Interesting Arrangement Being Attempted for Indiana NPDs

The Grand Lodge of Indiana is forming Restoration Lodge UD to gain some control over the ever-present problem of suspension of a member because of non-payment of dues (NPD). Grand Master Carl E. Culmann’s solution is to create Restoration Lodge UD where a suspended member will be placed for up to two years while his suspension and membership is verified.

While other Grand Lodges have used different methods to determine if the status of a member should be changed, this may be a new approach. Volunteers will contact the Restoration Lodge UD members and assist them in maintaining their Masonic membership.

There are many reasons why a member doesn’t pay his dues. It may be that his financial condition doesn’t allow him to continue membership. He could apply to the lodge for relief, but that often is an embarrassing position to be put into, and he might find it easier to say nothing.

If a Brother has become elderly and frail, his supporting relatives may find this expense an undue hardship and refuse to pay the dues bill. Still, others have moved into nursing homes where HIPPA regulations prohibit his health and address information from being forwarded to the lodge. Many times a lodge just can’t locate the Brother who still owes dues.

It is important that a Brother’s family know his wishes. He may think he is still in good standing, but the person who pays the bill disregards it because they don’t understand the significance of membership.

For most Brothers, the importance of being a Mason goes far beyond lodge attendance. The essence of the three degrees leaves such an indelible mark that they influence his life in such a way as to render him a different and better person. In some jurisdictions, a Brother is told he had “assumed obligations designed to make a lasting impression upon your mind and to serve as an uplifting and ennobling influence upon your life and character.” For many, simply taking the degrees is the only time they attend lodge, but they still consider themselves just as much a Mason as a regular attendee or a lodge officer might.

When a Brother becomes at risk of being suspended for non-payment of dues, lodges are obligated to contact him and ascertain his condition and true motives. This necessity is often very difficult, time-consuming, and many times impossible.

Some statistics have shown the average Masonic age of one who is suspended is seventeen years. The mode or most common Masonic age is likely three years. A man becomes a Mason, doesn’t pay his dues, is carried by the lodge for one or two years, and then is dropped for non-payment.

A study several years ago by Dr. S Brent Morris at the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite showed many Brothers suspended didn’t know it and thought they were still in good standing. Around 20+% of the NPD Brothers wanted to reinstate but needed to know how. Maybe the Restoration Lodge UD is the way to go and a model for other Grand Lodges to follow. Maybe the Grand Lodge of Indiana will gain helpful experience in dealing with suspensions from men who want to be able to remain Masons.

FUNDING FOR “EMESSAY NOTES” HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE SUPREME FOREST TALL CEDARS OF LEBANON
Audio Short Talk Bulletins: Please Donate

Previously, Brother Michael A. Smith, a member of the Grand Lodge of Maine, has been recording Short Talk Bulletins and charged a fee. Now he is making them available at no cost. His only request is for a few Brothers to make a donation.

By the end of January twenty-nine Short Talk Bulletins had been made available. These make great presentations at a lodge meeting and often spur discussions. Many of the Bulletins are recorded by the original author.

It’s one thing to read a Short Talk Bulletin, but it’s another to hear it read with the original speech patterns of the original presenter. MW Casey Hood is a prime example. As good as his writing is, it’s even better when heard with his Kentucky accent.

One can feel the emotion of Elizabeth Meldrum, Miss Job’s Daughter of Virginia, 2016–2017. Laugh, cry and contemplate the feeling in her voice as she describes her family’s connection to Freemasonry and what it means to her.

Soon, hopefully, lodges will be contributing a small amount to keep these talks being produced. They are the perfect supplement to the monthly Short Talk Bulletin put out by MSA. Maybe your lodge can find a small amount to contribute, or maybe you can do it for them.

Please go to www.shorttalkbulletin.com for a complete listing of available Bulletins, and an easy way to donate to them.

Pennsylvania Freemasons Remember the World War I

The November 2018 issue of Pennsylvania Freemason has a wonderful series of articles remembering the First World War and Freemasonry’s connection to it. Masonic Heroes of World War I, World War I Firsts, The Masonic Connection to the American Legion, and Pennsylvania Freemasonry During The Great War.

A subheading about the Masonic Service Association reads, “In June 1919, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania joined with other Grand Lodges in the United States and created the Masonic Service Association as a national unified effort for charity and good. The first annual meeting of the Masonic Service Association was held on the first anniversary of the end of “The Great War,” Armistice Day, November 11, 1919. The nation was divided into service zones, and R.W. Past Grand Master Louis A. Watres was placed in charge of the North Atlantic zone.”

MSA continues to have regional zones or “divisions.” Do you know who the Division Commissioner for your jurisdiction is? Find out at www.msana.com.

Where Did One Hundred and One Questions About Freemasonry Come From?

One of MSA’s more popular digests is One Hundred and One Questions About Freemasonry. It originated after see the Grand Lodge of Minnesota’s Minnesota Counselor’s Guide. Grand Master Ed Halpau helped us remember in his Grand Master’s column about Alcoholic Beverages in the January/February 2019 edition of The Minnesota Mason and available online at www.mn-masons.org/minnesota-mason-newspaper. Thank you, Grand Master!

Where Can You Find the Answer to This Question?

What is the only lodge to have ever been active, sequentially, in both what was United States territory and Canadian territory? This doesn’t include Golden Lodge No. 5, Stanstead, Canada which at one time straddled the international border between Canada and the United States.
- The answer can be found on the MSA website, www.msana.com.