

HEMPSTEAD MASONIC LODGE

#749 AF & AM



Worshipful Master Kenneth Harvey Secretary John "Corky" Daut
Hempstead Masonic Lodge Was Chartered December 6, 1893

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Hempstead Masonic Lodge
#749 AF & AM

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Special points of interest:

- Meetings every second Thursday at 7:30 P.M.
- Family style meals before the meetings at 6:30 P.M.
- Study nights, Degrees and floor work, Mondays 7:00 P.M. at Waller Lodge.
- Waller Lodge meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 P.M.
- Waller Lodge family style meals before the meetings at 6:30 P.M.

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Discretion And Secrets

By Richard D. Marcus
George Washington 1776
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We live in a time that celebrates openness about one's deepest feelings and worst foibles. The media enthusiastically report infidelities of community leaders. Newscasters tell us the lurid details of the lives of Gary Condit or Robert Blake. Our society's habit of public confession can even become brutal. On TV, Jerry Springer encourages people to tell all and thereby jolt their friends and family into outrageous action. Bluntly stating what you know *regardless* of the damage done is oddly praised as candor and forthrightness. It is almost a part of the American character to "say what you mean and

mean what you say," without artful diplomacy or courtesy.

Yet we, in Freemasonry, continue to practice the art of keeping secrets. We learn in our posting that we can tell everything about Freemasonry except the modes of recognition. The question we will investigate tonight is why do we continue to keep some things secret?

Some have suggested that secrecy was needed because political and religious persecution has at times led to the death of Freemasons. Even so, the deliberately public announcement of the founding of the Grand Lodge in London in 1717 would seem to have ended the need for further secrecy. Nevertheless, we persevere in our attachment to secrecy.

Others have scoffed that secrecy is merely a sociological tool for holding a group together through a shared knowledge. Certainly specialized knowledge helps keep groups together: be it people who love to sing madrigals, those who reenact Civil War battles, or professional groups of engineers or architects. But secrecy is not essential to these groups.

The answer to why we continue to practice secrecy, it seems to me, is to achieve our goal of becoming better men in Masonry. Maintaining secrecy is a lifelong discipline. Practicing the discipline of secrecy makes us better at doing it.

We are likewise commended to keep of the secrets of a Brother, rather than gossip what we know

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JUNE MEETING 2004

The last stated meeting of the 2003/2004 Masonic year will be opened at 7:30 PM on June 12, 2003.

Remember, the last meeting of the Masonic year is election day for the officers for the 2004/2005 Masonic Year. Dinner at 6:30 PM

More Doom And Gloom

Yep, Corky is at it again, with a few facts.

Hempstead Masonic Lodge has not raised a Master Mason in over 5 years. During that same 5 year period we have lost 12 members.

The only new members who have joined Hempstead Lodge during that same period were plural members from Waller

Lodge.

I have been told that Hempstead Lodge almost lost it's charter back in 1996 due to it's members not participating. Hempstead Lodge was only saved after 6 or more Waller members, who love Masonry, joined as plural members to help save it.

When I joined Hemp-
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Where Did They Go?

Why do candidates fail to advance after becoming Entered Apprentices? Answers to this question can provide much information which helps to understand the problems of declining membership and lack of interest in the activities of a Masonic lodge.

The question has been frequently answered by guess work or snap judgments. Recently, however, the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin undertook a serious study to find factual answers to the question. In 1969 a Research Committee headed by Past Grand Master Edward W. Stegner sent out a questionnaire to 729 "defaulted Entered Apprentices" to learn the reasons for their failure to advance.

The results of that canvass are the body of this Short Talk. To the concerned Mason, there is much food for thought in this report.

In Wisconsin, a candidate is "in default" after he fails to advance within one year. The survey of 729 defaulted Apprentices was started in late 1969, but it was February, 1970, before the returned questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed.

