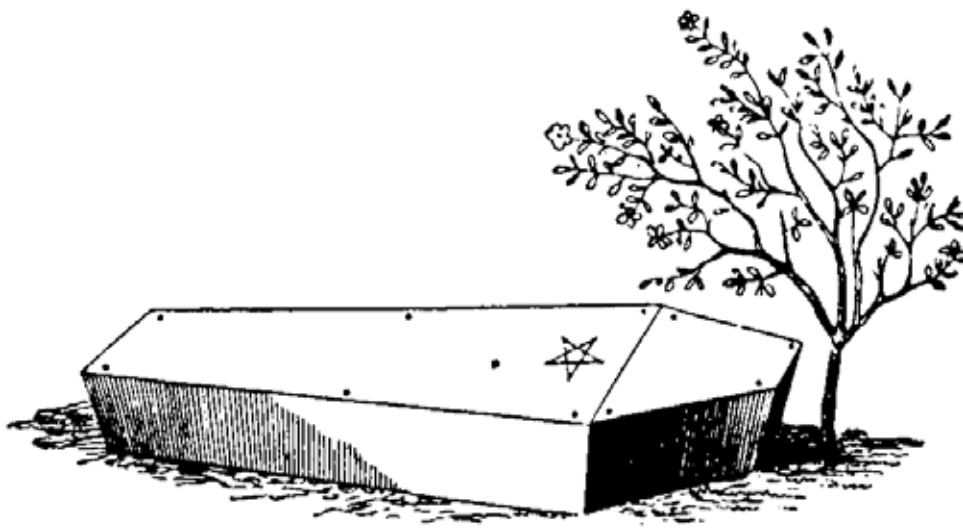


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# The Lyceum

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A publication of the Illinois  
Committee on Masonic Education

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# Contents

<b>From the Editor-In-Chief.....</b>	<b>3</b>
RW:. R.H. Johnson	
<b>From the Chairman.....</b>	<b>4</b>
WB:. Michael Overturf	
<b>Masonic Family Health Foundation.....</b>	<b>5</b>
RWB:. Elliott Anthony	
<b>Metaphores to Mortar: To Begin Anew.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Bro. Erik Marks	
<b>Masonic Education Challenge Coin.....</b>	<b>8</b>
WB:. Michael Overturf	
<b>Morning Has Broken.....</b>	<b>9</b>
WB:. Darin A. Lahners	
<b>What Say You? The Masonic Survey.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Education Committee	
<b>Renewable Energy.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Bro. Justus E. Fischer	
<b>Silence &amp; Circumspection.....</b>	<b>12</b>
WB:. Andrew D. Oxford	
<b>We Used To Be Strangers.....</b>	<b>13</b>
RW:. Chad Lacek, 33°	
<b>A Serious Lack of Discretion.....</b>	<b>15</b>
RW:. R.H. Johnson	
<b>Election Cards &amp; LEOs.....</b>	<b>19</b>
Education Committee & Jan Miller	
<b>District Education Talking Points.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Education Committee	
<b>Upcoming Education Conferences.....</b>	<b>21-22</b>
Education Committee	
<b>Reader's Corner: The Pocket History of Freemasonry.....</b>	<b>23</b>
WB:. Kevin Wheeler	
<b>Important Dates.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Grand Lodge Office & Education Committee	

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# FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Brothers all,

I am excited to bring you one of the most jam-packed issues we've produced to date. The theme of this issue is Renewal. This month's articles touch on our members' unique perspectives and educational viewpoints related to this idea.

Our featured article comes from a blog post in 2019 by Brother Erik Marks of Massachusetts. It's all about new beginnings and how our minds work within this concept. I think it will give us some great ideas to contemplate as we get motivated in 2022. Articles from Darin A. Lahners, Chad Lacey, Andrew Oxford, and Kevin Wheeler round out the issue.

A few things of note are the call to answer the Masonic Education Committee Survey. We are polling the membership in IL to get to know our Brothers and what they are after in their Masonic Education adventures. If you're an Illinois Freemason, please take a moment to fill this out. It takes about one minute. We've also published a list of essential dates for Grand Lodge Annual Communication, the next Education Symposiums, and even information on how to correctly add an LEO to the MORI/M2/Groupable database.

I wish you good reading and a happy day!

Yours in Brotherhood,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. H. Johnson". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

R. H. Johnson



# From the Chairman

WB Michael Overturf, Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee

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Brethren,

It is a sincere desire to wish you a very happy Easter to our Brothers of the Christian faith, "...for indeed his is risen!" And Following along those lines, this issue is concerned with Renewal.

We are in a critical time for those who have studied Masonic Astronomy or read Stellar Theology & Masonic Astronomy by Robert Hewitt Brown. The death of winter and the rebirth of a new year is upon us. Flowers and trees are in bloom, and our lawns wake up. The mud and brown grass "greens up."

This, for me, is a special time to take inventory after the winter and recharge. Growing up in Northwest Indiana, my dad would take off for spring break, and we would travel down to Southern Illinois to check on my grandparents. While there, grandpa and dad would take me fishing. It was dad's escape from the cold gray skies and to leave the city's hustle and bustle for a week....and did I mention I got to go fishing?

My wife and I had a fall and winter this last season we hope not to experience anytime soon. We sat down to perform a deep self-evaluation--hard things were said, and tough decisions were made. Coming out of the pandemic, everyone has taken a hit. Careers were lost, ideals and feelings were tested, some came out stronger, and others did not.

During this time, I found out I wasn't near the carpenter I thought I was (and that lumber was expensive.) and that my wife wasn't the housekeeper (I am still not hiring a housekeeper). This is the time to renew yourself and make strong plans, Brothers.

Fraternally,

WB Michael Overturf

*Michael Overturf*

Chairman of the Committee on Masonic Education





The Masonic Family Health Foundation's Mission is steeped in the Masonic fraternity's ideals of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Our foundation has a long history with Chicago, the Union Hospital, and what is now Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. The Center for Advanced Care enables Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center to expand and centralize cancer care, digestive health, and surgery services into one location, creating improved access to care, continuity among disciplines, enhanced efficiencies, and a better overall experience for patients and their families. The Masonic Family Health Foundation participated in seeing the completion of this incredible addition to the AIMMC campus in 2015.

