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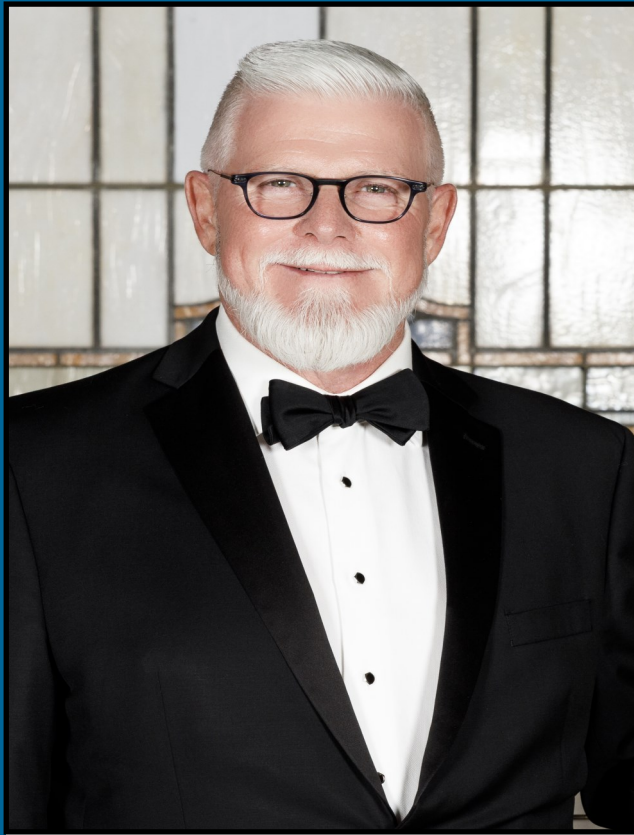
OKLAHOMA



MASON

**THE GRAND LODGE OF
ANCIENT FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE STATE
OF OKLAHOMA**

June 2026



Don Stanton

Grand Master

Executive Leadership and the Future of Oklahoma Masonry

Last quarter, I shared an article outlining several challenges facing Oklahoma Masonry and the need for deliberate executive leadership to address them. At that time, we identified key areas requiring attention: membership decline, financial stewardship, capital planning, modernization of procedures, and strengthening the Masonic experience.

As we move forward, it is important to provide an honest assessment of what is working, what remains a challenge, and where additional effort is needed.

Progress in Planning and Organization

One of the most encouraging developments has been the work completed by the committees formed to study and evaluate the major issues facing our jurisdiction. The involvement of Past Grand Masters and experienced brethren has provided valuable perspective and continuity.

In several areas, we have moved from discussing problems to developing



The Grand Lodge
of
OKLAHOMA

actionable recommendations. Long-range planning conversations that were once informal are now becoming structured efforts with measurable goals. These efforts alone represent meaningful progress. Organizations rarely improve by accident; improvement begins when challenges are clearly identified and addressed through planning.

Financial Stewardship: Progress with Work Remaining

Our review of financial operations has reinforced the importance of long-term sustainability. We have gained a clearer understanding of the impact that perpetual memberships have on future revenue and have begun evaluating strategies to ensure that Grand Lodge operations remain adequately funded.

What is working is increased awareness and transparency regarding financial realities. More brethren are engaging in conversations about stewardship and recognizing that responsible management requires planning beyond the current fiscal year.

What is not yet working is the pace at which some difficult financial decisions can be implemented. Sustainable solutions often require broad consensus, careful study, and patience. While progress has been made, this remains an area requiring continued attention.

Capital Planning and Facilities

Significant progress has been made in evaluating the condition and future needs of our facilities. For the first time in many years, we are approaching capital planning with a long-term perspective rather than reacting only when repairs become urgent.

This shift in mindset is working. Identifying future needs before they become emergencies allows us to make better decisions and use resources more effectively.

However, planning alone does not solve capital challenges. The reality remains that facility maintenance and improvements require funding, prioritization, and ongoing commitment. We have established a stronger foundation for future decisions, but much work remains ahead.

