



The Ashlar



March 2018

Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.
www.kempsvillelodge.org

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West Gate or Revolving Door?

Retention is a serious concern in the Blue Lodge today. Roughly twenty percent of Brethren leave Masonry within one year of being raised. Forty percent are lost after five years. Equally troubling, on average roughly ten percent are active in their Lodge at any given time. Such statistics serve to remind us that, for many newly-made Freemasons, the West Gate is also a revolving door. In this era of instant communication, virtual relationships, and passive gratification through entertainment, it's no surprise that our membership is on the decline. The concepts of volunteering, serving, giving of self, and the learning of values are not as celebrated they once were.

In order to address this concern, we should examine it in context. First, what motivates a man to join our Craft in the first place? The basic reasons: wanting to belong to a group, especially one which includes family members and friends; a favorable impression of the Craft and its tenets; and the mystique of Freemasonry. There is no question that the circle of friends and family can be an incubator for future Freemasons. Overall, this can be positive. However, some initiated in our Craft have done so for the sake of simply getting family, especially fatherly approval. This group unfortunately represents a sizable number who pass through the revolving door.

Lodges receive some petitions from men, particularly younger men, who have explored aspects of Freemasonry through books, articles, the internet, and popular culture. Curiosity can be a strong motivator and can also be positive. However, curiosity wanes and some of these men also will pass through the revolving door. To address this, we must begin with a cautious pathway to the West Gate. We must look for men who possess qualities of commitment and loyalty. In society today, commitment and loyalty may seem almost old-fashioned. So how do we convey to a seeker that Freemasonry relies on the commitment and loyalty of its members? Time commitment necessary to learn his work and be involved with Lodge activities must be realistically conveyed to the seeker. Some might say, "We don't want to scare him away by talking about time commitment." That is neither fair to the seeker nor the Lodge. He must be willing to put in the required time to make his Masonic journey both meaningful and rewarding. Most seekers are aware of the strong bonds of Brotherhood in Freemasonry. Seekers must be made to understand that Masonic loyalty is quite special. It is a fuel which powers us on our Masonic journey. A seeker who cannot understand, or is uncomfortable with the concept of fraternal loyalty will not, in most cases, become a retainable Freemason.

We must do our utmost to guard the West Gate which will assist in actively managing retention. By employing our strongest tool, mentoring, we can effectively put a wedge in the revolving door. Time spent with seekers and petitioners is a valuable investment of time and fraternal goodwill. Long ago, our canny Scottish Brethren invoked a saying both wise and filled with common sense: "In every man asking to join our Craft you should see a Master of your Lodge." This begs the question: "What qualities do you look for in a seeker?"



From The East



Why is retention important? Is it because Masonic membership is shrinking? Is it because it's getting increasingly difficult for the lodge to afford our current infrastructure?

Perhaps, but I believe the answer is simple. It's because today more than ever the world really needs more Masons which makes retention not only important, but vital.

We can divide membership into three areas: new members, participation, and retention. Once a man petitions the lodge for initiation or affiliation the clock starts. It becomes our duty to follow up, engage, and make every effort to welcome him into our lodge and integrate him into our fraternity. This process involves the vouchers guarding the West Gate, Secretary for communication, and degree teams and coaches. Your lodge officers have been working to expand and enhance this process by adding a mentorship program and the Senior Deacon has taken on the role of New Member coordinator.

We also need to bring back some of our lost members. We worked hard to get them, but they left us for some reason. We need to make every effort to reconnect and reengage every lost member regardless of why they left. We are currently working on a Re-Engagement process.

I am excited about the new processes the officers and I have been working on to manage retention. Stay tuned for more information. Remember, as Masons, our actions and deeds distinguish us from the rest of the world and the world needs more Masons!

Brother Chris Anders, Worshipful Master

From The West



Corn, Wine and Oil

Corn, part of the wages of a worthy brother Fellowcraft has been the center of a controversial theory that suggest our ancient brothers, the Templars, visited the New World long before Christopher Columbus. This discussion points to the extensive use of what appears to be corn in the beautiful and ornate decoration of Rosslyn Chapel. Officially known as the Collegiate Chapel of St. Matthew was a Roman Catholic chapel in Roslin, Midlothian, Scotland. Ears of corn in addition to other interesting symbols are used throughout the architecture of

the building. Rosslyn Chapel was constructed at least 50 years before Christopher Columbus set sail.

The assumption that corn as depicted in Rosslyn Chapel and other middle age art was unique to what is now North and South America is incorrect or at least misleading. Depictions of corn or a corn-like plant have been found on the walls inside pyramids and tombs in Egypt. Corn is also mentioned in the Bible beginning in Genesis.

I have read several explanations that suggest the language in the Bible is not accurate. Corn as used in the Bible whether derived from Hebrew or Greek means any type of grain. Your humble Senior Warden suggests that corn or a close relative such as maize was a common food source plant in ancient Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East. I doubt that the corn mentioned in the Bible resembles the eight foot tall stalks with foot long ears that populate the farms and gardens today. I believe the plant more closely resembles maize which is a much shorter plant that grows almost like a weed in the southern United States and Mexico. There is evidence that corn or a corn-like plant was cultivated in ancient Egypt. Corn kernels, cobs and stalks have been found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians.

Regardless of the origin of corn, whether from the New World or elsewhere, keep in mind that our fraternity is built on symbolism and allegory. The importance and meaning of the symbol lies far beneath what can be seen from the surface. The only way we as Masons can understand that deeper meaning is through a virtuous education and a continual search for more light in Masonry.

Brother Roger Taylor, Senior Warden

From The South



It is hard to believe that we are already more than two months into the Masonic year! It has been a very busy and successful January and February and we are looking forward to all that is still to come at Kempsville Masonic Lodge in 2018.