The Masonic Family Health Foundation has partnered with and supported many of Chicago's greatest health and human service programs. All of which are dedicated in a similar mission - A commitment to the health of the community.

The Masonic Family Health Foundation has embraced the Masonic fraternity's heritage to develop one of the greatest charitable foundations in Illinois.



Check out the informational interview featuring RW:. Elliott Anthony from the Education Committee's YouTube Channel!

<https://tinyurl.com/MFHFCharity>

FIND OUT MORE!

[HTTPS://MASONICFAMILYHEALTHFOUNDATION.ORG](https://masonicfamilyhealthfoundation.org)



# Metaphors to Mortar: To Begin Anew

by Brother Erik Marks

*An integral aspect of Masonry is applying the metaphors with which we work to our daily lives—to operationalize the speculative in every moment. Whether or not there is proof the metaphors are real or possible, treating them as such has powerful implications on the psyche. To experiment and build with them is to see how they affect the way one interacts with the world; living the metaphor in action changes how one conducts the self.*

Mortar is the glue that holds the blocks of the building together. When the individual relates to the everyday world through the medium of our metaphor and lessons therein, contemplation of aspects of self through the speculative becomes the Mortar for the construction of the individual's temple.

## **Raising and resurrection:**

The metaphor of the candidate embodying the Grand Master being Raised is for many a high point in the process. I'm using the ideas, as does the craft, of death, raising or resurrection for the basis for a psychological, cognitive, and spiritual process to inspire and create change in the here and now within the individual man. The ritual implies one can be "reborn" at any, every, moment, we always have another chance to do the right thing, get it right. It teaches it is possible to be "reborn" into higher states of consciousness and spiritual awakening(s). Through the metaphor in action, we receive instruction the work of change takes preparation, effort, and practice—and isn't without barriers and challenges. Within the frame of the ritual, it is with the aid of the Worshipful Master. We could take his representation to imply with the aid of Brothers, Friends, Family, or as a representation of our higher or ideal self, maybe the Grand Architect. Elaborating the interpretation: the metaphoric death might be a mis- or missed- step, an

error or failing in everyday life. When we keep the Oath and practice close in the moment, the sprig is always nearby. Staying grounded, contemplative, we have the opportunity to search ourselves and find the way to save the moment—even if we return to the scene some measure of time after the incident. We have the opportunity to act with integrity and justice. Through practice and repetition, we can make real-life changes in how we respond next time around.

While considering ways to operationalize the changes to a recently Raised self, I was reminded of two ideas: "if [people] pray for courage, does God give them courage? Or [are they given] opportunities to be courageous?" and "There is no way to Love, Love is the way." The former is a quote by Morgan Freeman in the movie *Evan Almighty*. The latter is by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist Monk. For the words courage and love, one could replace with: Peace, Kindness, Charity, Justice, Integrity, etc. Taken together, all challenging situations are opportunities and underscore intentional practice. Words are the currency of our lives and our minds. Words are the medium of our ideas, exchanges, vows, oaths, what soothes and enrages us. So, changing a word in how we talk with ourselves and others creates change within our metaphoric operating system code—changing the words has power. Which is why we don't often change the words in the ritual, because then we change the meaning and effect.

If you choose to conduct these experiments, it is possible for them to remain fully hidden, secret, from the world around you unless you choose to disclose to an other. Keeping the "secret," of this opportunity reframe, strengthens its function on the self. If it is assumed the past me acted a certain way and cannot change because of the historical fact, then present

me is more likely to also be stuck and cannot change. However, if reality is accepted along with the idea that rebirth (forgiveness? Self-compassion?) is possible, then hope returns, work on ashlar resumes, and growth and change may occur; The search may commence along with the opportunity to be raised towards an intended, ideal, obligated, self, and be born into a newer version or world.

### **Reincarnation:**

Though this concept is not overtly embedded in our ritual, taken as an extension of the above, it can be a potent metaphor and speculative tool through which to embody our Masonic obligations. The concept of reincarnation leads me to wonder how I would change my behavior if I treated everyone around me as living representations of spirits or souls with whom I've interacted in other lifetimes and in other stations in life. Further, I could consider this an iterative process that goes on and on until we find "liberation" from the cycle of death and rebirth, in which my station in the next is mediated by my action in the present. So, I end up with a world populated by people who have always been here with me, but our relationships are changed in each "birth." Now things get interesting, speculatively speaking. Each person could be experienced as a former or future Brother, family member, a parent or child from another, or future, life. I might change how I react to someone who presents to me in a manner I dislike. I could be kinder, more charitable if I assume a greater obligation to the person with whom I'm confronted. Or I might find a way to help them stay engaged—assuming I wanted to live my Masonic obligation in that moment (though aren't we really always on duty (another post perhaps)). Mortar is never off duty—it is always there, holding the building together

### **Presentation of the hand:**

When the Worshipful Master of the lodge greets us, a newly made Mason, a fellowcraft, a master, he offers us his hand. He reaches out to express his love and affection on his own behalf and the brethren of the lodge. It is welcoming. It is accepting. It is an offering. It is a metaphor. Regardless of country of birth or station in life, there are repeated offerings of connection, openness, and affirming equity. The Master of the Lodge shows he is willing to welcome and meet the brethren, whom he serves on the checkered floor of life with an open hand. For the year (or years as the case may sometimes be) in the East, he sets forth the plan on the trestle board and offers it to the brethren. The hand as trowel, the master models the applica-

tion of mortar between brethren in plain sight and good faith. Despite what is to come in life, the temple will continue to be built.

In one form of dream interpretation, all content of the dream may be seen as representations of the dreamer. We could take the above literal welcoming as a metaphor in like manner: the wiser, stronger, more beautiful representation of self, welcomes the rough to be worked into its own image. Through the hope of raising and resurrection, the aspects of ourselves we seek to perfect are always welcomed to the work. We do not disavow, deny, reject them. Otherwise, they become split off and neglected, undeveloped and wasted. Even worse, the despised or disavowed part(s) becomes an anti-masonic detractor seeking to tear down the temple in self-sabotage! Therefore the Master of his own temple greets the rough aspects of himself openly, lovingly, with curiosity and care, to treat charitably as he would a brother in need of relief. This can be hard work, by the way. When he accepts the stone as it is, he begins the work of shaping (behavior, habit, etc.), fitting it into place anew, and applying the mortar so the temple may be built toward perfection.

