

“PREPARING THE ASHLAR”



A Member's Guide

Prepared by
The Education and Information Committee
of
THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF OHIO

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Forward

This member's guide has been created as an aid for you as a new Master Mason to learn more about the Fraternity you have joined.

It is not intended that this manual be read straight through from start to finish. Review the Table of Contents and read those sections that are of interest or may contain answers to questions you have.

There is nothing in this manual that is "secret." Therefore, keep it handy to use as reference, not hidden in a dresser drawer.

Several Grand Lodges have produced similar publications. The Education and Information Committee has reviewed many of them and has adapted portions of those produced by the Grand Lodges of Vermont and Texas in assembling this New Member's Guide.

Fraternally,

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WELCOME TO FREEMASONRY

You have recently completed the first three Degrees of Freemasonry. We congratulate you on being accepted and welcome you into our ranks. We hope that you earnestly partake in the fellowship and positive lessons that our Fraternity has to offer.

As a new Master Mason, you have made an important step, one which we are sure you will value not only now, but also for many years to come. Freemasonry is a unique institution that has been a major part of community life in America for over 250 years. Your decision to enter the ranks of Freemasonry had to be your own without the undue influence of others. That makes your membership in the Fraternity one of choice, which is significant. Men join Freemasonry for a variety of reasons, each valid and important.

Because we are proud of our history and our heritage and because, as a new member, you are entitled to know the background and nature of the organization you are joining, this introductory section has been prepared to pass on certain thoughts and information intended to make your Masonic experience more meaningful.

To begin with, you should thoroughly understand that Freemasonry is entirely serious in character. The primary purpose of the initiation ceremonies is to teach and to convey to you the principles of our Fraternity.

WHO ARE FREEMASONS?

Freemasonry is large and diversified enough to provide what you are seeking. Masons are men who have joined together to improve themselves. This is accomplished through the principles and ceremonies of the Fraternity. We endeavor to extend Masonic lessons into our daily lives in order to become positive influences in our homes, communities, nation and throughout the world. We base our efforts on morality, justice, charity, truth and the laws of

God. Worldwide, membership encompasses millions of men who believe and support the same fundamental principles.

WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that unites men of good character who, though of different religious, ethnic, or social backgrounds, share a belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind.

The traditions of Freemasonry are founded upon the building of King Solomon's Temple, and its fraternal ceremonies use the working tools of the stonemasons to teach moral lessons and truths. For example, Masons are reminded at Lodge meetings to "meet upon the level of equality, act by the plumb of uprightness, and part upon the square of virtue."

Like most organizations, one will get out of Freemasonry what he is able to put into it. However, membership in Freemasonry is not meant in any way to interfere with an individual's commitment to his faith, family, or occupation. Freemasonry is not and never can be a replacement for these important institutions, but rather it is a positive environment that reminds every Mason of his duty to God, his community, his family and himself.

One modern definition is: "Freemasonry is an organized society of men, symbolically applying the principles of Operative Masonry and architecture to the science and art of character building." In other words, Freemasonry uses ageless methods and lessons to make each of us a better person.

Thus, Freemasonry

- has a basic philosophy of life that places the individual worth of each man high on its pedestal and incorporates the great teachings of many ages to provide a way for individual study and thought,

- has great respect for religion and promotes toleration and equal esteem for the religious opinions of others,
- provides a real working plan for making good men even better,
- is a social organization,
- has many important charitable projects,
- has a rich worldwide history,
- can help develop both public speaking and dramatic abilities and provides an effective avenue for developing character and leadership.

WHAT FREEMASONRY STANDS FOR

Freemasonry stands for many important principles and beliefs.

The primary principles of Freemasonry are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Its beliefs are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. These principles or beliefs cover a broad field, actually supplying the pattern to meet every experience in human life.

Freemasonry and the organizations that are within the Masonic family contribute over 700 million dollars every year to helping those with sight problems or aphasia, physically and developmentally disabled children, and those with severe burns. Local Lodges work to help their communities and individuals within those communities. Freemasonry's charity is always given without regard to race, sex, creed or national origin.

WHAT WE ARE NOT

We are not a secret society!

A secret society is generally one that wraps itself in a cloak of absolute secrecy. No one knows who the members are, where they meet, or generally too much about them.

That is not the Masonic Fraternity at all! Freemasons proudly wear

rings and lapel pins that declare their membership to anyone observant enough to notice. Masonic buildings are clearly marked by large signs or Masonic emblems.

The Fraternity does have a few “secrets” that are a continuation of the operative tradition of how one mason could identify himself to another. These parts of the ritual, which are called the esoteric side of Freemasonry, have been handed down by word of mouth for centuries. Also, the meetings of a Lodge are private but then so are the meetings of most non-public organizations.

Freemasonry's purposes, ideals and principles may be learned by anyone who inquires. There are numerous books on these subjects, which are available to the public. Freemasonry often has public notices in the newspapers, and our members are usually numbered among the more active citizens in the community.

We are not a religion!

Freemasonry, as an organization, is understanding and tolerant of an individual's right to his own religious beliefs and practices. Furthermore, Freemasonry has no creed, no dogma, no priesthood, and offers no “path to salvation,” because it is a FRATERNITY.

However, a firm belief in the existence and perfection of God, whatever an individual's religion, is required for membership.

WHAT WE DO NOT DO

Sectarian religion and partisan politics are not discussed in Masonic meetings, and there are very good reasons why. When we meet as Masons, we meet on the same level and are not subject to the classes and distinctions of the outside world. Each Brother is entitled to his own beliefs and may follow his own convictions. Our objective is to *unite* men, not to divide them. These two subjects can cause honest differences of opinion that might well cause friction among Brothers. No member running for political office has any right to expect the support of any other member

because of Lodge affiliation. This does not mean, however, that matters which concern them with the nature of government or individual freedoms are not proper concerns of Masons as good citizens.

There will be subjects concerning the Lodge's business that have to be discussed. These discussions should be kept within the bounds of propriety and everyone should show tolerance for the opinion of the other. Every Master wants harmony in his Lodge; and, once a matter has been put to a vote in the Lodge and a decision made, the decision should be accepted by all members regardless of how they voted.

Freemasonry teaches every Mason to be a good citizen and to perform his civic duties. We do not try to keep anyone from expressing his opinion, or from serving his city, county, state or nation in an honorable manner. Anyone who serves in political office should not act politically as a Freemason; nor should he act in the name of Freemasonry in exercising his rights.

To sum up, as a Mason you will never introduce into the Craft any controversial sectarian or political question. You will pay no heed to those, from without, who attack the Fraternity, and in your life as a member of the state you will ever be loyal to the demands of good citizenship.

ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY

The historical origins of Freemasonry as a modern fraternity can be traced back to a meeting of four Lodges held at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in London, England on St. John the Baptist Day, June 24, 1717. The purpose of this meeting was to celebrate one of the traditional feasts of the Freemasons. The result was the formation of the first Grand Lodge of Freemasons in the world.

