

What's in Your Masonic Wallet?

I'm sure you've all seen the credit card commercial on TV that asks...."What's in your wallet?" Good question. We never know how much stuff we have in there until we have to look for something, like a membership card. It's safely tucked away in our wallet, somewhere. We could probably find it if we sorted through the old gas receipts, dog-eared notes, business cards, and the various pieces of plastic identity that are layered on top of it.

Wallets are a little bit like time capsules in our hip pocket....they hold most of the things that matter to us that are smaller or flatter than a set of keys. The stuff in there, from scraps of paper and random phone numbers, to our Driver's License, had a purpose at the time it was put there, and, if you're like me, you hate to throw any of it away. We only empty a wallet and sort through this scrapbook of our life when it either gets too fat to sit on or when we get a new one as a present. I try not to buy one on my own because new wallets are never like the old one. A new one has different pockets and windows and separators for my stuff and when it comes down to it, it just 'sits' differently. A new wallet is always poking us and saying, "I'm Here!" It takes time for a new wallet to quiet down and conform, to become a comfortable fit, and feel forgotten again.

Becoming a Mason is a bit like getting a new 'mental wallet'. When you receive it, you begin cleaning out old memories in preparation for creating new ones. For, that new Masonic wallet is a time capsule of memories about things that are, and have been.....important milestones for us as Masons. We tend to tuck them away in little compartments for safekeeping. Eventually, those mental snapshots will become torn and frayed, and perhaps not quite as clear as they used to be; in recent years I have found that memory can be like that. And, after a time, just like a wallet that has been broken in, the memories of our beautiful ritual and the things we first learned about Masonry (and ourselves) will quiet down and conform; they'll get comfortable, and perhaps even be forgotten.

It's funny how we take our Masonic wallet for granted. We're content to watch a new Mason get his first Masonic wallet without thinking much about the condition of our own. We metaphorically 'sit' on our wallet of knowledge and eventually feel really comfortable, even if we don't really remember all of what's tucked away in there. But that's not the way the new Mason feels. He's excited. Can you recall the first time you were given a real wallet of your own when you were a boy? How proud you felt, how excited you were to open it up and see all the things inside; the little plastic picture windows and that long pocket where the money goes....you couldn't wait to put 'things' in it!

That new Mason is feeling just like that. He's already slipped the memories of his Obligation right into the slot for the driver's license, and he has clear mental photos of the Master approaching him from the East, giving him signs and due guards, extending a hand of friendship, or of the Senior Warden adjusting the flap of his new apron. He's already begun putting scraps of his Masonic memories in it....the notes about the Holy St's John, those working tools, Brotherly Love, his mentor's name and phone number, and a grocery list for Temperance, Justice, and Truth. And, boy, is he excited! He wants to show that new wallet around and share the few precious things he's been able to put in it. He, and his new wallet, are saying, "I'm Here, I'm Here!"

And there we sit on our quiet and comfortable old wallet, taking it all in stride with our older and wiser scraps of paper, mental photographs, and Masonic memories. Of course we're happy for the new Mason, to be sure, but perhaps we're just paternally pleased rather than excited along with him. Perhaps we don't have to really look in that wallet he wants to show us; we know what's in there; after all, we just gave it to him. But wait a minute...if you feel that way about *his* new Masonic wallet, you've just missed an opportunity to fill *your* wallet with some new stuff!

This becomes our opportunity to clean out our old one, to revisit the scraps of memory tucked away and remember what they really mean to us. Through that new Brother's enthusiasm and discoveries, there's a chance to make new and fresh the rumpled bits of Masonry we've forgotten over time. It's a second chance for us, a chance to discover Masonry, once again. His new wallet, and the one just like it that we're being offered, is the exact model of our old one. Its several parts fit together with such exact nicety, and though it's new, we can with confidence know that it will be comfortable.

So, What's in *your* wallet?....Same old memories?....There are plenty of opportunities to add new tidbits of Masonry to your wallet...at Stated Communications, Thursday night class, officers training classes, the DEO/DIW schools, the Correspondence Course, and even just conferring with other well informed brethren, and especially the newest Mason. I challenge you to clean out your Masonic wallet and fill it up with some fresh memories....don't just *sit* on the opportunity.

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