Membership: Encouraging Signs and Continuing Challenges

Membership remains our most significant long-term concern.

Several lodges have reported positive results from focusing on candidate engagement, mentorship, education, and fellowship. Lodges that actively involve new members and create meaningful experiences are seeing better retention than those relying solely on traditional

meeting structures.

This progress confirms an important lesson: men are still interested in Masonry when they encounter a vibrant and purposeful lodge experience.

At the same time, overall membership trends have not yet reversed. While some lodges are growing, others continue to struggle with attendance, participation, and retention. Recruitment alone is not enough. The challenge remains in keeping men engaged after they join.

What is working is the social media campaign to tell young men about Freemasonry.

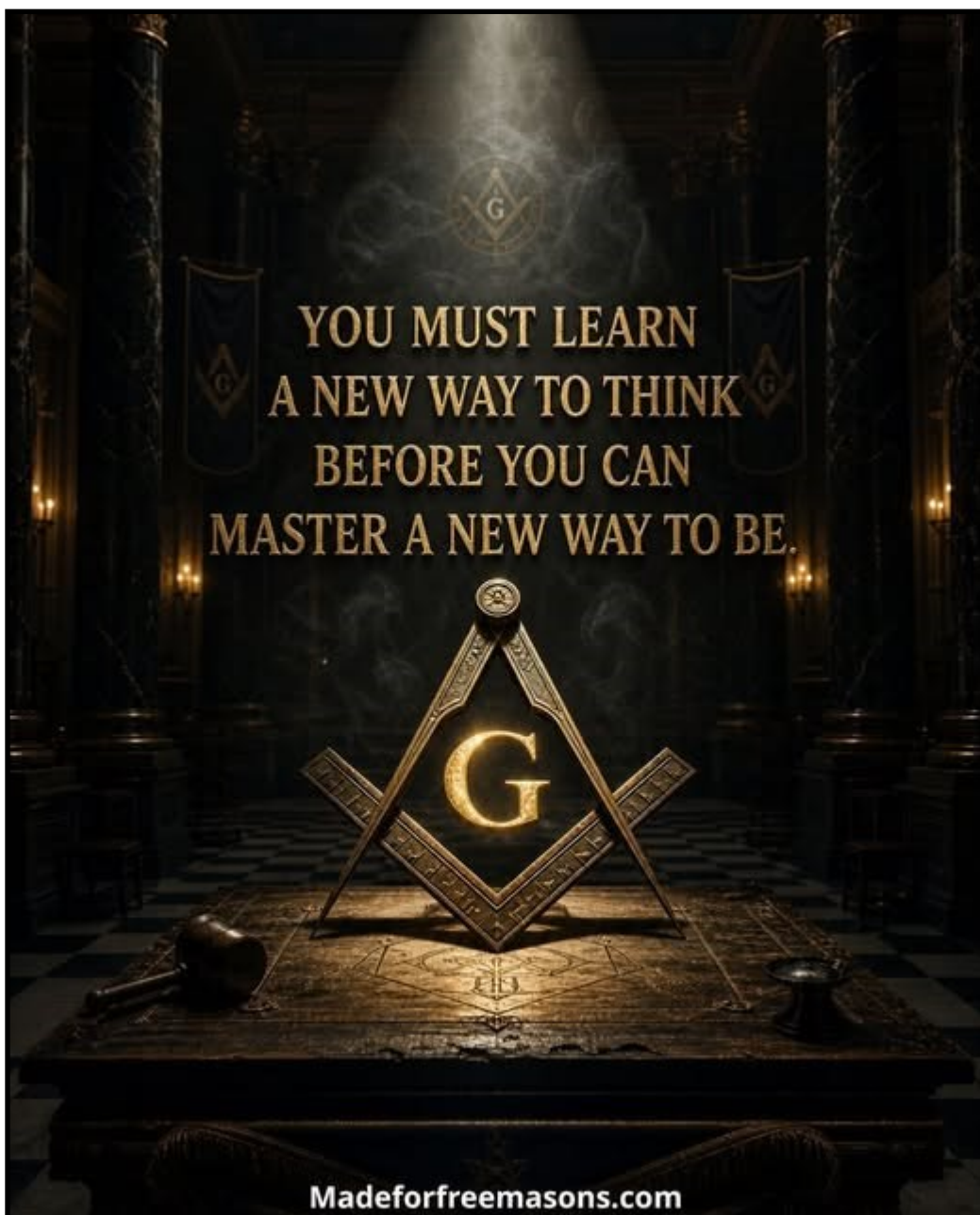
What is not working is the assumption that membership growth will occur without deliberate effort.