The transition from an organization of skilled stonemasons to a

fraternity of Freemasons is one clouded more by legend than revealed by facts. It is true that operative Lodges of stonemasons existed in the British Isles as far back as the 1400s. It is also true that some time during the 1600s, these operative Lodges began to accept non-stonemasons as members, who we now call speculative Masons or Freemasons. In fact, the modern Fraternity of Freemasons is a completely speculative organization--one that uses the tools of the operative stonemason as a basis for its symbolism and ceremonies around which are constructed a moral and ethical philosophy.

The legends of the building of King Solomon's Temple, as depicted in the ceremonies of the Degrees, are purely didactic and are not to be understood as actual history.

ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY IN OHIO

After the Revolutionary War, there came the great westward surge of Americans in search of land and new opportunities. Several brethren settled at what is now Marietta, Ohio. Across the Muskingum River from Marietta was Fort Harmar, among whose officers was Captain Jonathan Heart, Worshipful Master of American (Army) Union Lodge. This had been chartered as a military Lodge under St. John's Grand Lodge of Massachusetts on February 15, 1776. When this Lodge moved to New York shortly after it was chartered, the brethren obtained from Dr. Peter Middleton, Grand Master of the Province New York, permission to meet on April 23, 1776. In that same month he granted them a new Warrant under the name of Military Union Lodge No. 1. The brethren, however, referred to the Lodge as American Union Lodge.

On June 28, 1790, Brother Heart and a number of Marietta Masons opened American Union Lodge in that community, and thus, Freemasonry formally appeared in what is now Ohio.

A few years later fire took the Lodge's Charter. The brethren applied to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania for a new Charter but were refused. They then asked Massachusetts to renew their Charter and were granted permission to work under their old Charter until such time as a Grand Lodge might be formed having jurisdiction over the territory in which they were located.

On January 4, 1808, American Union Lodge No. 1 met with representatives of Cincinnati Lodge No. 13, Erie Lodge No. 47, Scioto Lodge No. 2, and Amity Lodge No. 105 to establish a Grand Lodge in Ohio. After four days they adopted a resolution to form such a Grand Lodge, electing Brother Rufus Putnam as Grand Master, and setting the first Monday in January, 1809, as the date for the first communication, which was to be had in Chillicothe, the state capital.

When they convened on this date, American Union Lodge was not represented. Since it seemed advisable, or at least desirable, to the other representatives to have delegates present from all the Lodges which participated in the formation of the Grand Lodge the preceding year, they waited three days for the arrival of a representative from American Union Lodge. Finally, deciding that none was coming, on January 5, 1809, they adopted the same Constitution as that of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, and installed their officers.

Brother Rufus Putnam having declined because of age and ill health to accept the position of Grand Master, Brother Samuel Huntington, Governor of Ohio, was elected Grand Master of Masons for 1809.

Thus, The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio came into being.

THE MISSION OF OHIO FREEMASONRY

"The mission of Ohio Freemasonry is to provide opportunities for sincere, honest, forthright men who believe in God and desire to contribute to the improvement of their communities and themselves.

Through our Masonic Fraternalism, we reaffirm our dedication and unity to become involved citizens who have a strong desire to preserve the values that have made and continue to make America great."

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FREEMASONRY?

Simply put, the overall purpose of Freemasonry is to provide a way to help each member become a better person. We do not propose to take a bad man and make him good; rather, our aim is to take the good man and make him better. We try to place emphasis on the individual man by:

- strengthening his character;
- improving his moral and spiritual outlook;
- broadening his mental horizons.

We try to impress upon the minds of our members the principles of personal responsibility and morality, to give each member an understanding of and feeling for Freemasonry's character, and to have every member put these lessons into practice in his daily life.

Freemasonry believes in universal peace made possible by teaching its doctrine through the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God.

WHAT IS GRAND LODGE?

The Grand Lodge of Ohio is the statewide governing organization for the Masonic Fraternity in Ohio. It was formed in 1808 by six

Lodges that had been previously chartered by Grand Lodges in Eastern States.

A Grand Lodge has the power to issue and withdraw charters to local Lodges and to make the laws, rules and regulations governing them as well as their members. It is by the power of a charter that a Lodge is able to meet and initiate new members.

The Grand Lodge of Ohio meets annually in October. The members of Grand Lodge are the Grand Lodge Officers, District Deputy Grand Masters, Past Grand Masters, Past District Deputy Grand Masters and the Masters and Wardens of local Ohio Lodges.

The very first Grand Lodge was formed in London, England by four Lodges in 1717. It is with the formation of this first Grand Lodge that the modern Masonic Fraternity was created.

WHAT ARE LODGES?

The Lodge is the local organization of the Masonic Fraternity and must have been granted a Charter by a Grand Lodge. There are specific guidelines set by the Grand Lodge as to how this local Lodge may function and what it can and cannot do. These guidelines are set forth in the Grand Lodge Code.

A Lodge has two primary functions. First, the Lodge provides an opportunity for members to experience fraternal and social bonding and a means of enacting the Fraternity's tenets of Brother Love, Relief, and Truth.

Second, the Lodge initiates new members according to the time-honored ceremonies, called Degrees, and by doing so, it passes down the fraternal heritage which links all Freemasons.

THREE DEGREES OF FREEMASONRY

As part of becoming a member of your Lodge, you experienced the first three Degrees of Freemasonry. First you were initiated an Entered Apprentice. Next you were passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft, and finally, you were raised to the Degree of Master Mason.

Freemasonry has three separate initiation ceremonies because as previously mentioned, the Fraternity's symbolism is based upon the stonemasons' trade, which since medieval times has used the "journeymen system" to train its craftsmen.

According to the journeymen system, a beginner in the trade was enrolled as an apprentice. He was assigned to a master stonemason and did all the rough, unskilled work. After a designated period of time, if the apprentice proved himself, he was taught the trade secrets of a stonemason. With a full knowledge of his trade, the apprentice passed to the level of journeyman, which enabled him to receive wages for his labor. The most talented of the journeymen would eventually complete a *master's piece* as an example of their skill. The few, who were found worthy, would be raised to the level of master. Master craftsman had the authority to train apprentices and employ journeymen.

You were initiated as an Entered Apprentice as your first step towards membership in a Masonic Lodge. Here you were reminded of the importance of circumscribing your desires and keeping your passions within due bounds. Like the first stone in a building, you were placed in the northeast corner. From there you truly began your journey in Freemasonry.

After proving your proficiency, you were passed to the degree of Fellow Craft. You were instructed in the importance of education, and you learned of the importance of the letter G, not only as a symbol of Geometry but also as one of God.

Unlike in the days of the stonemasons when most men remained as journeymen, you were raised to the degree of Master Mason and at this point became a full member of your Lodge. The ceremonies of the Degree expressed the idea that death, sooner or later, over takes us all. Accordingly, we should always remember this sobering thought as we make our choices each day.

MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS

As a member of a Masonic Lodge, you are qualified to join several organizations related to Freemasonry, including the York Rite, Scottish Rite, Order of the Eastern Star, and the Shrine.

While membership in any of these organizations can be rewarding, it should never be allowed to conflict with your involvement in your Lodge, which should always be your first priority as far as the Fraternity is concerned.

MASONIC YOUTH GROUPS

The Order of DeMolay is an organization for young men between the ages of 12 and 20. The local Chapters are sponsored by Masonic Lodges and provide worthwhile activities and leadership training.

The Order of Rainbow for Girls is for young women between the ages of 11 and 20. The local Assemblies are sponsored by Eastern Star Chapters and provide wholesome activities and leadership training.

Jobs Daughters is also for young women between the ages of 10 and 20, but they must be the relative of a Mason. The local Bethels are sponsored by local Masonic Lodges or Eastern Star Chapters and also have fun activities and provide leadership training.

Each of the groups also offers college scholarships to their members.

YOUR DUTIES AS A MASON

As a member of the Masonic Fraternity, your duties will always include loyalty to Freemasonry, faithfulness to your superior officers, and obedience to Masonic laws. These are fundamental conditions of membership. In addition to these, it is expected that you will strive to be a moral and ethical person in your day to day life, always remembering the duties you owe to God, your country, your neighbor and your family.

As a Mason, it will be your duty to hold membership in a Lodge. If necessary you may transfer your membership to another Lodge. Dues should be paid promptly as an imperative condition of that membership. While the Lodge is not an organized charity, it teaches love and charity for all mankind and especially for Brother Masons, their widows and orphans. It will, therefore, be your duty to stand ready to lend a helping hand to a Brother Mason in sickness or distress and to take part in supporting the charities of your Lodge so far as your conscience will guide you and your means permit.

As a Master Mason, when you are present at your Lodge you must vote when a ballot is taken on an application for membership. Voting on prospective members is not a right or privilege to be exercised at your discretion, but an obligation and a duty. This is another way of saying that the responsibility for deciding who shall be Masons rests on every Mason. In most cases, it is impossible for all the members of a Lodge to personally know each applicant for membership. For this reason, a Lodge will assign a committee to investigate the character of each applicant and report either favorably or unfavorably regarding his application before the vote is taken. If you do not personally know the applicant, it is best to vote according to the report of the investigation committee.

You may be summoned by the Worshipful Master to attend a meeting of your Lodge for some special purpose, or to discharge some duty required of you as a Mason; unless circumstances at the time make it impossible, it will be your duty to obey. A Lodge differs from any other organization in many fundamental respects. Duties and obligations may not be laid down or taken up at pleasure, and membership is not a mere gesture of honor or an idle privilege. A member may not stand aside until an opportunity occurs to secure something from it for his own selfish purpose, nor may he evade his responsibilities by shifting his burdens to more willing shoulders. The Mystic tie that binds him to his fellows holds him fast.

If you should meet an individual outside of Lodge who claims to be a Mason, be courteous but also cautious. Sadly, it is not altogether unusual for outsiders to try and take advantage of the privileges of our Fraternity. Generally, it is not appropriate to discuss our ceremonies or exchange the means of recognition, i.e. signs, passwords, or grips, with a stranger outside of a Lodge meeting. If you identify yourself to him as a Mason and he responds that he is also, show him your current dues card and a photo ID and ask to see his.

YOUR REWARDS AS A MASON

If you go through the Degrees, receive the work, decide that Freemasonry is a fine Institution and do nothing about the teachings presented to you, then you are wasting our time as well as your own time and money. If you recognize the opportunity which is yours, take the philosophy presented to you, study it, analyze it, contemplate its meaning and apply it to your own life, then your investment of time and money will be richly rewarded.

Do not adopt a double standard of conduct, whereby you apply the principles of Freemasonry to a part of your life, but feel that they do not apply to other phases. The thoughtful Freemason will apply the teachings of our institution to each and every phase of his life,

and we sincerely hope that you will see fit to follow such a practice. This great opportunity for self-improvement is one that you should grasp to such an extent that the principles of Freemasonry will eventually spread through every facet of your life; when you do, you will have allowed Freemasonry to become one of the greatest of your personal experiences.

As a member of a Lodge, it will be your right to visit other Lodges in this or other Grand Jurisdictions, provided always that the Worshipful Master is willing to admit you after you have been properly identified. In case of sickness or distress, you also have the right to apply for relief.

ATTENDING LODGE

Attendance at your Lodge is strongly encouraged. It is through the active participation in your Lodge that you will truly learn what it is to be a Freemason. Most Lodges hold their meeting in September through June with a break in July and August that Masons call “going dark.” Lodges have regular stated meetings either once or twice a month. The regular business of the Loge is conducted at the stated meetings. Special meetings are held to initiate candidates, hold practices, or for educational and social activities. It is a good practice to try and attend at least one stated and one special meeting each month.

VISITING OTHER LODGES

As you become comfortable and at ease in your Lodge, join some of your Brothers as they visit other Lodges. It is always interesting to witness the similarities and differences between Lodges and to make new Masonic acquaintances.

If you plan on visiting Lodges on your own, be sure to commit to memory the modes of recognition (signs, passwords, and grips), the requirements of your Obligations, and always keep with you a current dues card and photo ID. Though in Ohio, only a photo ID

and a current dues card are needed to visit a Lodge, in other states, they will most likely also question you in regards to the modes of recognition and the obligations of the three Degrees. This is nothing to worry about. With a little practice, there is no reason why you couldn't pass such an examination. Also, it never hurts to inform the Tyler of the Lodge you are visiting that you are a new Master Mason.

You are eligible as well, during future travels, to visit Lodges in jurisdictions beyond the State of Ohio and even the United States borders, if you request and receive visitation privileges or are invited to attend. The broader your attendance at home and at other Lodges, the greater will be your rewards and enjoyment from the brotherhood and camaraderie that are outstanding hallmarks of Freemasonry. As in all endeavors, you will receive as much from your Masonic experiences as you put into them.

PROPER ATTIRE FOR LODGE

Proper attire is a necessity and vital factor in adding dignity and impressiveness to the conferring of Degrees and accords to the Fraternity its due and merited respect from the Officers of the Lodge or of the Grand Lodge.

Each Lodge decides the proper attire for its Officers and its members; however, there is much to be said in favor of formal dress for the Officers. Formal attire, after 6:00 p.m., consists of full evening clothes or tuxedo. As the Master is clothed, so should all the Officers be attired that the harmony of uniformity and good taste may be evident. Members of the Lodge should generally wear a sports coat and tie if not a suit.

APRONS, GLOVES, AND JEWELS

The white apron is the distinguishing badge of a Freemason. Whenever it is worn, the apron should be worn *outside* the coat. Whenever a Grand Lodge Officer or other Freemason for whom a

distinctive apron, a Past Master for example, has been designated by the Grand Lodge is present at a Masonic meeting or communication, he may wear the apron so designated.

