

Hip to be Square.

My generation grew up listening to this song made famous by Huey Lewis and the News, but what does it really mean and does it apply to Masonry? The lyricist alludes to his rebellious youth but through the course of this song indicates that it is now “hip” which translates to socially acceptable, fashionable or trendy to be “square” meaning old-fashioned or conventional.

Originally calling someone a square implied someone who was honest, traditional and loyal, traits that we look for in our fellow masons. Also, given the conventions of our ritual work that hasn’t changed in quite a long time, for us as Mason’s it is truly hip to be square.

Another phrase that many of you probably expected from me on this step is that of being “squared away” since I am a Navy veteran. Far be it for me to disappoint. According to the dictionary this phrase was used in the days of wooden ships where the yards of the sails were squared to allow vessels to sail before the wind and make the best use of it. The definition that pertains more to our journey up the staircase is the one that refers to “put everything in order or in readiness”. Masonically, this can be applied to our efforts to transform ourselves from the rough ashlar to the perfect ashlar, putting ourselves “in readiness” to be a living stone for that spiritual building in the heavens.

We have now taken the first three steps along our path. As we reflect on them as a whole, I would like to point out an interesting fact about the 3 tools referenced here. If you take any two of them you can create the third. A plumb and a level used together form a square. A square used with a plumb will define a level and a level used with a square will give you a plumb line. As these three tools work so well together, so should we endeavor to work together with each other as masons.

One final question before we roam into the Tuscan ‘see’...how can you tell if a tree is masonic?
It has “square” roots.



‘The Winding Staircase - A 15 step path to improving yourself in Masonry’

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