Brethren,

Tonight another man has made the transition from Mister to Brother, standing at the door of the Lodge requesting admission to the mysteries and privileges of ancient and accepted freemasonry. As he is welcomed into our fraternity one cannot help but wonder …What Privileges?

We live in a competitive and fast paced world with more information at our fingertips than anyone could have imagined twenty years ago. So now that a new member has joined I ask you, what is the value proposition we offer? In plain speak, what privileges are we offering, how do we attract and retain new members? How do we as an organization compete with the shiny new toys on the internet?

First, we belong to a society that embraces Brotherhood across the globe. I wear on my right hand a ring that has allowed me to meet family around the world. From a touch on my shoulder in Wellington, New Zealand with a “Brother we meet on Thursday” to a chance meeting (or six) on the Go Train I have found members of our fraternity everywhere. My first experience with the vastness of our Brotherhood happened on a cruise ship. Unlike our newest candidate I am not a “Lewis” but rather a first generation Mason, so meeting strangers who are instant Brothers was new to me.

My wife and I were on a cruise with my parents, celebrating our anniversaries. On the first night our table of eight was like to distinct camps of four. NO talk across the table, just in our individuals groups. So separate that my Mother wondered if we should even bother going the next night. But on the second night, a formal night, I wore my tuxedo and my ring. One of our tablemates leaned over and mentioned I had some interesting jewelry, and did I know its significance? I replied that I did, but asked, did he know its meaning?

Whereupon he asked me, in typical American fashion, “Brother, how old is your Mother?’ and I replied 324, the number of my mother Lodge. Then my own Mom said, “Glen, I am not that old!” Laughter and handshakes ensued, and our table went from Strangers to Brothers… in an instant. My father leaned over and asked, ”What just happened?” I replied, “that is Masonry.”

Second, the 24 inch gauge helps us measure and calculate the activities in our lives. Everyone here tonight has made a choice to leave family, work, and the rest of your busy life at the door of the Lodge. You know in your own hearts why that choice was made, but you made a decision to show up! Be involved! And be a representative of our worldwide fraternity.

Third, the Work. Those words are so well crafted, so meaningful, I implore each of you present to look beyond the words on the page and consider their meaning. Consider the significance of each degree, think and feel the words important to you. Learn a part, or a passage “Today we may tread in the flowery meads of prosperity; tomorrow we may totter on the uneven paths of weakness, temptation and adversity” the words of the Work have meaning, they are a life lesson.

Fourth, as Brothers, let us work together to keep in touch, call a Brother who is not here to night and just say I missed you, it would be good to see you out sometime. Let them know that they are missed, and that they matter…to you.

I thank you for your support, your time, your attention, and your commitment. Good evening.