

## WALK AROUND THE LODGE

.W. BILL MARKS, WOODLAWN LODGE NO. 131 GLNS

### 1.WALK AROUND THE LODGE

(A)Rough Ashlar - (on left when facing Master)

A stone from the quarry before squaring, a symbol of untutored man.

Perfect Ashlar - (on right when facing Master)

A stone squared and smooth, symbol of enlightened manhood.

Perfection is here attained by a process of taking away; no stroke of gavel or chisel can add anything to a rough ashlar, it may only remove. Perfection, then, is already in.

The famous sculptor, Gutzon Borglun, himself a Freemason, when asked how he carved stone into statues, answered:

"It is very simple. I merely knock away with hammer and chisel the stone I do not need and the statue is there .... it was there all the time."

All that is required is to remove the roughness by "divesting our hearts and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life" to show forth the perfect man and Mason and to find the kingdom of heaven within.

(b)Warrant

Is the document given to brethren who are members of a "lodge under dispensation" (that is permitted to meet as a lodge by the Grand Master) when such a group becomes an actual lodge. Charters or Warrants are given only by

Grand Lodge and usually after a lodge under dispensation has demonstrated its fitness to receive that document.

The Charter or Warrant sets forth the facts, names the first Master and Wardens, authorizes the group to be and to act as a regular lodge under the Grand Lodge granting the Charter. Charters are a necessity for any regular and recognized lodge before it can begin work.

In the Ritual, when opening the lodge, the Senior Warden tells the Worshipful Master that he was made a Mason "within the body of a just and duly constituted lodge of Master Masons, assembled in a place representing the unfinished Sanctum Sanctorium of King Solomon's Temple furnished with the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses, together with a warrant or dispensation from some Grand Body of Competent Jurisdiction empowering it to work."

#### (c) Columns

These are symbols of stages of lodge activity, i.e. at labour or at refreshment. As the Senior Warden is charged with assisting the Worshipful Master in opening and closing the lodge and paying the Craft their wages if any be due, he is the dominant Warden when the lodge is at labour. When the lodge is at labour, his column is standing upright. The Junior Warden is charged with superintending the Craft during refreshment. His column is placed in an upright position when the lodge is at refreshment. When not in the upright positions, the columns are laid down or inclined.

#### (d) The Great Lights

The Great Lights are the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses.

The Square and Compasses are utilized to show the degree the lodge is working at.

In the first degree or Entered Apprentice degree, both points of the compasses are below the square. This means that both points are to be hidden from view.

In the second or Fellowcraft degree, one of the points is above the square while the square hides the other point from view. It doesn't matter which point is kept hidden.

In the third or Master Mason degree, both points of the compasses are above the square. Since both points are in full view, it does not matter where the square is situated under the legs of the compasses. The usual custom is a little lower than mid-point.

The Holy Bible must be opened at particular sections for each of the degrees.

1st degree - Psalm 133

2nd degree - Amos 7, verses 7 and 8

3rd degree - Ecclesiastics 12, verses 1 to 7

These are the passages that are recited when the candidate is being led blindfolded in his circumambulations around the lodge during each of the degrees.

At the Worshipful Master's or Junior Warden's order to disarrange the Great Lights, the Senior Deacon should merely remove the square and compasses and lay them on the Altar. The Holy Bible should not be closed as this is only done when the Worshipful Master gives the order to "close the Great Lights".

A note of caution: Brethren do not walk between the Altar and the East when the lodge is at labour, except when degree work is being performed. This is because the Master is supposed to have the Great Lights constantly in view.

The custom is rooted in a fundamental conception of the Craft - that the Altar is the centre of Masonry and that from it and the Great Lights it bears, flow all that there is of Masonic inspiration and truth and light.

## 2.DISCUSSION AND DEMONSTRATION OF PROPER USE OF THE SIGN OF FIDELITY

As recommended by the Board of Ritual and adopted by Grand Lodge at Amherst in June 1980, the following are the approved usages of the Sign of Fidelity:

(a)The sign of Fidelity is given by placing the palm of the right hand over the heart.

