

T.F.S.
Three, five, and seven
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By Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer.
Number 178 – September 01, 2010

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“Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance.”

J. Donald Walters

Dear Masonic Student,

Below is a very good article by Worshipful Brother Gerald Edgar, one of the newest members of the Grand Lodge Education Committee for the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. I'm sure you will enjoy and get a lot out of his article. - Ed

Membership and the future

By Gerald A. Edgar, P.M.
Mosaic #125 AF&AM @ Dubuque, IA

Recently I "visited" our ELCA, aka Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, website. My wife & I were delegates to our Synod convention this spring and we were informed the site had some great suggestions based on recent sociological and demographic research. In the 'Resources' section was an article by a Pastor; delineating the different reasons people join a church. This is just as relevant as to why people join a service club or a fraternal group.

His comments: Older members have not yet grasped that "membership" is a wholly secondary reason for being in church to many younger people. Baby-Boomers look for facilities and programs. Baby-Busters (their children) look for spiritual value and meaning I.E. older members of any group came from a generation that treasured 'membership'. "Boomers" look for the actual building and activities; 'Busters' (those from the 70's and later) look for what they might learn.

This reaffirms what many Masonic scholars are saying: to attract those in their 50's & 60's we need to have a well-kept building and activities that are meaningful and which the newly made Mason may join in with. The 20's & 30's group look at the original roots of Masonry - what do we teach AND do we actually "teach" same?

Can we be attractive to potential members while keeping current ones happy? Certainly! A clean, well-maintained building hosting a variety of activities (beyond reading Minutes & paying bills) with a healthy dose of Masonic education and group discussion of same should be our goal.

This issue has become a vital one to me as two weeks ago a first ever grandson entered our lives. By luck of birth (and the insight of his ancestors), he can potentially become a documented, son-to-son eighth generation Mason going back to 1840 (and a fourth generation DeMolay).

However, assuming he desires to become a Mason some day, will there be a lodge available to him? In my home state of Iowa, we have gone from the 500+ Lodges when I was Raised to

fewer than 300. Two entire counties no longer have any Lodge, several others have but one. (And many are NOT working Lodges and make no effort to be attractive to "Boomers" or "Busters"). What will we do today to insure [that] the opportunity for good men to become Masons exists in another twenty years? Yes, those who are motivated by family ties may seek out a distant Lodge but what of all the good men who live a significant distance from a Lodge? Where will be the source of their awareness of Masonry? Doors will not be knocked upon if the doors are unavailable.

Words to live by: Learn to listen, opportunity often knocks softly.

From volumes of Sacred Law:

“Gather while there is still time, before judgment begins and your opportunity is blown away like chaff. Act now, before the fierce fury of the LORD falls and the terrible day of the LORD's anger begins.” Zephaniah 2:2 Tanakh (old testament)

“Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.”
Colossians 4:5 New Testament

“Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life.” 2 Nephi 10:23 Book of Mormon

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 08/16/10 comes again from our Good Brother Glenn Kiecker; here is his question:

“Leaders create an environment which everyone has the opportunity to do work which matches his potential capability and for which an equitable differential reward is provided.” Elliott Jaques

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“No great man ever complains of want of opportunity.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Education Videos of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota can be viewed at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=om_yq4L3M_l#!q=glmned

T.F.S. & 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> -
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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!**