The questionnaire was sent to each individual with a letter over the Grand Master's signature, with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the reply. Of the 729 men contacted, 204, 28%, returned the questionnaire - a surprisingly large response for such an inquiry. Even more significant is the fact the 190 responders *signed* the questionnaire, although that was optional. 155, or 77%, made personal comments or suggestions, which indicates that one out of five of the defaulted Apprentices still had considerable interest in the fraternal organization he had become a part of so briefly.

The tabulated results of the questionnaire furnish a summary of the information resulting from the survey; the following questions and statistics are taken from the Wisconsin Research Committee's 1970 report.

A. Do you feel you had sufficient direct personal contact with members of the Lodge prior to the acceptance of your petition?

162 (80%) - sufficient
28 (14%) - insufficient

B. Do you feel you had sufficient direct personal contact with members of the Lodge between your acceptance and initiation?

170 (83%) - sufficient
24 (12%) - insufficient

C. What was the attitude of the Masonic Brethren to you?

171 (83%) generally positive and accepting
4 (2%) generally neutral
17 (8.3%) generally negative

D. Were you able to identify with the Masonic Fraternity?

83 (40%) - Yes, enthusiastically
86 (42%) - Yes, generally
30 (15%) - No strong feeling
7 (3%) - Negative

E. What were your feelings about the teachings of Freemasonry?

141 (70%) - generally understood
45 (22%) - generally vague
8 (4%) - no strong feeling

F. What were your impressions of the Entered Apprentice Degree?

162 (80%) - well conducted
30 (15%) - difficult to follow
2 (1%) - poorly done

G. What problems did you encounter in completing the degree work? (Number in order of importance. Add any in unmarked spaces.) (The following numbers indicate the frequency with which the problems were ranked first.)

112 (55%) - time involved
61 (30%) - memorization
31 (14%) - other activities

25 (12%) - business or profession
15 (7 1/4%) - personal attitude
10 (5%) - family
(2 1/2%) - money
(2 1/2%) - religion

(Other problems added to the list)

14 - "lost interest"

IO - mentioned "work." Same as business?

3 - entered the Armed Forces
9 - objected to the "posting"
7 - mentioned "health"

2 - had died

H. Do you hold membership in other civic or fraternal organizations?

12 (6%) were Elks

9 (4 1/2%) American Legion

6 (3%) Lions

4 were members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce;

3, of the V.F.W.;

2, were Moose;

1 each of the Eagles or Knights of Pythias.

I. Would you be interested in continuing your Masonic work now?

137 (67%) - Yes

51 (25%) - No

J. General Comments or Suggestions

155 (77%) made some comment

12 (6%) Lack of communication caused drop-out

7 (13 1/2%) had moved

4 (2%) stated they were former DeMolays

While most of those returning the questionnaires checked answers which indicate a favorable attitude to Freemasonry, the really significant replies are those which point out weaknesses in a Lodge's handling of candidates or Masonic customs or practices which "turned off" a candidate. E.g., approximately 12 1/2% (one out of every eight!) of the replies indicated "insufficient contact" between the candidate and the

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members of the lodge before and after the acceptance of the petition. Why does that happen in a Masonic Lodge? The same question should be asked about the significantly large number who couldn't readily "identify" with the Fraternity.

The frequency with which certain problems were checked under Question G suggests a number of areas for Masonic study and examination. Granted that some candidates are making excuses for themselves in listing "time" and "memorization" as the principal obstacles to their advancement, the fact remains that some of them (in their comments) challenged the archaic ritual of Freemasonry and the posting requirements as obsolete and unnecessary. Could this be why 14 defaulted Apprentices "lost interest"? A thoughtful study of all the problems mentioned would stimulate recognition of the basic fact that candidates need more information, more Masonic enlightenment, and more stimulation than they seem to receive at present in the first stages of initiation.

The Wisconsin Research Committee reported that "we are more concerned in applying the yardstick to ourselves" than to the candidates, because "our next task is to remedy the situation." What prompted their purpose to find possible solutions was the many frank comments from the defaulted candidates themselves.

"These comments surprised us and caused the Committee, to do some real soul searching as to how we could improve our lodge operations, and whether we are meeting the needs of young men today. Is time (for Masonry) a limited factor in today's world, and if so, how can it be conserved for the candidate? Is the problem of memorization also a factor, due to time, and how can we assist in this regard?"