Modernization and Governance

The review of governing procedures and administrative practices has produced valuable discussions regarding efficiency, consistency, and accountability.

In some areas, modernization has improved communication and reduced administrative burdens. Technology continues to provide opportunities for better recordkeeping, information sharing, and operational effectiveness.

At the same time, modernization must be approached carefully. Not every new idea improves the Craft, and not every



tradition should be altered. The goal remains finding the proper balance between preserving what is essential and improving what can be strengthened.

The Masonic Experience

Perhaps the most important lesson learned over the past year is that the quality of the Masonic experience matters more than ever.

The lodges that are thriving are generally not those with the largest buildings or the longest histories. They are the lodges where brethren genuinely enjoy being together, where education is valued, where candidates are welcomed, and where members feel connected to something meaningful.

This effort is working.

What is not working is treating Masonry as merely an administrative organization. Men do not join for paperwork, reports, or routine business. They join seeking fellowship, personal growth, purpose, and brotherhood.

When we provide those things, Masonry remains relevant.

Looking Ahead

The challenges identified this year have not disappeared, but neither have we stood still. We have made progress in planning, organization, financial review, and evaluating the future needs of our jurisdiction.

Most importantly, we have begun building a culture that recognizes the importance of long-term thinking.

There is still much to accomplish. Membership trends must improve. Financial sustainability must remain a priority. We continue to struggle to make significant financial decisions regarding our budgeting for operations and capital improvement. Lodges must remain focused on delivering a meaningful Masonic experience.

But there are reasons for optimism.

Across Oklahoma, I continue to see dedicated brethren investing their time, talent, and energy into the future of the Craft. I see lodges embracing mentorship, strengthening fellowship, and serving their communities. I see leaders willing to confront difficult realities while remaining committed to our principles.

That combination of honesty and commitment gives me confidence.

Any single program, committee, or officer will not determine the future of Oklahoma Masonry. It will be determined by the collective efforts of Masons who care enough to build something stronger than they inherited.

That work continues.

Iron Sharpens Iron



**The Cherokee Nation presents
M.W. Ronald J. Chambers M.O.H.
With the Medal of Patriotism
And the Cherokee Warrior Award**

Cornerstone



Murray State College
April 2, 2026



Hosting Lodge
Tishomingo Lodge #91



Cornerstone



**Adair Schools
April 27, 2026**



**Hosting Lodge
Adair Lodge
#99**



Have We Become Content With Our Freemasonry

Brethren of Oklahoma,
From time to time, every Mason should pause and ask himself a difficult question: Have I become content with my Freemasonry?

