

Walkabout

By Edward Peters

This Short Talk has been printed with permission from "The Grand Masters Eye Opener" a publication of the Grand Lodge of Canada in The Province of Ontario. It is actually a talk given to the Candidates at the conclusion of the Entered Apprentice Degree. This talk was prepared by R W. Bro. Edward Peters a Past District Deputy Grand Master in Ontario.

The officers stations and jewels will not be the same in every jurisdiction but the talk can certainly be changed to conform to the custom and practices of your own jurisdiction.

It is not ritual, but merely an informal presentation of some very valuable and useful information to the candidate.

Editor

When I first became a Mason, it was a good number of months before I understood the function of each officer and the various furnishings about the lodge. So, tonight, we are going to show you around, so to speak, in the hope that when you come to the lodge next month, you will feel comfortable and more at home amongst your brethren.

This area of the lodge is known as the "East" and it will come as no surprise to you that our Master sits in the east, since all learning emanated from the east. Our Master is elected by the brethren of the lodge for a period of one year. He is the "boss", and the well ruling of the lodge is in his hands. You will notice that the Master's jewel is the square and, as you have already learned, the square and the compasses represent the whole craft.

To his right is the Immediate Past Master; he was the Master last year. He has an important function in that, since he made all the usual mistakes that a Master can make during his year in office, he is now in the position of being able to correct the Master, give him his opinions and advice and prompt him as necessary. The IPM's jewel is the square from which is suspended a geometrical design of historical significance to the Mason. To the Master's left is a chair which is reserved for any dignitary who might visit, or anyone else within the lodge of Master's rank or higher, whom the Master might invite to sit beside him.

The area to the right of the Master is reserved for Past Masters or visiting Masters from other lodges, while the area to his left is reserved for Grand Lodge Officers.

Masonry, like any business, has a Head Office and a President. Our Head Office is in (use location of your own Grand Lodge office), and our President is the Grand Master

_____ The brethren who are responsible for Masonry in each Jurisdiction across the country, are what we refer to as Grand Lodge Officers and they are either elected or appointed to Grand Lodge. You will notice that they wear very colorful regalia and they are the wise men of Masonry. They keep a close eye on proceedings and when I get finished this evening they will not be reticent to point out any errors which I may have made during this presentation.

Here we have the Secretary and no business or organization could get along without a secretary and, it is certainly no different in Masonry. The lodge secretary performs a myriad of duties and is critical to the success and the well-running of the lodge. His jewel is the crossed goose quills, which, in early times, were used to transcribe the proceedings. It is one of his duties to keep a written record of all meetings. As a matter of fact, the first meeting ever held in my lodge in (insert date) was duly recorded by the secretary of that day and is available in the archives. In like manner, the events of this evening are being recorded together with your name, and will go down in the minutes as part of our lodge history Next to the Secretary is the Treasurer. It is his responsibility to look after the accounts of the lodge and to record all receipts and expenditures For example he will record the dollars of which you were relieved this evening. His Jewel is the crossed keys which have reference to the coffers or strong box in which the resources of the lodge were kept in years gone by.

Here we have the Junior Warden. The Junior Warden and the Senior Warden (point to him), along with the Master, are the principal officers of the lodge and they will normally progress from one chair to the next. In this way then, the Junior Warden, if he behaves himself and keeps his nose clean, will probably be elected Senior Warden next year and the Senior Warden will likewise be elected to the Master's chair. The Junior Warden's jewel is the plumb, which is the emblem of uprightness.

On each side of the Junior Warden sit the Stewards. Their Jewel is the cornucopia or "Horn of Plenty" It is the emblem assigned to the Stewards because of their function in administering to the brethren at the hours of refreshment The Junior Stewards chair is the first chair in the Lodge as one proceeds upward to the Master's.