DISCRETION AND SECRETS

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to others. Lax discipline in secrecy within a Lodge is a source of disharmony. Perhaps a Masonic allegory can help illustrate the benefits of secrecy to our fraternity and our lives. We should reflect on our promise not to reveal the secrets of our worthy brothers, except in the case of treason or murder.

Keeping some parts of our craft secret is surprisingly difficult. In our public gatherings, for example, we may slip by giving the due-guard and sign when we know that we should not. Secrecy maintains harmony. When we can keep one simple secret, we grow in strength to keep larger secrets revealed inadvertently at work or in our community.

The modern German tradition in Freemasonry tends not to refer to the Fraternity as being secret (*Geheimnis*) but as being discreet (*Diskret*). Discretion conveys a sense of being tactful or silent, rather than a sense of hiding things from others. How can we feel free to communicate frankly and to grow in our development if everything we might say would be aired in public? Our emphasis on secrecy should be relabeled as practicing discretion.

Since practice helps to perfect our actions, let us all live up to our promises in our obligation. We should continue to practice secrecy and discretion, not only in the modes of recognition but also in the secrets of everyday life that are daily entrusted to us. We need not say everything we know. As we remain faithful in keeping secrets and showing discretion, we will achieve our goal of becoming better men in Freemasonry.

9 HEMPSTEAD LODGE MEMBERS MAY BE LOST

As of June 23, 2004, the Hempstead Masonic Lodge could lose as many as 9 members.

Grand Lodge Law requires that anyone not paying their dues by that date will be suspended for non-payment of their 2004 dues.

Again, I will repeat from last month's newsletter, "We all know that things can happen that make us unable to pay every bill when it's due. If you are unable to pay your 2004 dues because of a real hardship, please contact the Secretary or the Worshipful Master. Remember, every one of us took an oath to help a Brother in need, but we can not help anyone with a problem if we don't know about the problem."

Remember, Masonry is all about "Brothers helping Brothers."

MASONIC ANNIVERSARIES

Crow, John E.	06-10-68
Hester, Sidney Joe Jr.	06-30-80
Woods, Harold Ray	06-20-74

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES

Geisendorff, Fred W.	06-17-28
Sweetman, Clyde O.	06-10-21
Vines, James Ray	06-13-46

Doom And Gloom

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stead Lodge 5 years ago, we had 18 to 22 members attending stated meetings each month. Now we have 8 to 10 members at a stated meeting.

5 years ago we had 8 or 10 wives and a handful of children attending the dinner and social hour before the meeting. Now if we have 2 wives attend the social hour it seems to be a special event.

Anyone have a solution?

An old farmer is outside for a walk around his land when he sees a sign on his neighbor's lawn; "Horse for Sale". Curious, he decides to have a look-see. As he approaches his neighbor's stable, he sees his old Italian friend brushing down a fine-looking stallion.

"Hello friend, I saw your sign out there and came over to see your horse for sale." Now, the Italian farmer speaks very poor English, but manages to answer well enough. "Yep, yep, disa is da horse for-a sale." "This horse here?" quizzes the old farmer, "Why he's a fine horse! Why-ever would you sell him?" "Well," sighs the Italian farmer, "He no looka so good anymore."

The old farmer, convinced that his neighbor has lost his mind, makes the sale and leads the horse across his field over to the stable. As he taps the horse gently on the back to coax him into the stable, he watches as the horse misses the door completely and smacks head first into the wall. "That ol' cheat sold me a near blind horse!" growls the old farmer.

He then proceeds to storm over across the field, reigns in hand, to give his neighbor a piece of his mind.

"You sold me a near blind horse you ol' cheat and you didn't even tell me!" he screams.

"Eh! I tolla you!" cries the Italian farmer, "I say, 'he no looka so good anymore!'"

<http://www.geocities.com/hempstead749/>

**Visit Hempstead Lodge's
Own Web Site**



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