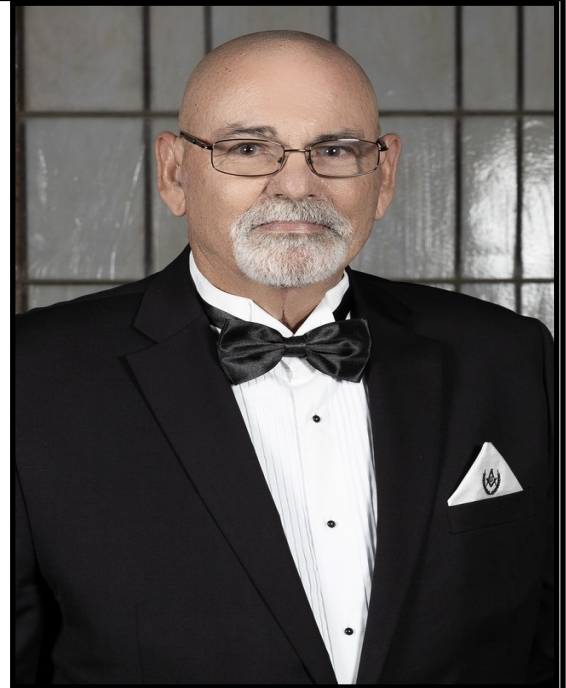
It is an uncomfortable question because it requires honest self-examination. Yet self-examination is at the very heart of our Craft. We are taught to improve ourselves, to labor diligently, and to leave the world a little better than we found it. If we are not careful, however, contentment can slowly replace commitment, and comfort can take the place of labor.

Consider our ritual. The ritual is the foundation upon which much of our Masonic experience is built. Do we strive to learn it, improve it, and present it with excellence? Or have we become satisfied with “good enough”? Every lecture forgotten, every degree rushed, and every opportunity to improve neglected are choices.

If we do not put in the work necessary to preserve and strengthen our ritual, who will?

Consider our buildings. Our lodges are more than structures of brick and mortar. They are symbols of the generations of Masons who came before us and invested their time, labor, and resources so that we might have a place to meet. Are we maintaining those buildings as faithful stewards? Are we planning for their future, or simply hoping someone else will take care of them? If we do not do the work that needs to be done, who will?

Consider our relationships. Freemasonry was never intended to be merely a meeting we attend once or twice a month. It is a brotherhood. It is friendship, mentorship, fellowship, and mutual support. Are we reaching out to the absent Brother? Are we welcoming new members and helping them find their place among us? Are we building meaningful connections, or simply occupying the same room? If we do not invest in our relationships, who will?



