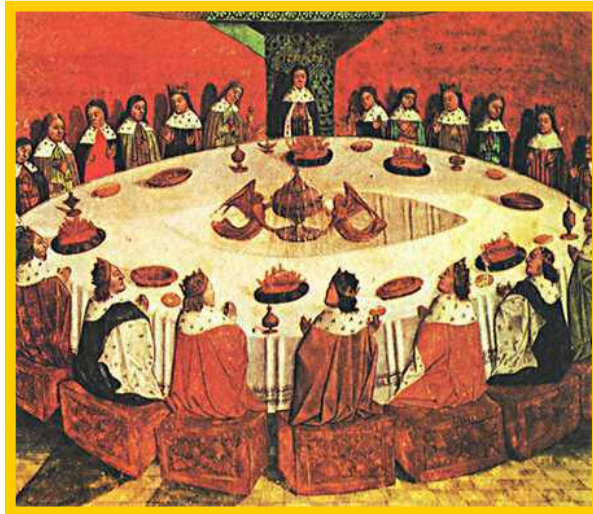


MASONIC NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE

Where 2 heads (or 3, 5, 7 or more) are better than 1



Freemasonry ~ Yours to Discover Learning your Craft

Join the Study Circle in your District

Get on the Learning Curve

An opportunity to discuss our philosophy, history and symbolism



Committee on Masonic Education

2003

R.W. Bro. Raymond S. J. Daniels, Chairman
BACK TO BASICS

**Masonry and Education
are synonymous terms**

BACK TO SCHOOL

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works."
Matthew 5: 16

I believe that Masonry and Education are synonymous terms, and I hope that by 'going back to school' we can create a greater awareness among our Brethren, particularly those newer members, of the true meaning behind our ceremonies. By the time every Mason has completed his three degrees he should be fully aware of the moral lessons contained within our lectures and how they should be used in the building of character and understanding. At the same time I would like to see every Mason enter into an erstwhile study of Masonic philosophy, history and symbolism, for it is only by so doing that we can appreciate the past and perhaps, shape the future.

M.W. Bro. Donald H. Mumby, Grand Master
August 2003

We cannot shine if we have not taken time to fill our lamps.

EDUCATION ~ the process

LEARNING ~ the method

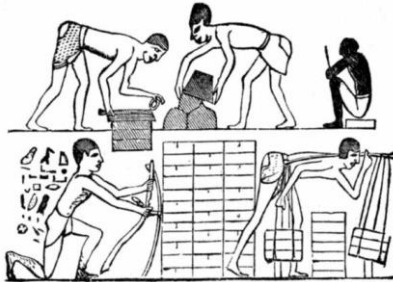
KNOWLEDGE ~ the product

To motivate and excite, to encourage and assist **every Mason in Ontario**

- To read and study
- To consider and discuss
- To learn and to know
- To understand and appreciate

... our **philosophy, history, and symbolism**
The lyf so short, the craft so long to
learne. Geoffrey Chaucer - 14th century

Properly understood, the lodge is a school, where the Master is the teacher, and the members are students. Freemasonry is the oldest and largest adult learning centre in the world. Our ancient operative brethren came to learn their trade secrets – the tricks of their trade.



Today, we as Modern, Free and Accepted Masons, come to learn the lessons of Moral Geometry, to explore the hidden mysteries of nature and science, and to seek answers to the greatest questions of life:

- What am I?
- Whence come I?
- Whither go I?



Real Masonic Education is not an exercise in scholarship – It is a voyage of personal discovery.

“the most important of all human studies – the knowledge of yourself”

- Self-examination
- Self-analysis
- Self-discipline
- Self-realization
- Self-fulfillment



“Masonry is a university, teaching the liberal arts and sciences of the soul to all who will attend to its words.”
Bro. Manly Palmer Hall

“Freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, and freedom of teaching – without these a university cannot exist.” Robert Maynard Hutchins

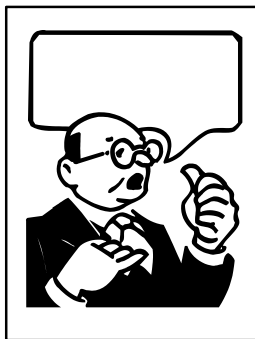
Education is not received ~ it is achieved.