Here we have the Senior Warden, whom I have already referred to. He has a similar function to the Junior Warden in assisting the Master in the well-ruling of the Lodge. His jewel is the Level, the emblem of equality. You are already well acquainted with the Junior Deacon, as he was the Mason who guided you around the lodge-room tonight during your degree. We have both a Junior Deacon and Senior Deacon (point to him), and they both have similar functions in the various degrees as they assist the Wardens and the Master in the actual duties of the lodge. Their jewels depict a dove and alludes to the dove which was released by Noah and returned to the ark with an olive branch.

You also know something about the Outer Guard (Tiler in many lodges) and the Inner Guard, since they were the first people you met when you were about to enter the lodge. The Outer Guard is responsible to see that none but Masons get into the lodge room and the Inner Guard has a similar function. The Inner Guard's Jewel is the crossed swords and the Outer Guard's Jewel sports a single sword. They recall the "flaming sword" placed, after Adam's fall, at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to keep all intruders away from the "tree of life".

The Director of Ceremonies (Marshal in many Lodges) is responsible to see that the ceremonies and degrees are well rehearsed and that the brethren know their work to the credit of the lodge. You will often see him with a furrowed brow and sweaty palm as he watches the degree work and probably sees things which you wouldn't notice but which, in his desire to achieve perfection keeps his worry-level high. His emblem or jewel is the crossed rods, depicting the marshal's baton originally the officer in charge of the king's horses but which has come to have certain ceremonial duties in respect to the marshaling of processions. The Director of ceremonies also attends to any ceremony in which the lodge might be involved.

The Organist is responsible for the music of the lodge and his jewel is the Lyre

The Chaplain looks after the spiritual side of our meetings and his jewel is the volume of the Sacred Law mounted on a triangle

This is the altar which you will find in every Masonic lodge It is the center of the building On the altar lies the V.S.L. This book can be different depending upon where the lodge IS situated in the world, and will always allude to the beliefs of the brethren in that particular area. It is not uncommon for more than one book to be on the altar, depending on where we are. For example, if you were to go to lodge in Jerusalem you would find four books upon the altar, alluding to the various beliefs in that city. It is important to know that everything which we do in Masonry emanates from the V.S.L. lying here on the altar, and it is the focal point of Masonry.

Here we have what we refer to as the rough and the perfect ashlar. (point to them) Now, as you begin your Masonic journey, you have been likened to the rough ashlar, which, you will notice, has some form, but is still very rough. This alludes to the fact that you have been investigated and your brethren have determined that you are a fit and proper person to become a Mason. Now begins the work – using our Masonic tools, of chipping away all that you do not need to be a Mason among men. Eventually, this rough ashlar will become more like the one we see across the lodge room, and which we refer to as the perfect ashlar. Masonry does not add anything to you as a man, but rather takes away anything that you do not need. Masonry then, is a journey which you have begun tonight. A journey, if you like, that takes you from the "rough ashlar" to the "perfect ashlar". Masonry is not something that you arrive at, but rather Masonry is something that is ongoing and in which you will spend the rest of your life aspiring to perfection. However, if you look closely at the "perfect ashlar", you will see that it is not "perfect", because nothing in this mortal world is perfect. We spend our lifetime as Masons, as I

have said, aspiring to perfection until, eventually we leave this world and go to the Grand Lodge Above.

You will get out of your Masonic journey in relationship to what you are prepared to give of yourself and your talent. It is my hope, and the hope of the brethren here assembled tonight, that you will continue your Masonic journey, that you will take your obligations seriously and that you with the help of your brethren will make a place for yourself in Masonic circles.

Congratulations and best wishes to you, brother.

NOTE: The "Walkabout" is given immediately following the EA degree and is intended to be a general explanation of the "chairs" and the lodgeroom. Take the candidate by the left arm and commence an informal walk around the lodge.

When referring to the Officer's jewels, have the appropriate jewel held up in order that the new brother may see what is being explained.

Keep the entire procedure in a "light" vein and introduce some humor where possible.

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