a candidate who is present for initiation and a degree to illustrate his knowledge by a catechism (a series of questions put forward to elicit his understanding).

The following exchange will remind you of some of our basic tenets. You will recognize similarities and differences with the exchanges that take place within our own lodges.

Q. How did you gain admission?

A. By three distinct knocks.

Q. To what do these three distinct knocks allude?

A. To an ancient and venerable exhortation:

Seek, and ye shall find;

Ask, And ye shall have;

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Q. How do you know yourself to be a Mason?

A. By having been examined and approved, well reported of, and regularly initiated into the Order.

Q. How will you convince me that you are a Mason?

A. By signs, tokens, and perfect points of entrance.

Q. What are signs?

A. All squares, angles, levels and perpendiculars are good and sufficient signs by which to know Masons.

Q. What purpose do they serve?

A. To distinguish a Mason in the light.

Q. What are tokens?

A. Certain friendly and brotherly words and grips, which distinguish a Mason in the dark as well as in the light.

Q. Will you give me the points of entrance?

A. Give me the first and I will give you the second.

Q. I hee.

A. I conceal.

Q. What do you conceal?

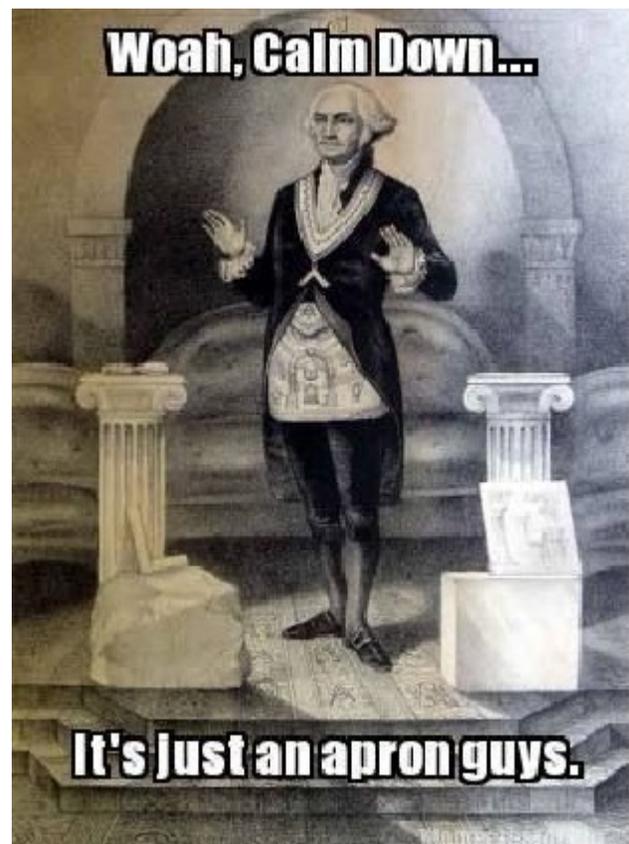
A. All secrets and mysteries belonging to Free Masons in Masonry, except it be to a true and lawful Brother.

Q. But as I am the examiner, you may safely reveal to me the points of entrance.

A. Of, at, and on.

Q. Of, at, and on what?

A. Of my own free-will and accord, at the door of the Lodge, and on the point of a sharp implement.



The Rite of Investiture



During investiture, we were presented with the well-known symbol of Freemasonry, the lambskin apron. This rite of investiture, or the placing upon the aspirant some garment has prevailed in all the ancient initiations.

In all these modes of investiture, no matter what was the material or the form, the symbolic signification intended to be conveyed was that of purity.

The apron derives its significance, as the symbol of purity, from two sources – from its colour and from its material. In each of these points of view it is, then, to be considered before its symbolism can be properly appreciated.

The pure, unspotted lamb-skin apron is, then, in Masonry, symbolic of that perfection of body and purity of mind which are essential qualifications in all who would participate in its sacred mysteries.

Ritual

The performance of the floor work in lodge can be a satisfying event to view as well as to perform.

Bro, if you don't square those corners, I'll hit you with my globe thingy.

—Hermes Trismegistus



Learning Ritual

Presented with the challenge of learning one of the charges, we may shirk the attempt, thinking as Dr. Seuss stated:

This mess is so big,
So deep and so tall,
We cannot pick it up.
There is no way at all!



But like most tasks, the job becomes doable if it is divided into smaller parts. Ritual is like that: learn one word, one phrase, one sentence at a time, and before too long you know a lecture.

Work on it every day for a few weeks and soon you will have accomplished something you didn't know you could do.

The Art of Memory

A technique called the *method of loci* or *memory palace* has proven effective at setting ideas in the mind. Since the human brain is highly adept at remembering spaces and images, people can visualize a house or palace, and visually place each item on a path through the house using a memorable visual association for each item. Then, to remember, they simply take a mental 'walk' through the house on that same path and 'see' each item they need to remember.

Delivering the Work

There is an expression in the military, "Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast."

Instructions and charges that are delivered with care communicate their purposes clearly, and so are understood and appreciated.

The recipients are pleased to receive a well-delivered message.



Secrets?



People sometimes become concerned that Masons apparently have secrets. We don't, but that idea is difficult to transmit.

Every culture has expressions or gestures that convey messages which are meaningful to that group. In Shakespear's *Romeo and Julliet*, an altercation began with, "Do you bite your thumb at me, sir?" We may not comprehend the intended insult in that gesture, but we have our own which convey criticism or disgust.

On the positive side, many gestures show respect or appreciation. Consider the salute or the blown kiss.

Signs of Recognition

Many of our actions symbolize what we consider to be universally accepted messages, but there are variations of interpretation which we would be wise to understand. Consider that a crooked finger means "come here" to us, but would be an insult to some people who reserve that movement for calling a dog.

Masonic signs of recognition are reserved for use within the lodge. Certain signs are used in each degree to acknowledge one's presence, to acknowledge being recognized, and to request permission to do certain things.

By such signs we show respect for authority and to recognize the seat of that authority.

Another reason is to request permission to perform certain duties and also to indicate our qualifications to do these things in the lodge room.

We take pleasure and pride in knowing and using these signs. They distinguish us as Masons.

The Wages of a Mason

For the most part, the benefits and perks of membership are the intangibles of mutual respect and personal spiritual growth.

Outward symbols of our membership can be purchased and displayed, but the lodge seldom gives tangible objects which are representative of the craft.



In the second degree, we were told that the E.A.s received a weekly allowance of corn, wine, and oil. A meaningful act at the end of that degree would be to make a presentation of a token of such "wages".



This neat little wooden temple houses jars of Corn, Wine and Oil. It is made out of wood that has been stained and finished and sports a set of Square and Compasses that are in the Fellowcraft mode. It would be a welcome visible symbol that could be displayed in the home.

A sample of the piece will be brought to each of the coming Official Visits.

They are available for \$15 plus shipping or they can be purchased directly from R.W.Bro Terry Schultz in Buffalo. He can be contacted at 716 693-3237 or by email at t.schultz5@roadrunner.com.

Sanke Lecture

Your secretary can remind you of the gathering at Brock University on March 20.