While the Ritual specifies that our Brothers are entitled to wear their aprons in specific forms, it is common practice for Master Masons to wear them as Fellow Crafts because of the inference to our symbolic status as Fellow Crafts in life and because it is more convenient to do so. When gloves are worn in the Lodge they must be white in every instance.

When a Brother serves *pro tem* in an Office to which he has not been elected or appointed he wears the jewel of that Office. He may wear the apron or not, as local custom provides.

The jewels of Lodge Officers are made of silver or white metal. The Officer is invested with the insignia of his Office at the time of his Installation and this insignia indicates his position in the Lodge. The jewel should always be worn as a designation for a particular Office and never as a mark of distinction or private adornment.

The jewels of Grand Lodge Officers are of gold or yellow metal and are worn with the same designation as Lodge jewels. Jewels of part gold and part silver are not appropriate.

Jewels or regalia of bodies other than Grand Lodge or subordinate Lodges are not appropriate in a Lodge meeting and should not be worn therein.

PUNCTUALITY

The Master will begin Stated Meetings punctually at the time provided in the By-Laws, or set for Special Meetings. It is extremely discourteous to the Master for Officers and members not to be present prior to the appointed time. The Worshipful Master is charged with seeing that the work progresses without delay and closes at a suitable hour.

ARRIVING LATE AT LODGE

If a Brother is late, he should not request the Tyler to obtain permission for him to enter until he is properly clothed. The Tyler should inform him of the Degree on which the Lodge is opened, and the Brother should enter the Lodge Room only after the alarm is given and answered, through the door guarded by the Junior Deacon and, if the Lodge is at labor, proceed to the Altar, salute the Master with the due guard and sign, and take a seat among the Brethren. If, however, the Master is engaged and disturbing him would be disruptive to the Lodge, the Brother may instead go to the West and salute the Senior Warden, or if he is also engaged, go to the South and salute the Junior Warden.

If a late arriving Brother finds himself in the Lodge without having previously determined the Degree, a careful examination of the Great Lights will reveal the correct salute to be given.

The due-guard and sign should be given accurately, not in perfunctory or slipshod style, but in a manner to show respect for the Office to which the salutation is made. The Officer saluted may remain seated and acknowledge the salutation with a nod of his head. The due-guard and sign are never given while seated.

ANTEROOM, TYLER'S ROOM AND PREPARATION ROOM

As soon as a Brother enters a Masonic building to attend a meeting, he must subject himself to all the requirements of the most exacting Masonic conduct.

At no time, and particularly if he is late, should an arriving Brother indulge in loud talking that may be heard in the Lodge Room. His demeanor toward other Brethren in the Anteroom or Tyler's Room should be courteous, respectful, and gracious, as Freemasonry does not give any man license to take personal liberties with another. While this should be the rule of his conduct always, it is especially true if a Candidate is present, awaiting a call to the Preparation Room. To give Candidates or other Brethren the impression that

vulgar conduct, obscene stories, levity, practical joking, or other forms of disrespect are countenanced by the Craft is a misrepresentation of that for which Freemasonry stands.

The Preparation Room is never to be used as a means of access to or from the Lodge. It is for the use only of Candidates and Officers while participating in the conferring of Degrees. To permit it to be used otherwise is contrary to the explicit instructions of the Ritual. It is the duty of the Tyler and Junior Deacon to see that this rule is strictly enforced.

ADDRESSING THE MASTER OF THE LODGE

A Brother who has anything to say to the Lodge, whether it be to enter discussion or to make or second a motion, must rise to his feet, salute, and address the Worshipful Master. Note: the salute of any degree is made by giving its due-guard and sign. The step is not given.

DISCUSSIONS IN LODGE

Regulations for discussion in Lodge are stated in our Constitution, By-Laws, and Code, and conformity thereto is essential to proper conduct therein.

The discussion at any Masonic meeting or gathering of political or private business, or any other Non-Masonic subject by which men are divided into classes, or that may engender feuds, schism, or disturb the harmony of the Lodge, is at all times forbidden.

It is strictly prohibited to discuss a Candidate after the ballot on his petition has been ordered by the Lodge. When balloting, a Freemason is prohibited from disclosing how he voted when casting a ballot, or seeking to influence members to ballot one way or another.

All uses of personalities, expressions of bitterness or resentment, flippant, unseemly, or discourteous remarks addressed to the Lodge or its Officers, are condemned alike by the principles of conduct and disciplinary laws of the Craft.

ORDER IN THE LODGE ROOM

All members should behave in a seemly, gracious manner, regarding every Brother his peer; generous in attitude toward the opinions of others yet kind and firm in sincere convictions during discussions and conduct of business, always with due regard for the regulations of the Lodge and the laws of the Grand Lodge; thoughtful and attentive to Ceremonies being conducted, observing all signs and gestures of courtesy and respect that harmony and dignity may prevail. While the responsibility for maintaining order rests with the Worshipful Master, adherence to these requirements will add pleasure to the performance of his duties.

LODGE PRAYER AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF FREEMASONRY

Chaplains and others who offer prayers in Lodge and at Masonic events, sometimes forget that Freemasonry is universal, or ignore that fact and insist on their own religious terminology. The universal nature of Freemasonry should never, under any circumstances, be forgotten or ignored, even if every member present share the same religious belief. Keeping in mind the lessons learned as Entered Apprentices will better enable us to help others understand that universality in Freemasonry **means** universality—all the time. When invoking the blessings of Heaven, we must always take care to keep our references to the Deity non-sectarian, such as “God” or “Grand Architect of the Universe.”

MASONIC CUSTOMS

The customs of Freemasonry have never been prescribed in our written laws but have come down to us through the years as

traditions developed in the Lodges and refined over time. Therefore, for the sake of uniformity and convenient reference, we have sought to set out here our most important customs and usages. In principle, these customs belong to the empire of good manners, that code by which gentlemen the world over govern their conduct. However, this principle in Freemasonry is found to apply on two levels: it becomes not only a standard of respect for the Craft as a whole, but a form of courtesy for the individual as well.

Freemasonry solicits no man. However, there is no objection to encouraging “a good man and true” to seek membership. The procedure for seeking membership may be explained to a potential Candidate. After a full explanation of the Craft’s purposes and goals is made to him, he should be left to make his own decision and ask for membership of his own free will, having formed a favorable opinion of Freemasonry through the good reports of its reputation.

Harmony is the first law of the Lodge as it is of Heaven. For one man to live in unity with another is the very essence of the Fraternity. Since it is the nature of decorum to protect harmony, good conduct is the bulwark of the Craft. It is also a guarantee of equality in the treatment of the members, that equality in which each man is treated with the same courtesy as every other.