Brother Erik Marks is a clinical social worker whose usual vocation has been in the field of human services in a wide range of settings since 1990. He was raised in 2017 by his biologically younger Brother and then Worshipful Master in Alpha Lodge in Framingham, MA.





# The Masonic Education Challenge Coin

by WB.: Michael Overturf, Chairman of Masonic Education



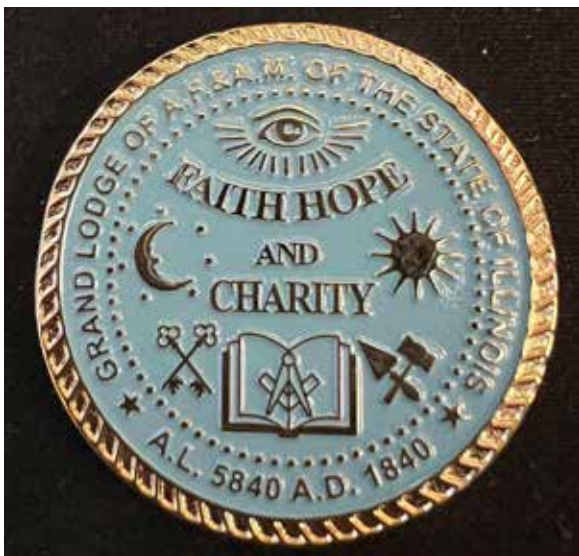
How can we as Educators in the Masonic Fraternity show when someone has gone above and beyond? How can we show who we are? While some use neck ties, we wanted to do something a little different--and yet, still in the familiar with Freemasonry. Late in 2021, your committee was thinking about ways we could show our appreciation and we landed, as you may have guessed, on a challenge coin and lapel pin.

Some have asked about the Challenge coins I had made with our exclusive lapel pins. Wikipedia states, “they are given to prove membership when challenged and to enhance morale.” After the great “tie debate” we had last year, this was the most effective method of keeping the peace--Challenge Coins!

Thinking about how Wikipedia defines their use--They also represent more to us as Masonic Educators. One side bares the Grand Lodge logo/seal. This represents our organizations values, and those which our AEOs, DEOs LEOs and committee members hold dear. On the reverse, the familiar iconography--the symbol of Masonic Industry, the Beehive shines brightly. It reminds us to always to be industrious and working toward the good of the hive--our Lodges and for Freemasonry in general.

The Most Worshipful Grand lodge of Illinois is lucky to have numerous members involved in Masonic Education and on the committee. We have outstanding members with deep roots in Masonic Education. While the history of challenge coins is all over the place, it has been used as a reward, for a job well done and to bring together our team of Masonic Educators.

Thinking in the speculative way, I feel that our challenge coin should be a reward for the outstanding contributions the membership makes to Masonic Education. It is proof of good work, true work, and just such work as been ordered. I have instructed our AEOs to give these unique tokens out. They are a **very** limited in number and a very special gift.





# Morning Has Broken

by WB: Darin A. Lahners, AEO Eastern Area



One of my earliest, happiest memories is dancing around with my mother to Cat Stevens (now known as Yusuf Islam) album, Teaser, and the Firecat. My personal favorite song from that album is: Moonshadow, followed closely by the song: Morning has Broken. The song was originally published as a Christian hymn in 1931, set to the tune of “Bunessan,” and the lyrics were written by Eleanor Farjeon. A slight variation of the tune can be found in a 1957 anthology under the name: “A Morning Song (For the First Day of Spring).” The song was popularized by Cat Stevens on the aforementioned album.

The Lyrics are as follows:

*Morning has broken like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the world*

*Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from Heaven  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden  
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass*

*Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning  
Born of the one light, Eden saw play  
Praise with elation, praise every morning  
God's recreation of the new day*

*Morning has broken like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the world*

While not Masonic at all, the lyrics do evoke the idea of the Sun's rising in the East every morning, which is implicated in the opening and closing of every Worshipful Lodge. When the Worshipful Master asks the Senior Warden: “Why in the East?” The answer is returned: “As the sun rises in the East to open and govern the day, so Rises the Worshipful Master in

the East to open and govern his lodge, set the craft to work, and give them proper instruction.” It also features prominently in the duties of the Junior and Senior Warden, albeit each of them represents the Sun at different stages of the day.

The Sun is also represented by one of the Lesser Lights, which are thus explained: “As the Sun rules the day and the moon governs the night, so should the Worshipful Master endeavor to rule and govern his lodge with equal regularity.” The idea is that there is no creation without the union of opposites. The Sun and Moon are both required to create a new day, and the Worshipful Master is required to not only govern over his lodge but to create a new Mason. The candidate is in darkness (representing ignorance, but also symbolically the night), and only with the help of the Worshipful Master (the Sun) rising in the East and bringing the candidate to “Light” does he become a Mason. The degrees are alchemical stages of purification, culminating with the Master Mason degree, where the base metal (lead) becomes a noble metal (gold), or the new Master Mason is reborn after the Symbolic Death of the old Master. This is the never-ending cycle of life, death, and rebirth, which is played out by the Sun daily and which will continue to be the case for approximately another 10 billion years.

It is appropriate then that the Sun and Freemasonry be so linked. The hope is that Freemasonry will be as everlasting as the Sun. So, maybe the next time you listen to “Morning has Broken” or witness a sunrise, you can think about these themes. The Sun is that constant hope of a new beginning or renewal of the day. So maybe it's also appropriate that I hold dear my memories of Cat Stevens because the Sun and Freemasonry, like my mother's love, are a constant in my life.



# What Say You?

On April 14th, The Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois sent all Master Masons a survey. The survey is short and takes less than one minute to complete. In it are eight questions which we hope you will take the time to answer.

A survey of this kind has never been done within the confines of our Grand Jurisdiction. It is focused solely on Masonic Education and your experience with it in your local lodges and areas. What will we gain from our answers? It is hoped we will be able to be better informed about what we all are looking for within the scope of Masonic Education and that we will be able to develop more content and the like for all our Lodges.

We know your time is precious--it's why all of the content your Education Committee puts out is essential, self-serve. Masonic Education, when you want it.