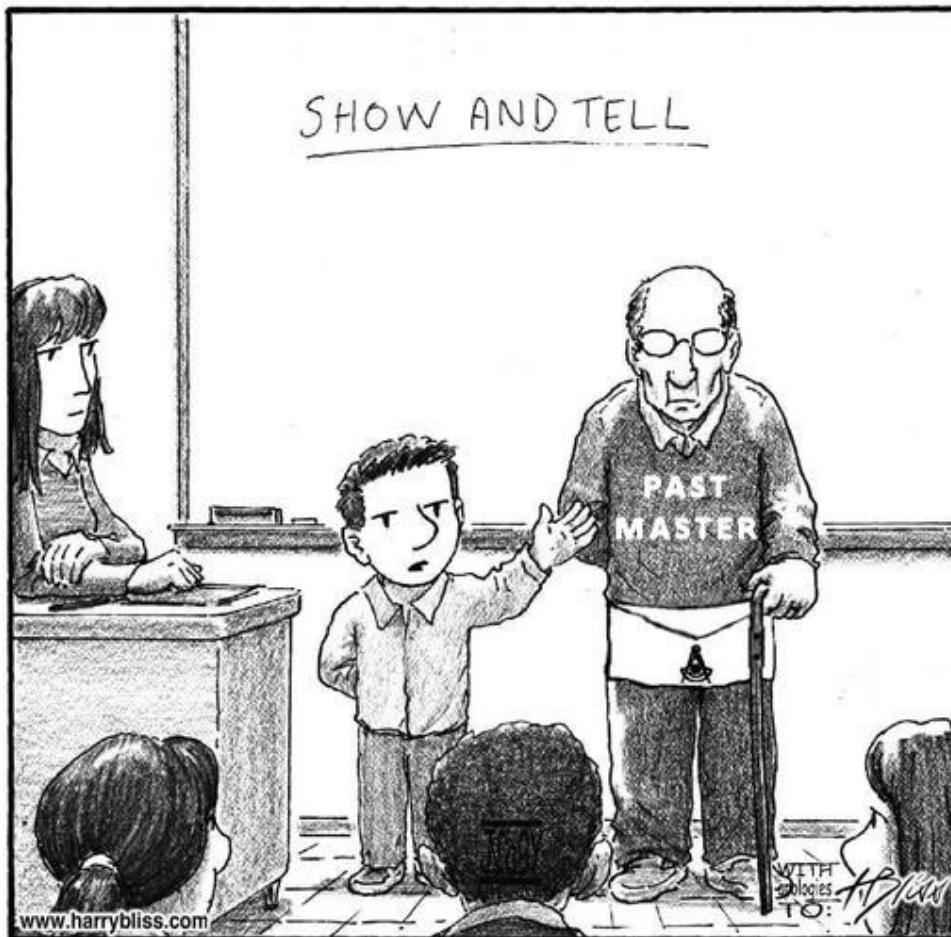
James Oates III
Deputy Grand Warden

Consider our finances. A healthy lodge requires more than good intentions. It requires planning, stewardship, and sometimes difficult decisions. Have we become content to let others carry the burden? Are we preparing our lodges to thrive in the years ahead, or merely survive until next year? If we do not take responsibility for our lodges' financial future, who will?

Finally, consider our personal growth. Freemasonry is not something that happens to us. It is something we actively pursue. Are we studying, learning, mentoring, and striving to become better men? Or have we reached a point where we believe the work is finished? The rough ashlar is never fully complete. There is always more work to be done.

Brethren, this is not a criticism. It is an invitation. It is an invitation to recommit ourselves to the labor that has always defined our fraternity. The future of Oklahoma Freemasonry will not be determined by someone else. It will be determined by the men who are reading these words today. If we do not do the work that needs to be done, who will?

FILED UNDER: When Any Audience will Do



"This is my grandpa. He's going to explain to us how things were done in his year."

Fifty Years of Service



**Worshipful
John Poe**

**Blue Lodge &
Scottish Rite
Awards**

**Red Lork Lodge
#505**

May 20, 2026

**Left to Right
Michael Maxey
Joe Manning
Don Stanton
James Taylor
Mike Dixon
Ed Shields**



DGM Fundraiser Update

Brethren,

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the many Oklahoma Masons who have already responded to the recent appeal for support of our Grand Lodge. Your generosity reflects the spirit of shared responsibility that has always been a hallmark of our Fraternity.

Since the appeal was mailed, contributions have continued to arrive from across our jurisdiction. It is encouraging to see Brothers and Lodges recognizing the importance of sustaining the services and programs that support Freemasonry throughout Oklahoma.

While we have made meaningful progress, there is still work to be done before the fundraising effort concludes at the end of September. As we continue preparations for the 2027 Grand Lodge budget, every contribution helps strengthen our ability to support constituent Lodges, improve communications, engage prospective members, and fulfill the many responsibilities entrusted to the Grand Lodge.

If you have already contributed, please accept my heartfelt thanks. If you have not yet had the opportunity, I respectfully ask that you consider joining your Brothers in supporting this effort. Together, through many individual acts of generosity, we can ensure that the Grand Lodge remains positioned to effectively serve the Craft both now and in the years ahead.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Oklahoma Freemasonry.

Fraternally,

James Oates, III
Deputy Grand Master



CHARITY



Collinsville Lodge #165 raises funds for local food bank

Norman Lodge #38 and DeMolay raise funds for Meals on Wheels





**Del City Lodge #536
Conducts Spaghetti Fundraiser
To raise funds for local youth
Suffering from severe medical condition**



Greetings from the Grand West!



Michael Ray
Senior Grand Warden

First, let me say once again, it is an honor to serve you as your Senior Grand Warden for 2026. Just a quick update to let you know that today is a GREAT DAY to be a Mason in the Great State of Oklahoma!

We have lodges that are working extremely hard to find the right men to become members of the Craft. I am amazed at the number of EA's, Fellow Craft, and Master Masons that are being brought into this Fraternity. It is this type of hard work and dedication, along with the continuance of guarding the WEST GATE, that will ensure our Craft continues to prosper like never before.