I had the opportunity to attend the Grand Master's visit on February 3rd at the Khedive Shrine. While I was there I was stuck by how many of the over 300 brethren and their wives that I have personally come to know after being a Master Mason for just

3 years. I would never have guessed before I became a Mason that I would gain so many good friends in such a short period of time. To me these are the true Jewels of Masonry, and this would not have been possible had I not been fully involved with our wonderful Lodge and its outstanding members. I am truly proud to be your Brother.

Brother Dave Trzeciakiewicz, Junior Warden

Masonic Birthdays for March

Franklin W. Beard, Jr. '73	Christopher J. Jaeger '58
Robert Craig Belda '00	William Michael Johnson '93
Jackson Rollins Bell, Jr. '09	John Duane Johnstone '64
Orlando C. Bitanga '98	Thomas William Lang '05
Donald Ray Blair '77	Robert Lee Lankford '72
James Delbert Boone '76	Robert Dale Leonard, Jr. '05
William Edwain Combs '80	Thomas Edward Lindner '83
Michael Leroy Denning '15	Winston E. Marchman '63
James F. Dombey '11	George W. Messinger '94
Wayne Sawyer Flora '67	Robert Carl Metz '92
Ivan Godinez '16	Sidney Thomas Moore '69
George M. Harrell, Jr. '70	Gary Burke Nye '06

The Brethren shown above have a total of 736 years in Masonry!

Trestleboard

March 13	Stated Communication Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM
March 17	Coach the Coaches Training, 10AM
March 31	Monthly Breakfast, 8-10AM
April 9	James Henry Parkerson Ritual School Kempsville Lodge, 6-9PM
April 10	Stated Communication Junior Warden's Night Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM
April 14	C. Frank Hicks Ritual School Lake Drummond Lodge, 8AM-12PM
April 16	District Blood Drive, 2-7PM

For the latest, up-to-date schedule, check our web site at www.kempsvillelodge.org.

Electronic Payments Are Now Available!

The Lodge is now accepting payments and donations electronically. To access this payment option visit the lodge website and select "Payment Center" from the list on the right side of the home page. Then choose which payment you want to make by clicking the Pay Now button. This directs you to a PayPal page where you have the option to pay with a PayPal account or a Debit or Credit Card. We are currently accepting Lodge Dues

payments, Bull Roast ticket purchases, and Donations. I hope you will find this new service to be both convenient and beneficial. If you have any questions please see me or our Secretary.

Chris Anders, Worshipful Master.

Youth Report

February has been a busy month for the youth in our area. On the 3rd of February it was a day of divide and conquer. While all of the DeMolay in the area were up in Richmond for Brotherhood Weekend, where there were competitions for ritual and chess, our own Master Councilor of Kempsville Jefferson won The Ceremony of Lights competition. At the same time all of this was going on, the 56th Masonic district had their visitation from the Grand Master where the girls from Bethel 42 were helping to serve the Grand Master along with the Rainbow Girls from Norfolk. All went well and everyone had a great time.

The Girls of Bethel 42 would also like to thank everyone who came out and supported them at Buffalo Wild Wings last month. The fundraiser went great and was a success.

And just as a reminder the girls meet on the 1st and 3rd Sundays and the boys are the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. They all would like for you to come and visit.

Brother Eddie Foley, Youth Advisor

To Our Masonic Widows

Happy Birthday to our special ladies in March:

Edna St John	March 1 st
Vivian Estes	March 17 th
Kaye Peters	March 18 th
Mary Nickerson	March 22 nd
Carol Wicks	March 24 th
Mary Hawker	March 25 th
Betty Williams	March 26 th
Leona Cronemiller	March 27 th
Carol Leszynski	March 27 th
Jean Mordica	March 28 th
Sharon Nolan	March 29 th

If any of our ladies are in need of assistance from the Lodge, please don't hesitate to contact Right Worshipful Bill Knowles or the Secretary.

The Finer Points

The Constitutions of Masonry require us to observe the moral law. Masons do not follow in the irreligious paths of an atheist or agnostic. We firmly believe in God and worship Him as the great Architect of the Universe.

Masons are to be good men and true - men of honor, integrity, and honesty; we vigorously reject all forms of bigotry. It is our duty to follow that golden rule, of "Doing to all men as we would have all men do unto us and those we love."

Monthly Breakfast



The January Monthly Breakfast was a huge success as Brethren, family, and friends came out in record numbers for the great food and fellowship.

Masonic Lexicon

Mount Hermon: In Arabic, Jabal al-Shaykh ("Mountain of the Sheikh") or in Hebrew, Har Hermon. It is a mountain cluster whose summit straddles the border between Syria and Lebanon

and, at 2,814 meters (9,232 feet) above sea level, is the highest point in Syria. Psalm 133:3 makes specific reference to the abundant dew formation upon Mount Hermon from whose snowy cap, when all the surrounding country is parched, the refreshing dew descends upon the mountains of Zion. (Source: Wikipedia)

Final Thoughts...

"Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold and silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are in the dealings with one another; sympathy begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness begets helpfulness, and these are the wages of a Mason."

Benjamin Franklin

Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master	Chris Anders	635-7617
Senior Warden	Roger Taylor	478-5498
Junior Warden	Dave Trzeciakiewicz	620-8311
Treasurer	Bill Nelligar	536-4100
Secretary	Bob Stanek	255-8336
Senior Deacon	Mike Denning	651-0712
Junior Deacon	John Settle, III	675-9695
Senior Steward	Todd Moissett	604-3085
Junior Steward	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Chaplain	Justin Gray	338-7218
Musician	R. Scott Foxwell	536-1659
Marshal	Scott Sherman	597-1150
Tiler	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Instructor of Work	Tom McGowan	497-3881
Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144

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