The survey contains no personal data at all and is completely anonymous. We ask that you limit your responses to one per member. Your Education Committee is dedicated to fulfilling your Educational needs. We've launched this publication, and we've begun Sunday Zoom Education calls that are recorded for posterity and to re-watch at your convenience. We've also begun the production of a mixed-media style learning program called Intender+. The first few videos are already on our YouTube Channel under the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education for Illinois.

We hope you take the time to take this short survey so we can give you more of what you're looking for!

Fraternally,

Your Committee on Masonic Education

Access the Survey at the following link-  
<https://tinyurl.com/MasonicEdu>





# Renewable Energy

by Bro. Justus E. Fischer



To embrace change could often be seen as an arduous task or something confusing to the human psyche. Time brings the experience to know when to apply our knowledge in becoming adaptable to the inevitable changes

in our lives as humans and brother Freemasons. The changes that I'm talking about can be found in everyday life in any given society. As most adaptable creatures of the environment do, we figure out our problems and solve them using the scientific method. A humanistic approach to change, however, is more complex than our counterparts in the animal kingdom. Our species experiences biological and physiological changes throughout our lifespan. I would be remiss if I failed to mention the more complex changes as well, such as mental and spiritual changes within our deeper consciousness and changes within our technocratic societies.

“THE ALL is THE MIND; The Universe is Mental.”  
-The Kybalion

Titles such as “The Kybalion,” the “I-Ching” (book of changes), and The Age of Spiritual Machines by Ray Kurzweil opened my mindset about how changes are a natural progression of our lives. Change is not inherently “good” or “bad,” It just is. Changes will exist whether we are prepared to embrace them or not. In Freemasonry, there are allusions to the legend concerning the destruction of King Solomon's Temple and the rebuilding of a new temple for posterity's sake. In the Scottish Rite, we see the allusion to the Phoenix in the 18° with the symbolism of the Pelican. The Phoenix is a mythical creature constantly being reborn from the ashes of fiery passion. In our Masonic ritual, there's a reference to a hermetic principle also discussed in The Kybalion. In the Third-Degree “charge” to the lodge, you find a hidden clue in “the energy of our minds and the affection of our souls,” I speculate this is a reference to the fundamentals of Alchemy and the Hermetic principles of the Age of Enlightenment. The outside changes of our ever-expanding universe, the changes in our seasons symbolize life and death and the rebirth and renewal of the planet's ecosystem. As we transition from the dormancy

of winter to the spring months, these changes have a mental and physical effect on our minds, our moods, and our bodies. The ethereal, as well as the physical bodies, live harmoniously together in unison. As above, so below.

In conclusion, I think that Freemasonry must adapt to the inevitable changes it currently faces. A change in the culture of the fraternity itself shows us that we should encourage the deep-seekers that inquire about the philosophies of our ancient mysteries, apart from the ritual itself. I believe that Masonic Education is in the renewal phase of our transition, from the good ol' social club of the golden era, into the fraternity that encourages intellectual discourse among the brethren, to dig deeper inside the written words of our ritual and analyze the allegorical symbolism contained therein, Freemasonry must also adapt to the ever-changing field of technological advancement, every Masonic lodge should have an education officer with the capabilities of setting up social media accounts and to utilize a working e-mail list messaging service for the lodge, the ability to host educational lectures that incorporate Audio-Visual aids in the lodge is also important for the retention of our membership, so we can make well-informed masons in the age of information, our renewal depends on our adaption to these changes within our society. Let our Masonic light be the photosynthesis needed for our sustenance as the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. To symbolize a beacon of light during a time of uncertainty and chaos means that moving forward into the next decade, our fraternity will experience a metamorphosis and renewal for the good of the Craft.

Sapere Aude. Initium Novum.



# Silence and Circumspection

by WB.: Andrew D. Oxford, Committee on Masonic Education

We are taught about those “*truly Masonic virtues, Silence and Circumspection.*” We are told that this is the best way to safeguard the secrets of Freemasonry from the uninitiated, and that is true. Is there a deeper meaning? I think so. What we are being told here is that it is important to think before you speak. Masonry teaches via allegory. The allegory serves to create a bridge in the mind that will allow deeper truths to cross. The virtues of Silence and Circumspection are age-old lessons, looked to be communicated in every society.

Our brethren in the past have taken this very literally. Their families often never heard anything about the teachings of Freemasonry. They loved their Masons but didn't know much about what it meant and therefore created a mystique around the fraternity. They sensed that the mission was for the betterment of humanity but weren't sure why. Brother Ben Franklin summed it up best when he said that the “secret of Freemasonry is that it has not secrets.” Silence and circumspection.

The bible teaches, “think not for much the speaking ye shall be heard.” It is true, you cannot win a debate by saying more words than your opponent. Your words need to have clarity and meaning. Hastily spoken words often end up in misunderstandings and create more problems than they solve. We need to think about what we are going to say before we say it. Words stir up emotions, and emotions lead to the release of passions. Silence and circumspection are virtues used by Masons to “subdue our passions.”

Everything we teach is inter-connected. The symbolism of the compasses “*circumscribes us and keeps up in due bounds.*” Hence we think before we speak or act and thereby avoid creating circumstances aggravated by misunderstandings. We add to the peace and harmony of society through silence and circumspection. We preserve the integrity of our institutions through silence and circumspection, and that preservation is represented by the Tyler's sword guarding the book of constitutions.

See the signs (the sword and the compasses), hear the word(s) in your memory, subdue your passions, and add to the common stock of knowledge and under-

standing in the beehives of society. Follow the symbols like breadcrumbs until you reach the truth. From the compasses to the sword guarding the book of constitutions, to the beehive, then back to the compasses. The symbols stand on their own but also lead to each other. The number of words you say is less important than what you say. Think before speaking.





# We Used To Be Strangers

by RWB.: Chad Lacey, Member Committee on Masonic Education



In the year 1800, it took five weeks to travel from New York to Chicago. In 1830 the railroad shortened that trip to two weeks. One hundred years later, in 1930, you only needed one day. Today, it's just twelve hours by car or a two-and-a-half-hour flight.

In 1914 travel to Europe from the East Coast took five to ten days. From the West coast, ten to twenty. Travel to Asia was a month or more. By 2016 you could travel to Europe in under twelve hours. Now you can be almost anywhere in the world in a single day, with Australia and New Zealand being rare exceptions.