Real Masonic Education is Learning, and Learning is not a spectator sport!

*I hear and I forget,
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand.*
Confucius

- Why does Masonic Education have a bad name? Why, when the Master announces, “This evening we are to have a presentation on Masonic Education” do we hear groans from the side benches?

There is more to Masonic Education than ‘*talking heads.*’



Masons are good talkers – sometimes too good! Papers given in lodge sometimes illustrate Bergen Evans’ definition of a college professor – ‘*someone who talks in other people’s sleep!*’

“*What you discover on your own is always more exciting than what someone else discovers for you – it’s like the difference between romantic love and an arranged marriage.*”
Terrence Rafferty

- The mediocre teacher **tells**,
- The good teacher **explains**,
- The superior teacher **demonstrates**,
- The great teacher **inspires**.
William Arthur Ward

“It is for each individual Mason to discover the secret of Masonry by reflection upon its symbols and a wise consideration and analysis of what is said and done in the work.”
Bro. Albert Pike

“We need to challenge brethren to think more about their Masonry, the meaning and relevance of our ceremonies, and the beneficial effects it will have on them if they are guided by them in their everyday lives. The individual Mason **MUST** be encouraged positively to talk freely about Masonry in his own words and from his own experience of it.

M.W. Bro. The Marquess of Northampton, United Grand Lodge of England

CONCEPT – *Making the MOST of Membership through Learning*
Explore its mysteries – Enjoy its privileges



- To kindle the spark that will light the lamp of learning in every lodge

Masonic Nights at the Round Table

are intended to get Masons thinking and talking about Masonry – to provoke open discussion of topics and questions of particular interest to the participating brethren.

Active Participation – Deeper Understanding – Fuller Appreciation

You may offer sentiments and opinion on such subjects as are regularly introduced in the lecture, under the superintendence of an experienced Master, who will guard the landmarks against encroachment.

Charge to the Newly Passed Candidate

A District-wide learning opportunity: Free and open discussion of topics and questions of particular interest to the Brethren. The individual Mason must be encouraged to talk freely about Masonry in his own words based on his unique experience and perspective. However, in order that it is not a pooling of ignorance, some reliable resource – “an experienced Master” – must be available to moderate, guide and stimulate discussion. Resource materials must also be provided to facilitate further reading and research.

- Information is only as valuable as its source.



- What is the best time for Masonic Education? – ANYTIME!
- When is a good time to start Learning? – NOW!

- “From a little spark may burst a mighty flame.” Dante Alighieri



Each District will be encouraged to organize at least three Round Table Discussion evenings – spaced in Autumn, Winter, and Spring months.

A **host lodge** is selected well in advance of the event with the cooperation and collaboration of the District Deputy Grand Master, the District Chairman of Masonic Education, and the Worshipful Master.

- An active, vibrant lodge
- Centrally located in the District
- Ample space to accommodate the visiting Brethren
- Try to select an evening when other lodges in the District do not have a regular meeting to achieve maximum attendance and avoid conflict of interest with other Masonic bodies.

*I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew:
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.* Bro. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

The most important question in Masonry is **WHY?**

“Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous mind.” Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784)

Each Lodge Education Officer should canvass the members of his Lodge to compile a list of topics and questions they would be interested in pursuing.

- Masonic Education is the study of **history, philosophy, and symbolism.**
- The mechanics of the Ritual are the province of the Lodge of Instruction.

At the Lodges of Instruction held annually during the fall, many of you have heard M.W. Bro. C. Edwin Drew state emphatically that he will not answer any question beginning with ‘WHY...?’ In the Lodges of Instruction, the Custodian and his Team are concerned with the delivery of the words of our Ritual and the performance of the mechanics of our Ceremonies – **What** we say and do, **Where, When** and **How** we do it.

The question '**Why...?**' more properly belongs to Masonic Education. Indeed, it is the chief object of Masonic Education to provide answers to questions that explore and investigate our **history, philosophy, and symbolism.**

Here is a simple example. Take the **Senior Deacon's Wand.** The Custodian will tell you that it is to be carried under the left arm, at a forty-five degree angle, grasped about one-third of the way from the top, with the symbol in profile. He will specify when and where it may be placed in a holder. He will demonstrate how to salute with the three-fold sign of a Fellow Craft while carrying the Wand. He will insist that the Wand never be 'grounded' and explain what is meant by the term 'grounding.'