This year, your Grand Lodge Officers are continuing to do everything possible to provide the necessary tools and support to assist you and your lodge to succeed. My continued thoughts for this article are: good fellowship, increased membership, and serious diving into retention.

I am excited and encouraged to report that our Wardens' Retreats were attended by so many this year. Brothers from across the state brought new ideas to each class and provided feedback that greatly benefited everyone. In 2027, your Grand Lodge Officers will be offering a total of eight classes across the state, open to all Master Masons who wish to attend. This class is intended to be a Lecture/Information-Sharing environment, and everyone's thoughts and comments are valuable to the class.

My Brothers, **we must** choose to continue changing our environment, our outlook toward the future, and our priorities. **We must continue to** be forward-thinking enough to SEE the goal in ever-changing light.

Our Grand Master's motto is "*Iron Sharpens Iron*". I continue to believe that when Brothers come together under one roof, sharing ideas, asking questions, and gaining new knowledge, we can take this information back and impart this concept to our own respective lodges, and be ready to continue reaping the harvest.

Retention is very important to all of us; however, it continues to haunt all of us. A failure to quickly involve new members in lodge activities can lead to them becoming disengaged shortly after joining, leaving them to think, “Is this all there is? “When am I going to learn what this is all about?”

Often, new members leave when the “Good to Better” promise is not met, and many find the experience to be just another men’s club. Our seasoned Masons also need to hear a good education piece; it refreshes the mind while reminding us of who we are and why we are Masons. So, remember, everyone learns at a different level and speed, so let’s not lose anyone along the way; we are all so very important.

So, here is my continued challenge to you: **join** me on this wonderful journey and make Masonry better than ever. **Join** me in finding new ways to increase our membership and retain our current (new and seasoned) members while protecting our WEST GATE.



**National Sojourners Tinker Chapter #43
Present “Build A Flag” Program
At Myrtle Lodge #145**

Western Gate

The Importance of the Investigation

The Investigation Committee is one of the most important safeguards in Freemasonry. In Oklahoma Masonry, the committee serves as the Lodge's "eyes and ears" in determining whether a petitioner is morally, mentally, and socially qualified to become a Mason. The committee's responsibility is far greater than simply verifying a background check. Its duty is to protect the harmony, reputation, traditions, and future of the Craft.

A petitioner may appear respectable on paper, but the Investigation Committee must determine whether he truly possesses the character expected of a Mason. Committee members should evaluate honesty, integrity, temperament, reputation in the community, family relationships, financial responsibility, respect for the law, and sincerity in seeking membership. The committee should also determine whether the petitioner understands that Freemasonry is not a business network, social club, or political organization, but a fraternity founded upon moral principles and personal improvement.

The committee should conduct in-person interviews whenever possible and speak candidly with the petitioner and, when appropriate, his spouse or family. Good investigation committees ask difficult but respectful questions. They should determine whether the petitioner has a history of violence, substance abuse, fraud, domestic issues, extremist behavior, or criminal activity that could bring discredit upon the Lodge or the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma. A weak investigation process can create long-term problems within a Lodge, while a thorough and honest investigation protects the fraternity for generations.

In Oklahoma, Lodges are not law enforcement agencies, but they may use publicly available records and legal background check resources to assist in evaluating petitioners. Any findings should always be handled confidentially and fairly. A felony conviction does not automatically define a man's entire life, but Lodges must carefully evaluate whether the petitioner's current character reflects Masonic values.



James Taylor Jr.
Junior Grand Warden

A careful investigation committee protects the integrity of the fraternity, preserves the reputation of the Lodge and Grand Lodge, and ensures that the principles of Freemasonry remain strong in the State of Oklahoma for future generations.

Best Practices for Oklahoma Lodges

- Assign experienced Masons to investigation committees.
- Require face-to-face interviews whenever possible.
- Verify employment and community reputation.
- Review publicly available court records and social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter)) carefully.
- Keep all findings confidential within the Lodge.
- Focus on his current character and rehabilitation, not merely accusations.
- Remember that the committee's recommendation affects the future harmony of the Lodge.

