

Good Evening Brethren:

I was “surfing” the Internet one evening not that long ago and was amazed at how many websites that I came across that pertained entirely to Masonry.

The simplest variation in my Masonic search word or phrase would return hundreds of different sites.

Do we have secrets? I am really not sure because you find almost an inexhaustive number of writers, many of whom are non-masons, claiming to know about everything we do and why we do it.

I was sad to see that there are many of these writers who do not view Masonry or Masons in general in the same light as we do. Simply to say, there is a somewhat negative picture of Masons portrayed in some of those writings.

Contrarily, I have had many enjoyable hours looking at District and lodge websites in our Grand Lodge’s jurisdiction as well as our Grand Lodge’s website and other Grand Lodge websites throughout the world.

The internet is the greatest communication tool that was ever invented notwithstanding the V.O.T.S.L. My reference library at home includes a very expensive set of Encyclopaedia Britannica that I purchased about twenty years ago. This reference library does not get the use that it once did. That is outside of my Masonic reference books, which I find myself referring to almost every other day.

Granted, my set of Encyclopaedia was often used when I first purchased it, but the annual medical, scientific and Book of the Year supplements that I purchased each year thereafter were expensive and rarely used.

However, having the internet in your home is like having the world's greatest library, and access to the world's greatest think tanks. Now if I could only retain everything that I read or viewed on the internet, rather than almost immediately forgetting about 99.9% of it, I would be in the league of Mr. Ken Jennings. Now for those of you who may not know or recognize that name, Mr. Jennings is that likable genius presently on Jeopardy, who has winnings of almost two million dollars.

The person that came up with the bright and catchy phrase, 'let your fingers do the walking' in the Bell Yellow Pages ad campaign could modify it for the "surfin' the net" as so many of us do on a regular basis. Perhaps something like "Around the world in point eight (.8) seconds or "I could have surfed all night". Mmmm, I better leave that to the ad campaign experts.

A short time ago, I was watching a western movie set in the nineteenth century, where the characters were amazed at the technology of the telegraph. Keep in mind, up to that time in the Wild West, the courageous riders and horses of the Pony Express were the standard mode of communication. Our modes of communication are changing rapidly and I am sure will continue to do so.

R. W. Bro. Brian E. Bond, Chairman of our Grand Lodge Computer Resource Committee, in his letter of October 12th, 2004 reminded us of the Constitutional changes made in July 2004 at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge. These changes permit the delivery of summonses by the method of email. Our Grand Secretary, M. W. Bro. Terence Shand originally approved this method provided that each lodge which wishes to utilize this method attend a seminar at which they would be instructed on the importance of privacy and security and be given the tools by which these goals would be achieved.

M. W. Bro. Donald H. Mumby, our Grand Master, has directed the Computer Resources Committee to continue with the process of instruction to allow those lodges wishing to use this delivery method to be properly informed and trained.

Presently in our District, twelve of the fourteen lodges have requested and received instruction. Of course these lodges will have to continue to mail, in the conventional sense, some of their summonses to their brethren who are not equipped to receive emails. One of the Secretaries suggested that emailing of summonses would make it difficult to enclose inserts that lodges receive from time to time. For example, the 'white' cards from the Hamilton Masonic Districts' Board of Relief, but those inserts could also be received by the Secretary via email and then, in turn, emailed to the members of the lodge.

The Computer Resource Committee has requested that the D.D.G.Ms. delegate someone within their respective districts, preferably the District Representative to the Computer Resources Committee, to contact each lodge to determine which lodges are actually using the email system. The representative could request from each of those lodges the number of members in their lodge that are receiving their summons by email.

The use of the email system would mean huge savings to the lodges and to Masonry in general. This is extremely necessary when you consider rising costs and declining memberships. An added bonus is that the transmissions are almost instantaneous and the Lodge Secretary may if he wishes request a confirmation that each email has been received.

Change is difficult especially in these fast paced, confusing and difficult times but we, as Masons, must use all the available tools at hand to continue to move forward. It is my belief that Masonry is and will become much sought after by many looking for reason and sense of direction in this violent and turbulent world but that is a topic for another day.

Brethren, thank you for your attention.