But, you may also ask: Why does the Deacon have a Wand? Why is the symbol on the Wand - '*the Dove bearing an olive branch in its beak?*' Why are the Deacons placed at opposite corners of the Lodge - Senior at the northeast, Junior at the southwest? Why are certain Grand Lodge Officers received '*under the wands?*' What do the '*crossed wands*' symbolize? These are all questions to be discussed under the general heading of Masonic Education.



There's never a **WHY** but there's a **WHEREFORE**

"You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives." Clay P. Bedford

"Supposing is good, but finding out is better."
Mark Twain - Bro. Samuel L. Clemens (1835-1910)

SPREAD THE WORD

"I've got enthusiasm - It's catching - I'm giving it to you!"

Announce and promote the event throughout the District with the assistance of all Lodge Secretaries through the lodge **Summons.**

- Design, print and post a colourful poster advertising the date, time, and place in all Masonic buildings in the District.
- Post it on the District Web Site.



- Enlist the assistance of the Education Officer in each lodge to make the brethren aware of this learning opportunity.
- Proposed topics and questions could be included with the announcement to arouse interest.

FOCUS – Modern Perspectives on Ancient Freemasonry

- Remember, the discussion of topics of *sectarian* religion or *party* politics is forbidden in the lodge.
- What about the things we don't tell a new Mason? At least one of these discussions should focus on the **Entered Apprentice Degree**. A concerted effort should be made to have all recently initiated Masons attend.

"It only takes 20 minutes to become a member, but a lifetime to become a Mason."

- *'Words are highly prized among Masons'* but what do we mean? Some words in the Ritual are not in common everyday use, and require some explanation if the lectures and charges are to be fully understood.

FACT : In the year ending 31 December 2002, 1,113 Candidates were Initiated
 Of these, only 896 (80.5%) were Passed to the Second Degree.
 CONCERN : Why did 217 (19.5%) drop out?



Scenario 1 Scenario 1

I can't tell you what to think,
 I can't tell you how to think,
 But I can give you something to think about!

AGENDA – On the floor of the lodge

When the regular business of the lodge has been completed, and all visitors admitted and introduced, the Worshipful Master will invite the

District Chairman of Masonic Education to present the topics and questions and open discussion.

- If the project has been enthusiastically promoted throughout the District, there will be enough brethren present to form several 'interest groups.' e.g. new Masons, recent books, legend and history in our Ritual, etc. Limit each group to 7-10 to encourage participation. Assign a Lodge Education Officer to each. Allow time at the end of the discussion for a brief report to share the ideas with all the Brethren at the end of the evening.

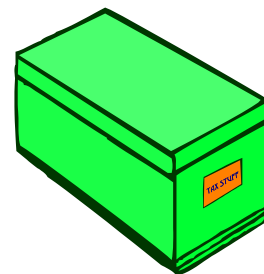
Appoint a scribe to jot down in point form the ideas expressed. These can be summarized in a 'newsletter' for distribution around the District.

- Every Brother should be allowed to 'have his just due.'
- Respect every Brother's opinion.
- Share the wealth of accumulated knowledge around the table.
- If the topics and questions are focused on symbolism, it may be better to hold the 'round table' in the lodge room where tracing boards, implements, tools, furniture, regalia and jewels are at hand.
- If a more informal setting would be advantageous, close the lodge and adjourn to the anteroom or banquet hall.

GETTING THINGS STARTED – Out of the box

Prepare a box with assorted items such as these:

Cabletow
Chisel
Coffee cup
Compasses
Cornucopia
Flag
Gavel
Gloves – white leather workmen's gloves
Hoodwink
Insoles – pair
Nest of envelopes
Protractor
Tassel
Square



- Divide the group into four teams of equal numbers
- Each team selects an item from the box

- Go to the four corners of the room and take five minutes to discuss the Masonic significance of the item selected
- Each team will take five minutes (maximum) to present the ideas developed to explain and interpret the symbolic significance of the item selected.
- Allow questions from the other teams at the end of each presentation.