In Lodge meetings, conduct takes the form of proper decorum. Loud talk, restless moving about, laughter, flippancy, irreverence toward the Worshipful Master and other Officers of the Lodge, passing between the Altar and the East, omission of the due guard and sign, giving no heed to the business at hand, improperly entering and leaving, are all unseemly and improper behavior and are not permissible.

“You are not to hold private Committees, or separate conversation, without leave from the Master, nor to talk of anything impertinent of unseemly, nor interrupt the Master or Wardens, or any Brother speaking to the Master; nor behave yourself ludicrously or jestingly while the Lodge is engaged in what is serious and solemn; nor use any unbecoming language upon any pretence

whatsoever; but to pay due [respect] to your Master, Wardens, and Fellows.” (*Ancient Charges*, Part VI, section 1, “In the Lodge while constituted.”)

MASTER’S COVER

There is no written law requiring a Master to remain covered at all times. To wear a hat is generally recognized as a symbol of his Office and is inherently a part of the system of Masonic symbolism. Therefore it is entirely fitting that he do so. It is a token of superiority of rank or Office, a visible and conspicuous sign of his position as Presiding Officer and actual head of the Lodge. A chapeaux or fez when worn as part of a uniform in connection with the appearance of a uniformed group as guests of the Lodge are permissible only before the Lodge is opened or while it is at Refreshment and only during the period of the group’s participation.

The hat should always be removed during prayer, at the mentioning of Deity as a sign of respect, and also when giving the obligations as a token of the sacredness of the pledges being taken. It should also be removed during the reception of the District Deputy Grand Master, and/or the Deputy Grand Master and Grand Master.

EMBLEMS AND SYMBOLS

Freemasonry’s one method of teaching its principles to Candidates is by emblems, symbols, and allegories. Without these, the symmetry and completeness of the exemplification of the Degrees is not achieved, it is obvious the Lodge must see that its emblems and symbols are of correct design, well cared for, accurately located, used and explained as strictly and fully as is required by the Ritual and without private interpretation by the Lodge.

Miniature Warden’s columns may be displayed, if desired, but their proper position must be carefully maintained by the Wardens. The Senior Warden’s column is in an upright position and the Junior

Warden's is placed horizontally during labor. Their positions are reversed during Refreshment, and at such times a salute is unnecessary.

The pillars, of correct design and height, should be placed on each side of the inner door of the Preparation Room, the pillar bearing the celestial globe being on the right of the Candidate as he enters. They may be placed against the Senior Warden's platform or steps if so desired, the pillar bearing the celestial globe being on the right of the Senior Warden. During the Fellow Craft Lecture, they will always be placed as near the Preparation Room door as the Lodge Room will permit.

When Ashlars are displayed in Lodge rooms, the Perfect Ashlar is located near the Southeast corner of the Master's platform or steps, and the Rough Ashlar near the Northeast corner of the platform.

The Letter G is properly placed above the Master's chair. Lodges often have a Letter G which can be separately illuminated. Some of these Lodges illuminate it if all Freemasons present have received the Fellow Craft degree, but otherwise leave it dark. When conferring the Fellow Craft degree these Lodges often illuminate the Letter at a certain point in the G Lecture. These practices are not rules, however, and each Master will know what is fitting for his particular Lodge.

The accessories used in the Lectures should be dignified in appearance, adequate in size, correct in design, and replaced when worn by use.

The Bible should be handled with care and reverence at all times. Where its pages have become soiled or torn, they should be cleaned or the book replaced. Clear plastic sheets, can be used to protect the pages.

FLAG

The flag of the United States should be mounted in a standard placed on the Master's platform in the corner to the Master's right. When posting the colors all Brethren will rise, face the flag, stand at attention, and salute by placing their right hand over their heart.

It is improper to use the flag as drapery for the Altar, or on any chair, seat or station in the Lodge Room, or as bunting for decorative purposes.

The flag should be given precedence over the banner of the Lodge or any other banner used in the Lodge Room, in public processions, or when displayed on a Masonic building. The Ohio flag, if displayed, should be mounted in a comparable standard placed in the East in the corner of the Lodge to the Master's left. When a Lodge banner is displayed in a Lodge Room it should be placed behind the Secretary's desk.

MASONIC TITLES

In the usages of Freemasonry, "Brother" is neither a sentimental nor a familiar form of address, but it is a title, a distinction, and an honor, as much as "Worshipful Brother," "Right Worshipful Brother" and "Most Worshipful Brother," and it must always be used as such.

A member does not attend a Lodge meeting in his capacity as a private individual, but as a Freemason. For this reason, in open Lodge always refer to a Brother in the same manner as any Officer in Lodge or Grand Lodge. Harmony and dignity will be the result of faithful adherence to this simple practice.

The correct titles for Officers and past Officers are: "Most Worshipful Brother" for the Grand Master, and Past Grand Masters; "Right Worshipful Brother" for the Deputy Grand Master, Senior Grand Warden, Junior Grand Warden, Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary, Grand Chaplain, Grand Orator, Grand Marshal, Senior

Grand Deacon, Junior Grand Deacon, Grand Tyler, and present and past District Deputy Grand Masters; and “Worshipful Brother” for present Masters and Past Masters.

Always address a Grand Lodge Officer at all communications and meetings by his correct title, and he in turn must show the same courtesy to other Grand Lodge Officers present as well as to the Worshipful Master, Wardens, and Brethren. This rule of conduct must be punctiliously observed no matter what ties of family or friendship may exist. When addressing any Brother, regardless of his rank or title, good taste dictates that his surname always be used in conjunction with his title. **The use of given names or nicknames is improper during Lodge meetings, as is dropping the word “Brother” from the honorific—the form “Worshipful Smith” or “Right Worshipful Jones” is never to be used.**

RECOMMENDING A MAN FOR MEMBERSHIP

In the Charge of an Enter Apprentice you were cautioned to only recommend men for membership in the Masonic Fraternity who you were convinced will “conform to our rules; to the end that the reputation, honor and welfare of the Institution may be firmly established and the world at large convinced of its good effects.” In other words, be sure that anyone that you recommend for membership in your Lodge is of such caliber and character that his membership will reflect well upon the Fraternity. It is also necessary that he meet certain specific qualifications.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Application for membership is open to men who:

- Have been an Ohio resident for at least one year
- Are at least 19 years old
- Have a belief in the existence and perfection of God
- Live a good moral and social life
- Do not advocate the overthrow of the government

- Can read and write English
- Are recommended by two members of the Lodge they wish to join. (If he does not know two members of a Lodge, the Secretary of the Lodge to which he is applying can arrange a meeting with two members of the Lodge for him.)

The application fee is generally between \$100 and \$250, and a Lodge's annual dues are between \$25 and \$150.

INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

As an important safeguard to Freemasonry, it is recommended that a petitioner be required to answer and sign a questionnaire containing rigid and searching questions about his personal life and conduct, and his motives and objectives in petitioning. The questionnaire should be reviewed with the petitioner by an appropriate committee. Pertinent information contained in the questionnaire may be used to further the investigation. If there is anything questionable about the petitioner, the Lodge should be given the benefit of the doubt. The petitioner is the one who creates the doubt and not Freemasonry. Our first duty is to guard well our door.

Some Lodges use a permanent committee for investigation of Petitioners. One advantage of this is experience of its members. Other Lodges prefer to use a new committee for each applicant, which usually gives responsibility to more members, and if newer members are called on to serve with the older and more experienced Brethren, it becomes a valuable process of education of newer members.

Some Important Pointers

- Be on guard against a tendency to carelessness.
- Don't overlook any references—the last one may be the one needed.
- Freemasonry owes an applicant nothing.
- Ask him if he has ever been arrested, convicted or pled

- guilty to a crime and served a sentence for the crime.
- If there is a doubt, resolve it in favor of Freemasonry and the Lodge.
 - Discover whether the applicant will strengthen the Fraternity. It is not enough that “he is as good as some other Freemasons.” It is often better to lose one than to gain one who adds nothing.
 - The applicant’s family, his neighbors, his fellow workers, and his employers, usually know him best.
 - Ask yourself if the applicant would be welcomed as a trusted guest in your own home, or the homes of your members.
 - Make your final decision objectively, based on facts. Don’t allow your judgment to be swayed by sentiment or emotion.
 - Ever keep in mind that the primary purpose of Freemasonry is to inspire in its initiates, who must be men of good character and moral deportment, a desire for higher thoughts, nobler deeds, and greater achievements. We cannot hope to undertake the moral reformation of a society as whole.
 - Investigations should be so conducted that even if rejected the applicant gains higher respect for the Fraternity.

BALLOT

Except for the Holy Bible, the ballot is the most important item in the Lodge. Every Freemason owes his Lodge the duty of protecting it against unfit Candidates and every Freemason owes every petitioner a fair and impartial ballot. The upright man and Freemason, true to the traditions of the Fraternity in casting a ballot, will never allow prejudice, selfish motives, or vindictiveness to influence his behavior at the ballot box. It is strictly forbidden for a Freemason to reveal how he will or has balloted or in any way to seek to influence the ballot of other members.

EDUCATION COURSES

The Grand Lodge provides an Education Course for the enlightenment and benefit of Lodge Officers and members. The Courses are available on the Grand Lodge website at www.freemason.com.

Upon request, a Certificate will be issued from the Grand Master recognizing the Brother's satisfactory completion of the Course. Normally, the Lodge Education Officer makes the request and presents the Certificate to the Brother in Lodge.

BEWARE OF THE INTERNET

Just as you have been admonished in Lodge that not everyone you meet wearing a Masonic ring or emblem is a Mason, so too are there several web sites and blogs that are run by imposters. Many of these sites are filled with misinformation and lies about Freemasonry.

The Grand Lodge of Ohio web site www.freemason.com has links to several authentic Masonic organizations. This site is also a source for events in your area, around Ohio and educational materials that will help you improve in Masonic Education.

BOOKS TO HELP YOU GAIN MASONIC KNOWLEDGE

Numerous books have been written about Freemasonry. Several of these publications contain items that the author purports to be fact, but actually are not true. The Grand Lodge Education and Information Committee each year publishes a paper titled "Bulletin 11" that lists books that it has researched and found to be factual and worthy of your investigation. This Bulletin is given to each Lodge's Education Officer for his use in the instruction of new Brothers in his Lodge.

Publications that are currently approved are:

1. *“Freemasons for Dummies”* by Christopher Hodapp
2. *“The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Freemasonry”* by S. Brent Morris
3. *“American Freemasons”* by Mark A. Tabbert
4. *“Introduction to Freemason”* by Carl Claudy

ANNUAL DUES

Sometime in August or September of every year, you will receive a dues notice from your Lodge. It is essential that you pay your dues to the Lodge not later than its first meeting in November, which is the Annual Meeting and Election of Lodge Officers.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS

The Elected Officers of your Lodge are the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, and Tyler.

Every officer is freely elected by the members of the Lodge. However, no Brother may be elected to the office of Worshipful Master unless he has been installed as a Warden.

The officers appointed by the Worshipful Master are the Chaplain, Lodge Education Officer, Senior and Junior Stewards.

Generally, a Brother who has served with dedication as an Appointed Officer will be considered for an Elected Office of the Lodge. If he continues to serve with dedication, he will normally progress up through the officer line and eventually serve his Lodge as Worshipful Master. The exact progress from appointed to elected office varies from Lodge to Lodge.

The responsibilities of each officer are many and varied. If you are interested in serving as an officer you should review the list or

responsibilities as illustrated in the Officers Manual and discuss your desire with either the Senior or Junior Warden of your Lodge.

It is against Masonic law to campaign for any office. However, a Brother that shows his dedication to the Lodge by participating in its activities as well as learning and performing some of the various parts of the Initiation Ceremonies will no doubt be asked at some time to serve in an office.

The following is a brief description of each of the Lodge Officers and their main duties.

The Worshipful Master is the presiding officer of the Lodge. The title Worshipful is an old English title equivalent to “honorable.” The mayor of a city in Great Britain or Canada is equally likely to be called the Honorable Mayor or the Worshipful Mayor.

The Worshipful Master is completely responsible for all the actions of his Lodge. His authority is absolute, and consequently, he must have a solid understanding of the laws, customs and ceremonies of the Fraternity and act accordingly. He should be willing to seek good advice when needed and always lead and govern his Lodge with dignity, moderation, and decorum.

The Worshipful Master is responsible for opening and closing the Lodge and generally confers the Degrees upon Candidates. His station is at the East end of the Lodge room.

The Senior Warden and Junior Warden are similar to the 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents in non-Masonic organizations. The Senior Warden’s number one responsibility is to assist the Worshipful Master in his administration of the Lodge. In many Lodges, it is the Junior Warden who reports to the Lodge those members who are either sick or distressed.

The Wardens assist the Worshipful Master in the conferral of the Degrees and may give one or more of the Lectures and Charges.

The Senior Wardens' Station is in the West end and the Junior Warden's is on the South side of the Lodge.

The Treasurer is the financial officer of the Lodge. It is his duties to receive monies from the Secretary and pay them out as ordered by the Lodge. His place is generally to the right of the Worshipful Master's far right.

The Secretary records the minutes of the Lodge's meetings, writes all Lodge correspondence, and receives all monies paid to the Lodge, which he pays over to the Treasurer. His place is to the left of the Worshipful Master's far left.

The Senior Deacon acts as the official guide for Candidates during the Ceremonies of Initiation as well as receiving and introducing guests to the Lodge. His place is to the right of the Worshipful Master. However, in many Lodges, he sits along the Northeast side of the Lodge.

The Junior Deacon acts as the Lodge's inner guard. He with the assistance of the Tyler announces all Brothers seeking to enter the Lodge after the meeting has begun. His place is at the immediate right of the Senior Warden.

