

T.F.S.
Three, five, and seven
3 5 7

By Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer.
Number 174 – July 01. 2010

This publication, while it is printed with the permission of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of A.F. & A. M. of Minnesota, contains the writings and opinions of Ed Halpaus and is not in any way the opinion of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota.

“Anyone who in discussion relies upon authority uses, not his understanding, but rather his memory.” Leonardo Da Vinci

Dear Masonic Student,

For quite some time I have advocated and promoted the idea of Lodges organizing Masonic discussion Groups: I truly believe that a Masonic Discussion Group will enhance the enjoyment a Mason will experience in his Masonic journey and personal life. One of the best ways to learn about Masonry is from other Masons in a good discussion group. Not every Freemason will want to become involved in a discussion group, but there are some who would really enjoy it. Discussion groups are for those who want to participate.

Discussion groups are strictly voluntary. They can range from the very informal to structured but, all that is needed is one Brother to act as a facilitator to get the ball going and to help us all stay on the subject; participants can rotate as the facilitator so no one is expected to do that all the time.

I like discussion groups. I had the great pleasure to be invited to sit in one recently when I visited a Lodge in St. Paul. It was a fine time, and it didn't seem to take long, but the fellowship and the information from all the Brethren present was simply great; I think we all learned from each other, I know I certainly learned from the other participants.

A Masonic discussion group doesn't have to be a certain number of Masons, it can be just 2 or 3 interested Brothers, if there are 5 or more that's better. A discussion group can be held in a Lodge building, but I would suggest not in the Lodge room, either with or without some refreshments. Or it could be held in a café or restaurant where a table of Masons could comfortably just visit about our great fraternity and all it has to teach us.

Some time ago I was invited to participate in a discussion group and a fine restaurant and bar after visiting a Lodge in Duluth. We had about 8 or so and we had a great time discussing Masonry and enjoying great Masonic fellowship. We all had what we wanted to have for a late night snack and beverage, and appetizers were being shared as well as information regarding Masonic education. It is in settings like this where fellowship and Masonry happens.

More recently I was involved in a fine Masonic discussion with a friend and Brother that was equally enjoyable and informative. A discussion group truly can simply be two or more Masons learning from each other.

For those of us who like the Internet, there are Masonic discussion groups we can participate in via the computer to discuss Masonic topics with other Masonic Students from around the world. I'm a member of a number of them, and enjoy them all. Some members of the group are more active than others: That's the nice thing about discussion groups; if you want to listen and learn, (or in the case of a computer discussion group,

simply read the messages going forth and back,) that's O.K. But if you feel you have something to add to the conversation the other participants are very happy to hear what you have to say.

The Masonic Discussion Groups I belong to via the Internet are:

Esoterism; Mased; Masonic Brothers; PHA Research; Philaethes; The Lost Word.

These are all on Yahoo Groups, which you can reach through <http://groups.yahoo> Plus there are many other groups in Yahoo Groups you could join to enjoy Masonic discussions.

I'm partial to the Philaethes Discussion Group: I've been a member of it the longest; I'm a life member of the Philaethes Society; and was recently elected as Executive Secretary of the Philaethes Society. But I've enjoyed it from the beginning.

Some of the above groups are for the initiated only, and some are for Masonic Students initiated or not. When you go to the Yahoo Groups page you can read the requirements to participate in each group.

One, The Philaethes' is for members of the Philaethes only, so when you're on that discussion group you know you're talking about Masonry with Masons. Plus all participants are members of the society, and you have the opportunity to discuss Masonry and Masonic topics with knowledgeable Masons from all over the globe. It truly is an international Masonic Research Society, and it certainly is the premiere research society in North America.

If you're a member of the Philaethes Society and would like an invitation to join their Internet discussion group, just send an email to Brother Jack Buta, 1st V.P. of the Society, at smilinjack@cableone.net. If you're not yet a member you can simply go to www.freemasonry.org to learn more about the Society, as well as to join us as a seeker of truth and light.

No matter where there is a Masonic Discussion Group, whether it be in a Lodge (even if it's not your Lodge), at a café or restaurant after a Lodge meeting, a simple one with just a few Masons in a Brother's family room or back yard, a more organized one, such as a Philaethes Chapter, (there's one forming in the St. Paul and Minneapolis metro area,) or one of the many that are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week via the Internet, you will increase your happiness in Masonry by your participation.

If you would like to get a group going in your Lodge or elsewhere and would like some ideas on what to introduce as topics you could go to www.lodgebuilder.org and look at the Masonic Monday Questions archived there for some ideas to discuss. These are also on the web site for the Grand Lodge of Minnesota (www.mn-masons.org) under education resources as are old issues of T.F.S., which would also serve as a resource for discussion topics.

One of the best ways to learn about Freemasonry and all it has to teach us is from an interested knowledgeable Brother Mason in a discussion group; it's a great place to help mentor a brother and to be mentored by a Brother.

Beginning a Masonic Discussion Group is not a difficult thing to do, and it is a lot of fun for a Mason!

“A philosopher who is not taking part in discussions is like a boxer who never goes into the ring.”
Ludwig Wittgenstein

Words to live by: “Good fellowship and friendship are lasting, rational and manly pleasures.” William Wycherley - 1640-1716, British Dramatist

From volumes of Sacred Law:

What good fellowship we enjoyed as we walked together to the house of God. Psalm 55:14 Takankh – Old Testament NLT

One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the discussion. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Mark 12:28 New Testament NLT

All who obey God and the apostle are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of God, - of the prophets (who teach), the sincere (lovers of Truth), the witnesses (who testify), and the Righteous (who do good): Ah! What a beautiful fellowship! Qur'an 004:069 Yusuf Ali Translation

Please remember: if you would like to participate in the latest Masonic Monday Question, please go to <http://www.lodgebuilder.org> and click on the Lodge Education forum. When you have an answer send it to masonicmonday@gmail.com the Masonic Monday Question for the week of 06/28/10 is: **When and where was the 1st Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star for Black Women established – And what was the name of the Chapter?**

“We will win the world when we realize that fellowship, not evangelism, must be our primary emphasis. When we demonstrate the Big Miracle of Love, it won't be necessary for us to go out -- they will come.” Jess Moody

More Light – Mehr Licht ©, Masonic Matters © and T.F.S. ©, are sent out by Email at no charge to anyone who would like to receive them. If you enjoy these publications please share them with others. To subscribe to these publications just send an E-mail to erhmasonic@gmail.com with Subscribe in the subject line and you will be added to the list to receive the publications.

“One of the signs of passing youth is the birth of a sense of fellowship with other human beings as we take our place among them.” Virginia Woolf

The newest Education video from the Grand Lodge of Minnesota can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAcUiBn8xI0>.

TFS & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed's Face Book page; <http://www.facebook.com/ed.halpaus> - <http://halpaus.blogspot.com> - <http://www.mn-masons.org>

Please remember – Ed's new email address is erhmasonic@gmail.com the old one is going away.

With “Brotherly Love”,

Ed Halpaus

Grand Lodge Education Officer

Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:

It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!