In just over seven generations, our human race has eliminated the barriers which kept us separated for so many thousands of years. Think about that for a moment. It's not uncommon for a child to know their great-grandparents. That's four generations of people, living in the same moment. In less than twice that time, we have connected our planet and united its inhabitants.

For most of human history, life was local. The people you interacted with as an adult were people you grew up with. You went to the same schools, played in the same parks and fields, and learned the same basic values expected by your community. There were still plenty of disagreements, but at least the people involved had similar points of view.

Travelers coming from a distance farther than a few towns away were viewed with fascination and suspicion. They spoke differently.

They dressed differently. They acted differently. Immediately a distinction was made between us and them, and there was nothing particularly wrong with that. It wasn't necessary to understand them, let alone accept them. They were outsiders entering your community. It was their responsibility to conform if they hoped to be a part of it.

Once the barriers of time, expense, dangers, and doubts, were removed from travel, the 'us and them' mentality became more difficult to justify. The strangers are here to stay. The strangers are now the locals. You might be the stranger now.

The people of Japan had no contact with the outside world for 264 years, from 1639-1853. Isolated cultures across the globe are suddenly in daily contact. The results of this, particularly in America, is that we cannot rely on a common upbringing to understand each other. Even people born in the same towns today might be raised with dramatically different cultural expectations. We need to depend instead on something universal, something that connects every human being.

Freemasonry teaches us to regard the whole human species as one family. Taken directly from the Tenets and Cardinal Virtues lecture in the first degree, "... the high and low, rich and poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support, and protect each other. On this principle, Masonry unites men of every country, sect, and opinion and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance."

It is more obvious now than at any time in our history that we are one human family, whether we like it or not. How long did it take for the recent virus detected in China to spread so thoroughly that virtually every person on the planet has either had it or knows someone who has? There are no more far away places. There are no more isolated events. There are no problems that are not our problem.

When we regard humanity, every single person, as a member of our family, we are united simply by virtue of being human. That's the only qualification. It doesn't matter where or how you were raised. It doesn't matter what language you speak or what name you use to praise God. It isn't tolerance, it's acceptance. We seem to be misusing that word lately. I tolerate mosquitoes while I'm on a camping trip. I tolerate a screaming child on an airplane. That is to say, I hate those things, but I put up with them as unavoidable evils. I would feel awful if I learned that someone needed to tolerate me. Our diversity is our strength. It's as true for our genetics as it is for our society. The more, the better.

Wars become harder to start and fight when people are united. We see that now as the world unites in condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We refuse to let our human family be divided by nationality. We can separate the people of a place from the actions of the government they suffer under. We know you, Brother in Ukraine. We know you, Sister in Russia. Your suffering is our suffering. Your loss is our loss. Injury to one injures us all.

We have never needed the unifying principles of Freemasonry more than we do now. We are inextricably, irreversibly, inseparably connected. As our technology advances, the physical distances between us will become even smaller. We realize that we all live on the same small, fragile planet. Our lives are already desperately brief, when not cut shorter by disease or disaster. We are all in this together. Let's choose to face the uncertain future united as a global human family. There are no strangers left.



# A Serious Lack of Discretion

by RWB.: Robert H. Johnson, Committee on Education

For years, almost from the beginning, Masonic writers, contemporaries, and lecturers have been writing about the West Gate. The West Gate is the term used to describe the place of entrance into our gentle Craft. Using the West Gate means that we are guarding our Craft from those who may not be a good candidate for Freemasonry.

On February 16th, 1951, the Grand Master of the State of Illinois approved a packet to be sent to every Lodge in the jurisdiction--a stern letter and a small booklet. The text of the letter is below.

*“Dear Worshipful Master:*

*Enclosed you will find three copies of the booklet “INVESTIGATION” which has just been published by this Committee at the direction of the Grand Master.*

*The Officers of our Grand Lodge are seriously concerned with the lack of discretion shown by some Investigation Committees in not carefully screening petitioners to our lodges. In these unsettled times proper and thorough investigating is vital to the very existence of our lodges and the progress of our Fraternity.*

*The Grand Master has approved and recommends the procedure outlined. To ensure that this is done, the Worshipful Master should place a copy of these instructions in the hands of each member of such Committee.*

*It is our sincere hope that this will materially aid the Craft in following your instructions, and that your work and our lodges will prosper accordingly.*

*Sincerely and fraternally,  
Committee on Masonic Information  
C.B. Steele, Chairman”*

Today, various Lodges have adopted additional programs for guarding the West Gate that supplement the Lodge’s Investigation Committee and their reporting efforts. For instance, Pennsylvania’s

Grand Lodge runs a criminal background check at the Grand Lodge level. If the candidate is clear (no felonies), the Lodge is allowed to further investigate and vote on him.

Here in our jurisdiction, a criminal background check is not required at any level, although Lodges may adopt a policy of requiring one to aid the Investigation Committee’s work. In Illinois, a common misconception is that a felony bars a man from becoming a Freemason. It does not. The Committee should ascertain the answers to sixteen recommended questions as outlined in the Grand Lodge of Illinois Investigation Committee Guide during the investigation. These questions are outlined below:

- 1. Do they believe in a Supreme Being?**
- 2. Can the petitioner read and write English?**
- 3. Does the petitioner’s wife and family approve of his petition?**
- 4. Does the petitioner understand Masonry’s position on insurance?**
- 5. Does the petitioner have the financial ability to become a Mason?**
- 6. Will he be able to devote the time and effort that is required to study, prepare, and complete our degree work?**
- 7. To what other organizations does the petitioner belong?**
- 8. How did the petitioner learn about Freemasonry?**
- 9. Is the petitioner of a lawful age, and does he satisfy the Illinois residence requirements?**
- 10. Is the petitioner of sound mental health?**
- 11. What is the petitioner’s occupation?**