Where there is much desire to learn there of necessity will be
 much arguing ~
 much writing ~
 many opinions:
 For opinion in good men is but **knowledge in the making.**

John Milton

"There are three sides to every story – yours, mine, and all that lie between." Jody Kern

Question
 Consider
 Think
 Discuss



Read
 Research
 Study

Reading maketh a full man,
conference a ready man,
 and **writing** an exact man.
 Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

ACTION – *Write the vision and make it plain upon tables,
 that he may run that readeth it.* Habakkuk 2: 2

The importance of Masonic symbols is **what these symbols teach.** Symbols are a means to an end. It is not the purpose of Freemasonry to teach the meaning of symbols. The sole purpose of symbolism is to teach Freemasonry. Symbolism, by nature, can be very subjective. Some men see meaning where others do not. It should be obvious that the symbolism of Freemasonry is inseparable from the philosophy of Freemasonry. Bro. Albert Mackey stated: *"To study the symbolism of Masonry is the only way to investigate its philosophy."*



Scenario 2

Scenario 2

Learning by Degrees What's it all about?

Questions you always wanted to have answered
but didn't know who to ask!

The Curriculum Group of the Committee on Masonic Education will make available lists of topics and questions that have been collected by the Regional Resource Officers in the field, and prepare short background papers to initiate discussion and reading lists to stimulate further study.

Everyone is an explorer "How could you possibly live your life looking at a door and not open it?" Robert D. Ballard

Ask - and you will receive

Seek - and you will find

Knock - and the door will be opened

Here are a few ideas to get you started thinking:

- Deprived of all metals
- 15 inches, 12 inches, nine inches – a step in the right direction – “A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”
- left foot first – put your best foot forward
- Rite of Discalceation – Why ‘slipshod’ and not barefoot? – Exodus 3: 5 (reverence and humility); Ruth 4: 7 (pledge of honour and sincerity)
- The Masonic Obligation – ‘bloody oath’ or ‘solemn promise’ – Oath, Vow, or Obligation: legal definition– Oaths in scripture (1 Kings 8: 31; Numbers 30: 2; Genesis 14: 22; Genesis 24: 2-3, 9; Jeremiah 34: 18, 20)
- Secrets and Secrecy in Freemasonry
- Penalty – traditional, symbolical, historical? – “A fool’s tongue is long enough to cut his own throat”
- ‘buried in the sand of the sea’ – ‘no trace or remembrance’
- Masonic triads – ‘just, perfect, and regular’ – words as symbols
- Three – the Masonic number



- The Egyptian philosophers – Who were they and what did they teach?
- The Pythagoreans – Who was Pythagoras and what did he teach?
- What part, if any, does number symbolism play in Freemasonry?
- Orientation – the sun, a symbol of light
- Why is the Chaplain situated in the North?
- Holy Ground – Genesis 22: 1-14; 1 Chronicles 21: 1-21; 2 Chronicles 3: 1.
- Pillars and Columns – Ionic, Doric, Corinthian
- The Wardens' Columns – JW the pillar of cloud by day; SW the pillar of fire by night? – the porch pillars of the Temple?
- On many First Degree Tracing Boards the Pillar of Beauty (Corinthian) stands in the East and the Pillar of Wisdom (Ionic) in the South. Why?
- Jacob's Ladder – Genesis 28: 10-22
- Tessellated Pavement – Indented Skirting – squares and triangles
- Tassels – Virtues – Plumb lines – limits and proportions
- "Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set." Proverbs 22: 28 What are the 'landmarks' of Freemasonry?



Scenario 3 Scenario 3

Learning while enjoying the Social Virtues

An idea for our time: Not all educational activities need to be formally structured. Learning may take place in more relaxed surroundings. From earliest times Masons have enjoyed convivial social occasions. A free-wheeling 'gab fest' with 'Pizza and Beer' might help dispel the notion that history and philosophy are stuffy and dull, interesting only to academics. Remember that the first Grand Lodge was formed in a London alehouse!

- Getting to know you – sharing background and experience
- What's in it for me? – real benefits of Freemasonry
- Underground streams – Is there more to Freemasonry than meets the eye? – The deeper significance of our Ritual
- What do other Masonic bodies (Scottish Rite / York Rite) have to offer in additional degrees?



Scenario 4

Scenario 4

Open for Questions
ASK ME ANOTHER ONE ...

Freemasonry does not need to be defended, but it must be explained.

"Few people really think about the public perception of Freemasonry and are content to blissfully sail along until confronted. Then, not being prepared, and not having answers ready, they clam up and slink away. BE PREPARED."