The Chaplain gives the prayers at the opening and closing of the Lodge and during the Initiation Ceremonies. Because Freemasonry requires that its members believe in the existence and perfection of God but not that they follow a specific religion, the prayers at Lodges are always of a non-sectarian nature. His place is to the immediate right of the Worshipful Master.

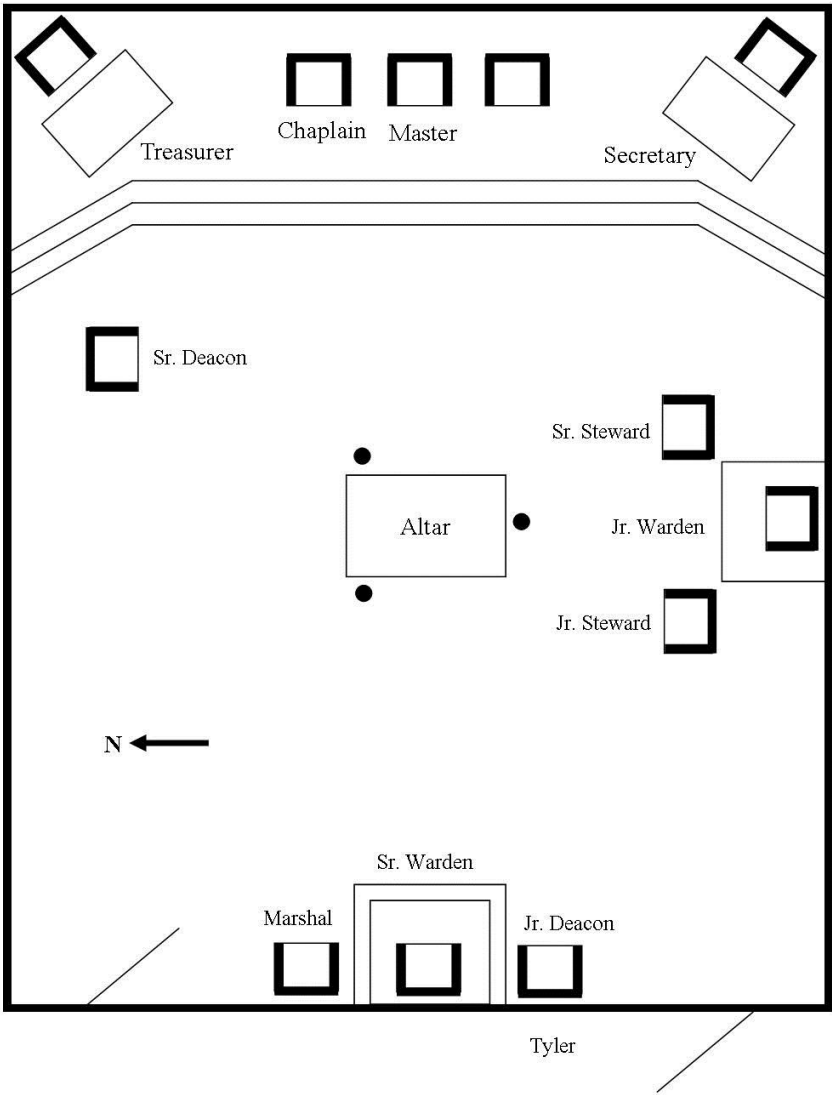
The Senior and Junior Stewards participate with the Senior Deacon in conducting Candidates during the initiation ceremonies and generally provide the meals and refreshment for the Lodge meetings. Their places are in front of the Junior Warden and to his left and right.

The Tyler is the Lodges outer guard. It is his duty to exam all visitors to the Lodge to make sure that they are Freemasons in good standing and holding a current dues card. His place is outside the main door into the Lodge room.

The Lodge Education Officer is responsible for the Masonic education of the candidates as well as the members of the Lodge. He has no assigned station or place in the Lodge.

Lastly, some Lodges choose to appoint a Marshal. The duties of the Marshal will vary from Lodge to Lodge. He is often tasked with assisting the Senior Deacon as he accommodates visitors or helps to prepare candidates for initiation.

LODGE LAYOUT



It is within the Lodge Room that all of our ancient ceremonies take place. Every item of paraphernalia within this room has a symbolic meaning, and you are encouraged to learn that meaning.

THE OHIO MASONIC HOME

The Ohio Masonic Home and its subsidiaries provide quality adult health care, retirement living and community-based services in a dignified, supportive living environment with concern and compassion for all in the name of Ohio Freemasonry. The Ohio Masonic Home is actually a collection of businesses offering services to seniors throughout the state. An asset to Ohio Freemasonry for 115 years, it offers quality retirement living and health care options for seniors ages 55-older. It operates three campuses, a charitable foundation, a financial assistance program and community service coordination.

Its campuses are: Springfield Masonic Community in Springfield; Browning Masonic Community in Waterville near Toledo; and Western Reserve Masonic Community near Cleveland. The three campuses promote independence and the “freedom to pursue your passion.” The Masonic Financial Assistance Corporation administers funds for worthy and distressed Masons living on the campuses of The Ohio Masonic Home. Masonic Senior Services assists senior Masons, their wives, widows and Eastern Star members to remain in their homes as long as possible by utilizing community-based support services. The Benevolent Endowment Foundation, Inc. is the fundraising arm of The Ohio Masonic Home, responsible for management and investment of the existing endowment assets as well as the identification and development of additional funding resources. The Ohio Masonic Home is governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees representing the Grand Lodge, York and Scottish Rites. These Trustees meet quarterly and as needed, to set policy and direction for the parent corporation.

Springfield Masonic Community is a 500-acre continuing care campus offering independent living garden villas and apartments, assisted living, skilled nursing care and Alzheimer’s/dementia-related care. There are two Residential Care/Assisted Living areas: the 48-unit Bancroft Manor and the 60-unit Hillman Manor; two independent living apartment buildings--the 41-unit Apartments at Cunningham Place and the 60-unit Iredell Gardens; and 106

independent living garden villa homes in Masonic Square. The Carl and Edyth Lindner Community Center, containing dining, social, and meeting rooms as well as a deli, provides a fine compliment to the residential accommodations as well as walking paths, a fitness center and numerous activities.

The health care division operates 190 skilled health care beds in the Rickly Building and at the Pathways Center for Alzheimer's Care. Levels of care provided include intermediate through skilled nursing, and rehabilitative, respite, and Alzheimer's care.

For additional information about Springfield Masonic Community and its services or to receive an application for residence, call (888) 290-2644 or (937) 525-3007, or go to www.ohiomasonichome.org.

The Browning Masonic Community, located in Waterville, has 450 acres with 15 independent living garden villa homes and a 50-unit independent/assisted living apartment building. The campus offers numerous activities, a fitness center and health spa, and unique social areas in a rural setting on a lake near the Maumee River yet close to city conveniences.

