

The Importance of “Laws, Rules & Regulations”

Over the years I've heard quite a few of the Brethren complain about how we are losing the “Masonic Knowledge” that past generations have left us with. This dearth of traditional learning is massive, and we are slowly getting back to it. I want to focus on the “other” knowledge that is very important to Lodges...the administrative and jurisdictional knowledge...that sometimes gets ignored. When I first thought about becoming a DEO I was absolutely floored by the amount of information there was in printed form, that most Brethren never pick up to read, or in many cases are not even aware of it's existence.

Here's the question...when was the last time you read through the Virginia Methodical Digest? It's that document that guides the Grand Lodge and our subordinate Lodges. Are you familiar with it...can you find a topic or answer to a specific question in this document? Do you have a copy readily available for reference? We have it in the Lodge library! If you are involved at all in the Grand Lodge Correspondence Course, you certainly know about the Digest. I've tried to get Brethren throughout our district interested in this for a long time now...with some small success. I guess I can only count it successful if you actually finish the course. No, I'm not trying to make you feel guilty about not finishing the course you started years ago....but if the cabletow fits.....

I have to tell you, I find our laws, rules and regulations the least sexy thing about Masonry! But, these are among the most important, for without our Laws, we are nothing. Laws are what define a society...and the people who are familiar with the laws are usually in control of a society. Just look at the United States...how many non-lawyers do you know in Congress...on the Supreme Court...running departments for the Executive Branch.

With all due respect to those in our midst who chose that noble profession, this is not to say that lawyers are superior in any way. On the contrary, this statement targets in on those who know the laws and are familiar with them. These Masons, the ones who know their rules and regulations are far better equipped than most to deal with tough situations. They tend to have a clearer idea of the dos and don'ts of Masonry in their jurisdictions. They tend to go to the authority or the source, instead of some Brother's fading memory.

So why is this important? Because, to be a leader you must know how to get to your goal. The rules can be a great aid in the promotion of peace and harmony as well. Familiarity with your our rules is an invaluable resource, and can bring a quick end to many conflicts. Learning is not just about mathematical squares and the 47th problem of Euclid...it's about the every-day stuff too. So pick up the Digest, and have some enjoyable reading!

And speaking of reading...on a personal note...I had an interesting experience last Friday evening....My 3 year-old granddaughter caught me reading. I was not watching HBO, or surfing the Internet or anything like that...I was reading. It was an old out-of-print Masonic book given along to me by a Brother in Arizona that I share some of my 'educational nuggets' with. She came up to me, crawled up in my lap and we looked at all the pictures in the book I had been paying attention to. We talked about colors, and letters, and numbers...you know...three-year-old kid stuff.

Eventually, she got tired of looking at pictures of guys sitting or standing around while wearing 'funny aprons' and those drawings of grand old buildings, so she grabbed one of her books and sat next to me on the floor and started reading something about a princess and her adventures. I then realized that I was doing her a favor. I was teaching her a lesson that many in today's society don't do for children...I was reading with the TV turned off.

Now, I am no better than any other man...and will never claim such a thing. But the lesson I learned last Friday filled me with such an awesome sense of accomplishment that I had to share it with you. My Masonry was improving my family. My practice of this Craft was taking this little girl into the world of the written word....which will eventually (I hope) lead her into a love of literature and knowledge far beyond the perception of her peers. This is a gift that my Masonic curiosity has given to my family.

So, whom do you represent to your children or grandchildren? What does your family see you do on those lazy weekends when it's too hot to mow the lawn and the budget doesn't allow for a movie or a trip to the mall? Are you taking your time to be a Mason? That's the time to let my love of the Craft invade and permeate every aspect of my life. Masonry is who I am striving to be.... not just what I do. Take it to heart, my Brethren. Our Craft is a noble pursuit, it is like Arthur's "Quest for the Grail", it is a way of living. When all of us live the life of a Mason while being who we are...we will all be better, and our Craft will have in it the men it deserves. I try. Do you?

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