Useful Oklahoma Background and Court Record Resources

Oklahoma State Courts Network (OSCN)

This site is the primary Oklahoma court records database and is extremely useful for checking felony and misdemeanor cases.

<https://www.oscn.net/dockets/Search.aspx#all>

OSCN allows searches by name and provides access to criminal felony ("CF") and misdemeanor ("CM") dockets.

Oklahoma On-Demand Court Records (ODCR)

Some Oklahoma counties use ODCR instead of OSCN.

<https://odcr.com/>

Oklahoma Sex Offender Registry

A very important resource for Lodges conducting due diligence.

<https://sors.doc.ok.gov/ords/svorp/sors/r/sors/disclaimer>

VINELink Inmate and Custody Search

Useful for checking incarceration status and custody information.

<https://www.vinelink.com/>

Grand Lodge of Oklahoma Background Check

The Oklahoma Masons Ordering System allows petitioners to securely submit information and complete a required criminal background check as part of the application process.

<http://www.infocheckusa.com/masons-ordering-oklahoma.html>

REMEMBER

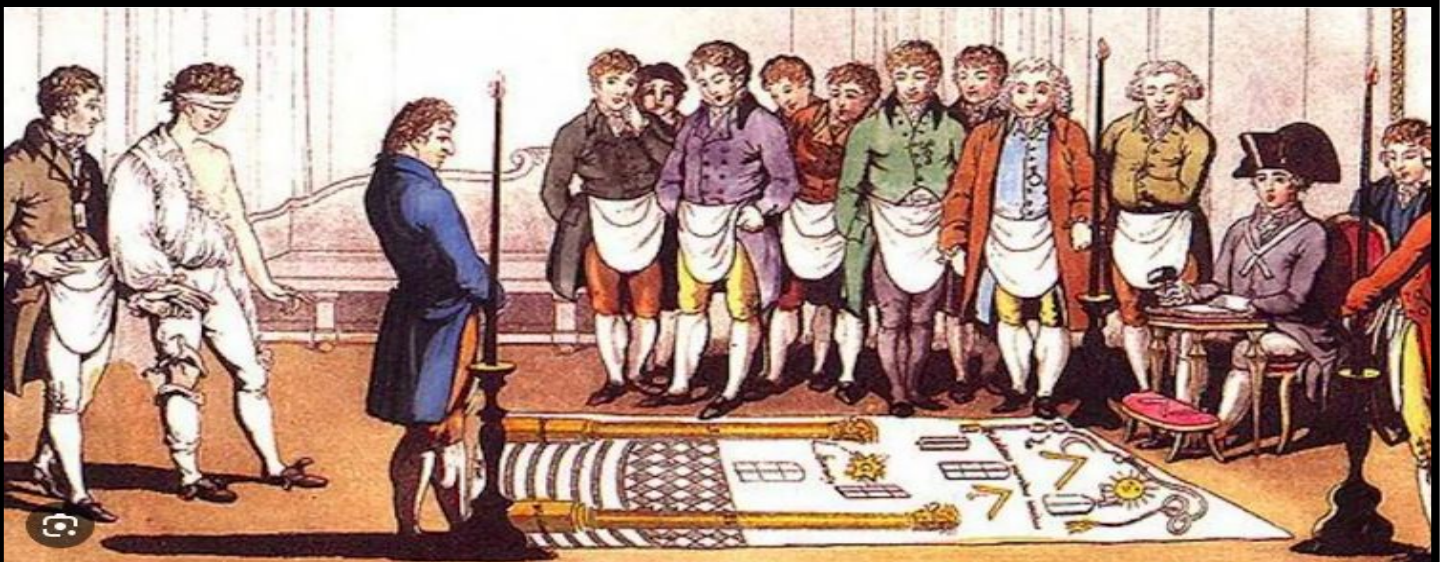
**Myrtle Lodge #145
Conducts Empty Chair Degree
In Remembrance of Brethren
Who have given their all
To keep this country free**



Fellow Craft



Britton Lodge #434



From the Secretary's Desk

What I've Learned in 56 Years About Bringing Men to Masonry—and Keeping Them There

After 56 years in Oklahoma Masonry, I've seen just about everything—full lodges and empty ones, strong years and hard years, men come in with enthusiasm, and others quietly drift away.