(b)It is a tri-functional sign. It is a sign of acknowledgement, of respect, and of reverence.

(c)Its use:

(i)TO STAND ON: When the sign is to be held for a considerable time.  
-on being charged (only the recipient stands on the sign)

-at prayer

-on displaying the Great Lights

-on closing the Great Lights

-during the obligation of a candidate or brother

-at certain times during a Masonic Funeral Service

-during the recitation of the obligation in a re-dedication service in Lodge

(ii)GIVING: When the sign is given, held for a moment and then dropped.

-on being addressed by the Worshipful Master, or the Senior Warden or the Junior Warden

-on completion of the act of voting

-by the Senior Deacon before opening the Great Lights

(d)It is not to be given unless dressed in regalia.

Some of the common misuses:

(i)Rising in open lodge to address the Worshipful Master (other than when addressed first by the Worshipful Master). The correct signs to be used are the due guard and penal signs of the degree on which the lodge is working.

(ii) On opening and closing of the lodge when the Junior Warden is passing on the Worshipful Master's order about taking due notice of the opening or closing, brethren should not stand on the Sign of Fidelity all the time the Junior Warden is speaking.

(iii) The Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden should not stand on the Sign of Fidelity when addressing each other or the brethren when opening, closing or recessing the lodge.

### 3. PROPER DISPLAYING OF THE SIGNS - THEIR USE AND THE FOOT WORK ACCOMPANYING

The correct position of the due guard is the position of the hands while taking the obligation of each degree. (Demonstration).

The due guard and penal signs are two separate signs and thus the hands should be dropped to the sides following the due guard before commencing the penal sign.

The due guard **and** sign are **always** to be given as a salutation to the Worshipful Master on entering or retiring from lodge and on rising to address the Worshipful Master in lodge. The correct signs are governed by the degree in which the lodge is working.

When approaching the Altar to salute the Worshipful Master, brethren should stop one pace short of the spot where they will make their salute. They should then step forward on the step of the degree at which the lodge is open and give the appropriate due guard and penal sign.

Likewise, when rising to address the Worshipful Master, the appropriate due guard and penal sign should also be accompanied by the proper step.

**Where room permits**, on closing the lodge the brethren should step forward from the south, west, north and east and form a square. Their steps to form this square should be in unison with the three principal officers and on the steps of the three degrees. When the Worshipful Master asks the Senior Warden,

"How should Masons meet?", his answer should be accompanied by the grasping of the level and taking a step as an Entered Apprentice. The Junior Warden's response to "How should Masons act?", should be accompanied by the grasping of the plumb and continuing the step into that of a Fellow Craft. Similarly, on the Worshipful Master's declaration of "And part upon the square", he should grasp the square and complete the step as a Master Mason.

#### 4. THE INNER DOOR - PROPER SECURITY BY THE TYLER AND INNER GUARD

The seriousness of guarding the lodge is forever laid down in Landmark Eleventh and By-law 5(i) of Woodlawn Lodge No. 131. (Applicable Landmark and By-law to be read.)

This means just what it states. No one without the Master's permission can leave or enter the lodge hall. The Tyler has no way of knowing whether a person coming through the door from within has the Worshipful Master's permission. It is only through being told by the Inner Guard following proper battery on the door that he should allow any one to "re-pass" the door. Similarly, the Inner Guard has no way of knowing who is coming through the closed door from outside unless the Tyler tells him. Even then he should not open the inside door until he has the permission of the Worshipful Master to attend to the alarm.

Most of the problems in this area are from truly legitimate reasons to exit the lodge room, i.e. secretary attending to candidates and brethren during degrees, deacons passing to refreshment areas to collect "Sunshine Funds", and stewards to prepare refreshments. Each of these exits and returns to/from the lodge room should be via proper exchange between the Inner Guard and Tyler.