... M.W. Bro. Donald H. Mumby, Grand Master

1. Is Masonry a "secret society"? Why are Masons afraid to let people know that they are Masons? "Secrets" or "secrecy" is the basis for many negative public perceptions about Freemasonry. If we have nothing to hide, why do we still operate under a veil of secrecy? Why is there a secret handshake?
2. In practical terms, what is the point of Masonry anyway? What should I say if a non-Mason asks, "What is Masonry all about, and what do you guys really do in your meetings"?
3. Is Masonry a "W.A.S.P." group?
4. Why would any young man (under forty years of age) want to join? "Why should I think of becoming a Mason?" Why would anyone want to join? "Why did you become a Mason?"
5. My wife wants to know what goes on in the lodge. "We have never had secrets in our marriage. What is so secret about Freemasonry that you can't talk about it?" What can I tell her without breaking my Obligations?
6. Isn't Masonry a kind of religion? Aren't there enough religions without you guys having one of your own?

7. Is it true that Masonry is "sexist" because it excludes women? Why does Masonry not admit females in this enlightened age? *Why can't a woman be a Freemason?*
8. How does a Masonic Lodge differ from a service club (Rotary, Lions, Kinsmen, etc.)?
9. Is Masonry a "cult"? ... a "conspiracy"?
10. What have Masons done that is so bad to cause such widespread negative feelings directed against Masonry?
11. If we claim to be both universal and tolerant in religious matters, why do the Ritual legends and symbols concentrate exclusively on the Hebrew Old Testament? Could this be offensive to Christians, Moslems and Hindus?
12. If Freemasonry is such a moral force and tries to "take good men and make them better" why is the Fraternity losing members at a steady rate?
13. Why are increasing numbers of religious leaders condemning Freemasonry?
14. Why don't we invite men to submit applications for membership? Why is 'solicitation' such a forbidden sin?
15. Is Freemasonry anti-Catholic? Why can't members of the Roman Catholic Church become Freemasons?
16. How does Freemasonry contribute to, or improve the "quality of life" in the community?
17. Why haven't I heard about Freemasonry in my community? If Masons say that they are active in the community, why do you never hear about their "good works" like you do about other organizations (Shriners, Lions, Knights of Columbus)?
18. How does / can / should Freemasonry communicate with today's society?

19. Why do grown men leave their family at home to get all dressed up, put on aprons, memorize a lot of old words, play act, and pretend that it is 300 years ago? It may be a harmless eccentricity, but it all seems so childish.

20. **What is the one question that you hope no one ever asks you about Freemasonry?** How would you answer it?

- a) From a Masonic Brother;
- b) From a potential applicant;
- c) From an interested friend or work mate;
- d) From your wife, mother, or sister;
- e) From an aggressive anti-Mason;
- f) From a member of a left-wing political party;
- g) From a member of a right-wing fundamentalist religious sect;
- h) From a stranger who notices your Masonic ring.

FINALLY ... A PERSONAL QUESTION - Something to think about! *What is it about Masonry that makes me love the Craft so much? Why do I go to Masonic meetings with the same group of men, to witness the same ritual performed, month in - month out, year after year, some for fifty, or more years? What do I get out of Masonry?*

So many men, so many minds



Freemasonry is not dogmatic! Every man has a right to his opinion, and no one has a corner on intelligence. Masonry has the innate capacity to be all things to all men. There are many interpretations, double meanings, varied and valid, of our symbols and allegories. It is the nature of our institution to respect the opinions of our brethren and fellows.

To guide his steps afford your kindest aid,
And gently pity whom ye can't persuade;
Leave to avenging heaven his stubborn will,
For, O, remember, he's your brother still.

Bro. Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745)

“What we get out of Freemasonry starts with our rebirth – the Initiation. What we end up with depends on ourselves. Without question, we will receive more benefits than we contribute. We will get more out than we put in – not materially, but spiritually and mentally.”

Allen E. Roberts : The Craft and Its Symbols, 1974

Committee on Masonic Education ~ 2003

At your service

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R.W. Bro. J. David Bell, Vice Chairman
R.W. Bro. James Fisher, Secretary

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R.W. Bro. Wayne Elgie
R.W. Bro. Bruce Whitmore
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