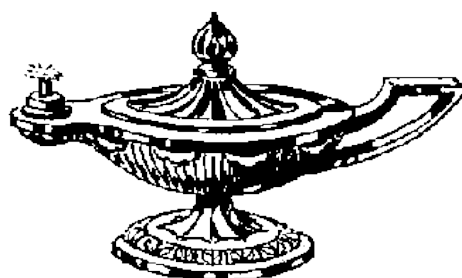
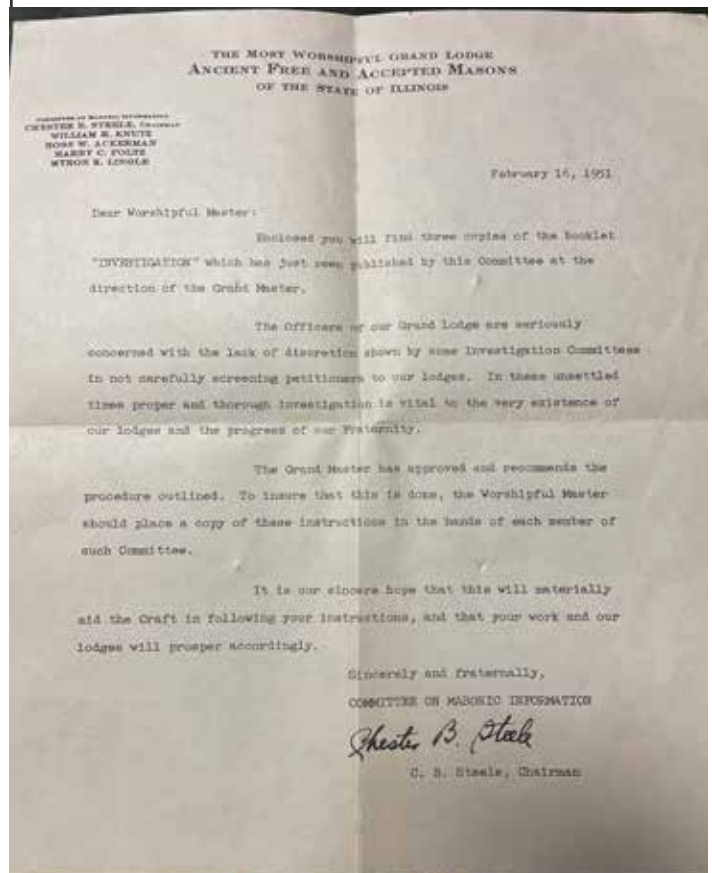
12. Has the petitioner ever submitted a prior petition?
13. Does the petitioner know of any reason why he cannot or should not become a Freemason?
14. Is this decision of the petitioner's own free will and accord?
15. Has the petitioner ever been in trouble?
16. Why does the petitioner want to become a Mason?

On question fifteen, a "Yes." Does not disqualify them. The Investigation Committee should inquire as to what the trouble was or, if severe enough, what the felony was for, how long ago was it? What were the circumstances of the alleged crime? If the Committee feels that the man should still be allowed to continue or not, it is up to them. They then report to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge individually—and most importantly, details should not be disclosed. The committee member should only "Not Recommend" or "Recommend" the petitioner for membership.

A copy of the investigation Committee Guide can be found via MORI / M2 / Groupable under the Documents tab. Contact the Grand Lodge Office for the credentials to log into this area—your secretary should already have them. The passwords were distributed on February 11th, 2022. Once inside the Documents, click on "Additional Files," "Grand Lodge Forms," "Masonic Information."

For the 1951 guide to investigation that was sent out along with the original letter, check out the following pages.

Happy investigation and GUARD WELL THE WEST GATE!





**INVESTIGATION**  
DUTIES OF INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE



*Issued by*  
**COMMITTEE ON MASONIC INFORMATION**  
*of the*  
**M. W. Grand Lodge A. F. & A. M.**  
**of the State of Illinois**  
**Room 1404**  
**201 NORTH WELLS STREET**  
**CHICAGO 6, ILLINOIS**

**INVESTIGATION**  
DUTIES OF INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

The subjects treated in this booklet were arranged by Brother Alphonse Cerza, Waubansia Lodge No. 160, at the request of this Committee. We hereby acknowledge our debt of gratitude to Brother Cerza.

The procedure detailed in this booklet is approved by our M. W. Grand Master and recommended for use by Investigation Committees.

**COMMITTEE ON MASONIC INFORMATION**

**BE ON GUARD**  
*By WILBUR D. NESBIT*

Round the ancient lodges  
Men were set on guard,  
North and south and east and west,  
Keeping watch and ward.  
Silent, steady, sleepless,  
Keen of ear and eye—  
On the pathway where they stood  
No one might creep by.

Near the ancient lodges  
None might come to see,  
None might come to listen there  
Save a sign gave he,  
For the ancient lodges,  
As those of today,  
Kept the outer, creeping folk  
Very far away.

But, today, each Mason  
Has a duty high;  
He must stand, a sentinel  
To all that come nigh;  
He must guard Freemasonry,  
Must protect its name  
As he would his gate or door  
Or a woman's name.

Note: The first, third, and fourth verses of this poem only are here reproduced.

**INVESTIGATION**  
Duties of Investigation Committee

The work of the Investigation Committee is of great importance, probably equal to if not greater in importance than any other endeavor in Masonry.

While it is true that the final responsibility for maintaining the high standards of the Craft rests with the total membership of a lodge, yet the result of the ballot on a petition for membership is largely determined by the report of the Investigation Committee. Consequently an appointment to an Investigation Committee should be considered in the light of an important Masonic duty. The membership of the lodge, as well as the Craft as a whole, is dependent upon the work and judgment of each member of such Committee, and their report should be made only after a careful and complete investigation.

Each member of an Investigation Committee should make a separate and independent investigation of the petitioner. He should start at the earliest possible moment, for a complete investigation will take some time.

A visit to the petitioner's home is necessary in order to observe his home life and to determine his family's attitude toward his joining the Craft. The interview should be informal. The petitioner should be made to feel at ease. Then his natural reactions, his friendliness, his fairness, his views on charity, or his lack of these desirable characteristics, can be better observed and judged.

During the investigation the following specific facts must be ascertained:

1. **BELIEF IN GOD.** No man can become a Mason unless he believes in God. This does not mean that he must profess Christianity, for there are many good Masons throughout the world who are of various beliefs, creeds, and religions. But it does mean that he must believe in a Supreme Being.—Code 281. Also Ancient Charges "Concerning God and Religion." Code, page 3 (1).

2. **DOES HE HAVE THE SENSES OF A MAN?** It is required that a petitioner have the senses of a man, especially those of hearing, seeing, and feeling.—Code 279.

