

Something to Think About....

Sometimes, as a speaker, in order to get a point across to your audience it helps to draw from your own life experiences. So, bear with me here, I'm reaching back in time. Some of you know that in a former life I spent a long time working in the broadcast industry, sometimes as a "hands-on", 'tower climbing', 'build your own equipment' kind of radio engineer. Quite often I was on stage as the MC of live concerts introducing great musical artists like Henry Mancini, Lena Horne, Tony Bennett, or Jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd.....and at one part-time job while attending engineering school in the mid 60's, I was a big city, rock and roll DJ on a 50,000-watt station in Dallas....I know, it's hard to picture that, isn't it?

From the very first air shift in my career to the last on-air job over 26 years later, I signed off all of my shifts with a few well-chosen words of wisdom directed to my loyal audience. It was never as memorable as the way "Paul Harvey" closes his programs, but I did try to leave the audience with a positive *image* in their minds. I left them with a segment I called "something to think about". So much for reminiscing...let's fast forward to today.

As Masons, what kind of image do we leave behind? One of the issues that Masonry constantly faces is the perception held by the general public about the Masonic fraternity. This has become almost critical in some places such as England where the House of Commons has applied considerable pressure to lodges to publish the names of their individual lodge members. Obviously this is a serious threat to both individual freedoms as well as to the fraternity in general. But, wait a minute, let's flip the coin over and look at the other side. Maybe this type of pressure is an opportunity for Masons to accomplish two important tasks; to inform the public of (1) the substantial accomplishments made by individual Masons; and (2) the on going contributions made by the Masonic family through their work, and the charities that we support.

To accomplish these tasks will require some serious effort by the all of the various branches that make up our Masonic family tree. But even more critical will be actions of us as individual Masons. I believe most, if not all of us have had the experience of hearing someone comment on the positive and negative aspects of an organization based solely on the fact that "they know someone" in that organization. Our individual behavior as members of the Masonic community has a direct impact on what opinions the general public holds about us as Freemasons.

I would suggest that each of us as members of the Masonic family has the responsibility to work at informing the community at large about the positive force Masonry has had in the past, and what positive effects Masonry is continuing to have today. I believe an important piece of this educational process is to make the general public aware of our goal "to take good men, and make them better." As human beings our opinions and attitudes are deeply influenced by our experiences and interactions with other people. Consequently, how we act as individuals will form the opinions held by the general public concerning the Masonic family.

So, now it's my turn to leave you with an image.....Ultimately, no one will really care how many honors you were given. No one will care that you devoted many hours to researching Masonic Education topics, or that you worked very hard to become a good ritualist. No one will care how many Masonic degrees you collected along the way, but a part of the world *will* know if you made a DIFFERENCE! Depending on whether the impression you left behind was positive or negative, it could ultimately determine if Masonry gets credit, or the blame. Brethren, the challenge is ours! Let's work at making our daily lives reflect the principles of Masonry..... We need to Live Freemasonry Daily..... 'it's something to think about'!

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