The other exit to lodge room, normally only used during degree work, leads to a preparation room which is still considered part of the lodge and which can still be protected by the Tyler. This door should never be used for brethren to enter or exit a lodge which is at labour!

## 5.HOW TO WORK YOUR WAY INTO A LODGE WHERE YOU ARE UNKNOWN AND NOT ABLE TO BE VOUCHERED FOR

The right of visitation is one of the greatest rights and privileges that Freemasons enjoy. This right is enshrined forever in Landmark Fourteenth which I shall now read to you.

While it is a right of a Mason in good standing to visit a regular lodge, it is also the responsibility of the lodge being visited to ensure that the person seeking admission is a Mason. This responsibility is prescribed in Landmark Fifteenth and also in Section 31 of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia which I shall now read to you.

Every newly made Master Mason at some time desires to visit another lodge other than his Mother Lodge. Perhaps he is in a strange city and desires friendly contact or goes on purpose to another town just to see if he can "work himself in". He may be visiting a friend in another Province and would like to go to lodge with him and must take an examination.

The questions that probably pop into his mind are: What have I the right to expect? How should I act? and, What must I know?

He has a right to expect (and usually receives) a courteous, kindly examination at the hands of a committee of brethren who are glad he has honoured their lodge with his visit.

He should act as any brother will always act with brethren; his attitude should be that of a guest calling upon a host, not a criminal being examined to see if he should be hanged or not.

He must know enough of Masonry to satisfy his hosts that he is a Mason (and should need to know more). He must be prepared for differences in ritual as these can vary from province to province and country to country. In fact, within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, there are two lodges which work under different rituals than all the rest. Fundamentally, all the rituals deal with the same three degrees but words, customs and practices may differ.

All committees in all Grand Jurisdictions will want to know of the brother's knowledge of what makes him a Mason. Some will do it by a quick means, while others might be slightly more devious, but all in all the end result is the same.

Perhaps, most importantly, a visitor should be able to present some credentials showing that he is in good standing in his home lodge. These vary among Grand Jurisdictions but should include a receipt for dues, a dues card, a good standing card, a travelling certificate, and in some cases, a certificate or document indicating life or honorary membership.

When a visitor first approaches a strange lodge for the purpose of seeking admission, he should approach the tyler and explain his circumstances and request an examination by committee.

The tyler usually will ask to see some proof of good standing in a recognized lodge. When this is presented, he contacts the Master to form a committee or, in some lodges where there is a perpetual visitors committee, he will approach the chairman of that committee.

A committee of two or three, appointed by the Master, takes the visitor to a private room where they mutually take the "Tyler's Oath". The visitor is not expected to have this oath memorized; it will be given to the visitor in the same manner that the obligations of the three degrees are given to candidates.

Once the requirements for credentials and the Tyler's Oath have been satisfied, the committee asks questions. Here the practice is as varied as the masons on the committee and vary from committee to committee.

The committee's duty is single, to find out if the visitor is a Mason. It is not their duty to ascertain how much he knows or how well he knows it. Their duty is simple and solely to protect their lodge from one who is not a Mason.

With no attempt to lay down any rules, it may be said that a visitor who can explain the several modes of recognition, knows the necessary words and can give the substance, if not the words, of the obligations can usually satisfy most committees.



The committee that is satisfied will delay as little as possible in taking the visitor into the lodge and introducing him to the Master and brethren. The chairman of the committee should ensure that at the earliest opportunity the brother should meet as many of the brethren as possible.

Distressing tales are sometimes told by warm-hearted visitors of cold-hearted lodges which are too busy to pay any attention to strangers within their lodges. But such tales, thankfully, are few and far between.

It is one of the glories of the Fraternity that a stranger in a strange land is no stranger in the Masonic lodge he visits. That committee which most quickly is able to make him feel welcome and at home best serves not only their own lodge but all of Masonry.