3. **CAN HE READ AND WRITE ENGLISH?** In Illinois one of the requirements for membership is that the petitioner must be able to read and write English.—Code 279.

4. **AGE.** The petitioner must be at least twenty-one years of age and must not be in his dotage. (The word "dotage" means feebleness or imbecility of understanding or mind.) If he appears too young it will be well to check his age.—Code 282.

5. **RESIDENCE AND LODGE JURISDICTION:** The petitioner must have resided in the State of Illinois for at least one year and within the jurisdiction of the lodge for at least six months.—Codes 276-277-277A-282-290.

6. **OCCUPATION.** The occupation of a petitioner is frequently a guide to his character. For example, one engaged in an illegal or unsavory occupation or business is not a proper person to become a Mason. Also,

4

in Illinois, no lodge shall receive the petition of one engaged in the manufacture, distribution, or sale of intoxicating liquors.—Codes 290 and 487.

7. **PRIOR PETITION.** If this is not the first petition, the result of the first petition should be rechecked. The required time between the filing of the two petitions should also be checked.—Code 290.

8. **MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.** It is essential to ask the petitioner if he is a member of any group whose views are not compatible with Freemasonry. There are certain religions, for example, that strictly forbid their members to become Masons; if a petitioner is a member of such a church you must at least inquire into his motives and his sincerity. This is not a religious test for membership in the Craft but is designed to prevent future mental conflict.

Although politics is not to be considered a test, yet membership in certain political parties would be incompatible because of the lack of moral and ethical concepts of such parties; for example, one world-wide political party preaches struggle between classes and is therefore incompatible with Freemasonry, which teaches the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

9. **DOES HE KNOW OF ANY REASON WHY HE CANNOT BECOME A FREEMASON?** The purpose of this question is to ascertain whether the petitioner has any mental reservations regarding the Craft.

10. **FREE WILL AND ACCORD.** One of the fundamental laws of the Craft is that the petitioner come of his own free will and accord. It is therefore necessary

5

to ascertain why and how he came to file his petition in order to be satisfied that he did so voluntarily and not under pressure of any kind.—Code 289.

11. **FINANCIAL ABILITY.** Membership in the Craft calls for the making of certain financial contributions; it is important that these payments will not impose hardship on the family of the petitioner.—Code 553.

12. **INSURANCE.** It is important that the petitioner and his family understand that Freemasonry has no insurance benefits and that material benefits will not necessarily be given to him or his family because of his membership in the Fraternity.

13. **EVER IN TROUBLE?** If the petitioner has at any time been in trouble with the civil authorities, or convicted of a crime, the matter should be very thoroughly investigated.

#### CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

The above information can be learned from the petitioner, checked with the brethren who recommended the petitioner, and rechecked in the interview with the petitioner and his family. But remember that, while most of the petitioners who come to us do so with clean hands, we should ever be on guard against an attempt to conceal information from us.

Therefore we should not rest the investigation here but should seek diligently for further information by consulting with the petitioner's employer, fellow-employees, neighbors, business associates, and with others who might know of his personal as well as his business habits. Any rumor casting discredit on his integrity should be investigated thoroughly.

6

After all the facts have been learned each member of the Committee must conscientiously determine for himself the report he will make. Code 280 reads: "Masonry knows no distinction of race or color. It is the mental, moral, and physical qualifications of the man that are to be considered."

#### THE REPORT

Each member of the Committee must see the Worshipful Master privately and make a verbal report to him. Report should never be made to the secretary or its nature divulged to any person other than the Master.—Code 295.

Although the report on a petition is due on a certain date, an investigation should never be hurried. If the investigation requires more time, the Master will give the Committee more time at their request.—Code 298.

Always bear in mind that, as a member of an Investigating Committee you are selecting the material which will in the future, make the structure of our organization strong or weak.

NOTE: All Codes referred to above are taken from the Book of Constitutions and By-Laws of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M., of the State of Illinois amended to October 1948. Those appointed to an Investigation Committee should read Codes 279 to 300, inclusive.

Copies of the Code are obtainable from secretaries and masters of lodges, by purchase (price 10c postpaid) from the Grand Secretary, Richard C. Devesport, Northshore Illinois, or by loan from the library of the Committee on Masonic Information, 1453 Maple Avenue, Evanston, Illinois.

7

# ELECTION CARDS AND LODGE EDUCATION OFFICERS (LEOS)

An audit revealed that our Lodge Education Officers are not identified in Mori / M2 / Groupable in recent months. This leads to a particular issue in that your Education Committee and the Grand Lodge cannot directly contact these educators. Please see the note from Jan Miller, our Grand Lodge Office Manager, on how to add an LEO to your Lodge information within the database.

## Lodge Education Officers (LEOs) Process for Adding 04/08/2022

When a Worshipful Master appoints a member as Lodge Education Officer, the Master or Lodge Secretary will need to email or call the Grand Lodge office to have the member entered into groupable|m2. Please contact Joyce Hashman or Jan Miller for the entry.

When contacting, please provide member's full name, date of the appointment, and member number, if at all possible.

To clarify:

- A new Certificate of Election (CoE) does not 'delete' the LEO currently appointed
- The LEO will not be added to the CoE, as it is not one of the required elected or appointed officers



# *District Education*

## *Talking Points*

### **Overview of the Intender Program - Prior to the First Degree**

“After the first and second degrees, the Lodge gives the new brother the Guidebook appropriate for that degree. He then meets with the new brother, teaches the catechism, and goes over the questions and answers in each Guidebook.”





**REGISTRATION FOR  
THE 2022 CONFERENCE  
IS NOW OPEN!**

Midwest Conference on Masonic Education 2022

**April 29-May 01, 2022**

Hampton Inn and Suites Kansas City - Country Club Plaza  
4600 Summit Street  
Kansas City, MO 64112

The 2022 Midwest Conference on Masonic Education looks to be yet another fantastic weekend of sharing best practices on Masonic Education and enjoying some great Masonic fellowship!

We have some exciting speakers lined up and plenty of workshops for you to learn new tools you can use in your jurisdiction! This conference is open to all Master Masons.

Use the link/web address below to view the agenda, buy your ticket and book your hotel room!