Browning Masonic Community, founded in 1981, is at 8883 Browning Drive, Waterville, OH 43566. For more information about the Browning Masonic Community or to receive an application for residence, call (866) 878-4055 or (419) 878-4055, or go to www.ohiomasonichome.org.

Western Reserve Masonic Community, in Medina, offers 20 homes with basements and garages, 126 independent living apartments, 25 assisted living apartments and 48 units for skilled health care. The campus boasts three lakes but is close to city conveniences. Services are available to Masons, members of their families as well as others in need of independent or assisted living accommodations or nursing care.

For additional information about Western Reserve Masonic Community or to receive an application for admission, call (866) 433-1514 or (330) 721-3000, or write to Marketing, Western Reserve Masonic Community, 4931 Nettleton Road, Medina, OH 44256.

Masonic Senior Services is designed to assist senior Masons, their wives, widows and Eastern Star members to remain in their homes as long as possible by better utilizing existing community-based support services available to them. The staff is familiar with senior-directed programs and assists senior Brethren in more effectively and successfully navigating these programs. Masonic Senior Services also offers the I-CARE program, which works with Ohio lodges to obtain community services or train lodge volunteers to support lodge members and families needing assistance in their homes. Masonic Senior Services also administers Masonic Helping Hands, which provides in-home services such as companion services and light housekeeping. For additional information about Masonic Senior Services, call toll-free (888) 286-0010, or go to www.ohiomasonichome.org.

The Masonic Financial Assistance Corporation administers funds for worthy and distressed Masons living on the campuses of The Ohio Masonic Home. The Masonic Financial Assistance Corporation (MFAC) was formed to manage the Home's financial assistance programs. The former "Asset Surrender" program was discontinued in 1995. Now, residents pay a monthly service fee for services. When individuals are unable to pay, they can seek fraternal financial assistance through the application process of the Masonic Financial Assistance Corporation.

Financial assistance is available for qualifying Ohio Masons and their wives or widows who are residents or are applying for residency at The Ohio Masonic Home campuses in Springfield, Waterville or Medina.

For more information on eligibility and how to apply for financial assistance, contact the MFAC office at 937-525-4985 or toll-free at 800-564-9016, or via e-mail at FAP@ohiomasonichome.org.

The Ohio Masonic Home Scholarship Program has been established by the Home to help eligible Masonic fraternity-related students. To qualify, a student must be making satisfactory progress in a Bachelor's, Associate's or other undergraduate degree program at a qualifying institution. For additional details and scholarship applications, call (937) 525-3009, or download the form at www.ohiomasonichome.org.

The Ohio Masonic Home Benevolent Endowment Foundation, Inc. offers a variety of programs to encourage and enable the Brethren to assist in supporting the quality care provided by The Home on all its campuses. Among these programs are: the One Grand Club, the Gold Card program, Memorial/Recognition Trees, Naming/Recognition Opportunities, the Pastoral Care/Campus Beautification and Library-Media support funds, periodic appeals for specific projects, the Jim Perry Legends Golf Classic, charitable giving seminars and a number of self-selected charitable giving programs. All these efforts support the care and programs provided to our residents.

For additional information or to learn about gift-giving opportunities available through the Foundation, call (888) 248-2664 or (937) 525-3003, or write to www.ohiomasonichome.org.

THE GRAND LODGE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

In 1962 the Grand Lodge established a committee to administer a number of scholarships to deserving and able students in selected Ohio Colleges, Universities and Theological Seminaries.

In 1964 the Grand Lodge established the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio Scholarship Foundation, tax-exempt

foundation to receive gifts and monies with which to fund the scholarship program.

The Grand Lodge Scholarship program has recently undergone a major reorganization. There is now one \$2000 scholarship available to each of the 25 Masonic Districts in the state. Applications for these scholarships are available from the District Deputies, who are also responsible for establishing a District Selection Committee. The District Selection Committee sends its recommendations on to the Grand Lodge Scholarship Committee, which makes the final selections.

The scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to individuals pursuing a secondary educational at a college, university, or vocational training school.

Lodges and members are encouraged to contribute to the Scholarship Foundation. Many Lodges have adopted the practice of making a memorial contribution to the Scholarship Foundation in the name of a deceased member in lieu of sending a floral emblem.

Contributions may be sent directly to: The Scholarship Foundation, the Grand Lodge of F.& A.M. of Ohio, 1 Masonic Drive, Springfield, Ohio 45504.

THE GRAND LODGE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

This Foundation was founded in 1994. Donations to the Foundation are placed in an endowment fund and only the interest can be used to relieve the distressed and fund charitable projects. The Charitable Foundation of the Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Ohio is a tax-deductible, 501 (c)(3) recognized foundation that accumulates contributions from Masons, their families and friends.

Contributions are regularly sent to victims of catastrophic illnesses, weather related disasters, accidents, fires, etc. Recipients need not be members of the Craft, and frequently are not.

The possible recipients are identified and recommended to the Foundation by the Lodge. Contributions to this Foundation should be regularly considered and may be sent directly to: The Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation, Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Ohio, 1 Masonic Drive, Springfield, Ohio 45504.

OHIO SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The Masons of Ohio for many years have been supporting athletes to the state Summer Games of the Ohio Special Olympics. Well over \$100,000 is contributed each year by Lodges and Brethren who hold special dinners and other events to raise money. At one time, it required \$30 to “sponsor an athlete” to the Summer Games in Columbus. Now, it costs about \$80 to bring each athlete to the Games.

Contributions may be sent directly to: the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation, the Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Ohio, P.O. Box 629, Worthington, Ohio 43085, and marked “For Special Olympics.” They will be earmarked for that purpose.

MASONIC MODEL STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Grand Lodge of Ohio has sponsored Masonic Model workshops for more than ten years. These three-day training sessions for teachers and other school personnel are intended to increase their skills at identifying “at risk” students in the classroom and intervening in their lives before the student can become a disruptive force in school or society.

Ohio is one of 27 states whose Grand Lodges are part of the Masonic Foundation for Children, which provides the instructors and expertise for the program. Since the workshops were initiated in Ohio, more than 1500 teachers from 236 schools have been trained. The Ohio Department of Education now recommends the Masonic Model program.

The costs of the program are borne by the Grand Lodge of Ohio, and in the future, it is hoped that they can be paid from the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation. Until the Foundation's Endowment Fund grows enough for that, the Grand Lodge finances the program from its operating budget. Contributions to the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation will help to fund this worthwhile effort in the future. A Lodge or group of Lodges can sponsor a program in a local school district.

INDIVIDUAL LODGE CHARITIES

Many local Lodges have established charitable funds and activities in their communities to express the values of Freemasonry on a local level. Such activities provide the opportunity for members to participate personally in the improvement of their local community. You are encouraged to take part in and support the charitable activities of your local Lodge as well as those of the District and Grand Lodge.