**<https://tinyurl.com/MCME2022>**



# ESOTERICON 2022

JOIN US ON JUNE 11, 2022, AS WE BRING YOU A DAY'S WORTH OF ENLIGHTENING PRESENTATIONS OF HERMETIC, ESOTERIC, INITIATIC, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND SPIRITUAL CONTENT; BROUGHT TO YOU BY SOME OF THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST ERUDITE MINDS IN THE FIELD!

THIS YEAR'S ESOTERICON WILL BE AN IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL EVENT, PRESENTED TO YOU VIA ZOOM® WEBINAR, AND WILL CONSIST OF 6 FULL PRESENTATIONS, A CONTEMPLATIVE EXERCISE TO START THE DAY, BREAKOUT SESSIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS, AND THE ABILITY TO MEET WITH AND LEARN ABOUT ESOTERIC TOPICS FROM SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE AUTHORS AND SPEAKERS! TICKET PURCHASE GETS YOU ACCESS TO EVENTS AND SWAG!

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JON RUARK ~ JASON RICHARDS ~ KEVIN HOMAN ~ JOE MARTINEZ

# Reader's Corner

## The Pocket History of Freemasonry

by Fred L. Pick and G. Norman Knight; Revised by Frederick Smyth

A Book review by  
WB.: Kevin A. Wheeler



The book *The Pocket History of Freemasonry* by Brothers Pick, Knight, and Smyth is much like Brother Bernard E. Jones' book *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium* because it also endeavors to cover all aspects of Free-

masonry from its written inception. I particularly enjoyed this book because there were a few more topics, some of which I found interesting or, at least to me, had been new information. The topics I will cover in this book review deal with the obligation penalties, Irish Influence in Masonry and the Scottish Constitution, and several other degrees covered in the latter part of the book.

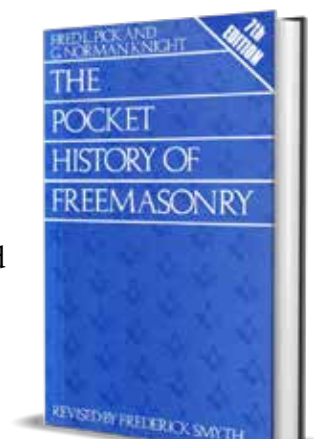
While reading this book, I came across a page discussing the obligation penalties that I found quite disturbing. It reads, "There had arisen among English Freemasons a growing dislike of the barbarous wording of the penalties, which had already been modified in Ireland and in Scotland." (p.133) Reading on, I discovered that in 1893 the Grand Lodge of Ireland changed theirs, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland, "On 3rd November 1966, the Grand Lodge recommended that all daughter lodges within the Scottish Constitution should omit the "ancient" penalties from all the obligations given in their lodges." (p. 197) This information was alarming because I hadn't known that it had been changed, nor did I agree with it. However, I can say that I am glad that I have been brought to light on this manner. I'm proud to say that my home Grand Lodge continues to use the traditional penalty in its ritual.

Some other things I learned were about Ireland, Scotland, and other degrees in Masonry that I was

unfamiliar with. One thing that I liked regarding the Grand Lodge of Ireland is its Grand Lodge of Instruction, which is "an official and permanent body to preserve and promulgate its ritual as handed down by John Fowler, who, in turn, derived it from ritualists of the last quarter of the eighteenth century." (p. 163) This body is unique because it is charged with teaching all the ritual and floor work throughout all of Masonry within its jurisdiction. I found it intriguing that Irish Freemasonry, through its use of Military Lodges, extended its jurisdiction far and wide by issuing warrants throughout the world. This included the Mother Lodge of Australia, founded in 1820, an early lodge in New Zealand, founded in 1843, India in 1961, Nigeria and Ghana in 1973, and several more.

Aside from the changing of the obligation penalties, reading this book allowed me to explore Scottish Freemasonry further. I didn't know that it wasn't until 1836 that the Scotland Grand Lodge created its own book of constitutions because of its antiquity in Freemasonry. There are no traditional or "old charges" as in English Freemasonry. Something else that pulled me into the text was that, to date, I hadn't read much about Scottish Freemasonry. In particular, the history of Mother Lodge Kilwinning No. 0--it is the oldest known lodge in the world, dating its records back to the 1140s.

One thing that caught my attention was that in England, following the Union of 1813, the Grand Chapter now controlled the following degrees: Mark Master, Excellent Master, Royal Arch, Royal Ark Mariner, Babylonish Pass or Red Cross, Royal Master,





Select Master, and Super Excellent Master. It caught my attention because, in America, these degrees are, aside from the Babylonish Pass or Red Cross, in various parts of the York Rite--mainly being the Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Council of Cryptic Masons, and the Allied Masonic Degrees.

I must say, I didn't want to read this book at first. It appeared to be the very same information I had previously read. However, as I continued to read, I discovered some interesting things I had not known about Freemasonry and also about some of my brethren from other jurisdictions. I am glad I decided to read this book and would recommend it to my brethren, as I am sure they will appreciate further Light in Masonry.



## GRAND LODGE IMPORTANT DATES

Grand Lodge Annual Communication is scheduled for October 7th & 8th. Based on the date of our event, there are some important dates you need to be aware of:

Item Due to Grand Lodge by:

Proposed Amendment (90 days out) July 9, 2022

Reinstatement from Expulsion (65 days out) August 3, 2022

Lodge Name Change Requests (30 days out) September 7, 2022

## EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

**MCME**, Kansas City, MO - April 29-May 1st

**Sequoit No. 127 Mini Edu Symposium**, Antioch, IL - May 21st, 2022

**Masonic Con** (The Original), New Hampshire - June 4th, 2022

**Esotericon**, Virginia - June 10-12, 2022

**South Pasadena Masonic Lodge - Masonic Con**, Los Angeles - July 22-24, 2022

**Texas Masonic Con**, August 20th, 2022

**Masonic Con Kansas**, KC Metro - August 27th, 2022

**AMD Illinois- In-gathering**, Bloomington Normal - September 17th, 2022

For more visit, [MasonicConferences.com](http://MasonicConferences.com)

If your lodge or organization is having an Educational Event (not related to instruction or charities), please let us know. Email the details to: [secretary@spesnovum.com](mailto:secretary@spesnovum.com)

Please give us at least a month notice so that we can ensure it is added.