And if there's one thing I've learned the hard way, it's this:

We don't lose men because Masonry isn't good. We lose them because we sometimes fail to give them what they came looking for.

Now I want to talk plainly for a minute—especially to those of us in rural lodges, where things are a little different. We don't have a big population to draw from. We don't have a constant stream of new faces. Every man matters.

And that means we have to understand something important:

Ritual is vital to Masonry—but it is not what brings a man to our door.

I love our ritual. I've spent a lifetime in it. But no man I've ever known knocked on the lodge door because he wanted to memorize catechisms or learn floor work.

He came for something else.

Over the years, I've come to see that most men—whether they can put it into words or not—are looking for three things when they start circling Masonry.

First, they're looking for Brotherhood.

And I don't mean the word—we use that word a lot. I mean the real thing.

Out here in rural communities, a man already knows many people. He's got neighbors, church, maybe family close by. But what he's often missing is a place where men genuinely check on each other, stand by each other, and mean it.

He's looking for a place where, if he doesn't show up, somebody notices.



Mike Dixon
Grand Secretary

That's the first test for us. When a man visits, does he feel like a guest—or does he feel like he just met men who actually care whether he comes back?

I've found that happens best in small conversations, not formal meetings. Sit down with this man. Talk with him. Listen to him. Don't just hand him a petition—get to know him.

That's how Brotherhood starts.

Second, he's looking for Personal Growth.

A man may not say it that way, but he knows when he finds it—and he knows when he doesn't.

He's looking for something that makes him better. More disciplined. More thoughtful. More grounded.

Now here's where we sometimes lose him.

If the only thing he sees is us opening lodge, reading minutes, paying bills, and closing lodge, he doesn't see growth—he sees routine.

That won't hold him.

In my years, the lodges that held men were the ones that gave them something to take home. A lesson. A conversation. A sense that Masonry was actually working on them.

It doesn't have to be fancy. Just meaningful.

Third, he's looking for Purpose.

This issue is a big one—especially for men in our communities.

A man wants to know that what he's doing matters.

He doesn't need a speech about it. He needs to see it.

When we help a widow, when we support a local family, when we show up as Masons in our community—that's when he understands what this fraternity is about.

If all he sees is meetings, he'll eventually question why he's there.

But if he sees purpose, he'll stay.

Now let me say something about dues—because every one of us has seen good men suspended for non-payment.

In 56 years, I've never believed that was really about money.

It's about connection.

A man who feels connected—who has brothers, who is growing, who sees purpose—he finds a way to pay his dues.

A man who doesn't feel those things... drifts. And when the dues notice comes, it's just one more reason to step away.

That's why I've always believed in something simple:

No brother should ever slip away without somebody noticing.

Pick up the phone. Stop by. Have a conversation. Not to pressure him—but to let him know he matters.

Most of the time, that's all it takes.

Now, back to ritual.

Ritual is where Masonry comes alive—but only after a man is ready for it.

If we lead with ritual, we're speaking a language he doesn't yet understand.

But if we first give him Brotherhood, growth, and purpose—then ritual becomes something powerful. It deepens what he's already found.

That's when it matters most.

So after all these years, what do I actually do?

Nothing complicated.

I pay attention to people.

I make time for conversations.

I make sure our lodge stands for something real.

And I don't let a brother disappear without someone reaching out.

That's it.

Because Masonry, especially in rural Oklahoma, doesn't grow through programs or paperwork.

It grows one man at a time.

And it stays strong when we remember why those men came in the first place:

Not for ritual.

But for Brotherhood, growth, and purpose.

Entered Apprentice



Anchor-Crescent Lodge #104

Del City Lodge #536





Myrtle Lodge #145

Yukon Lodge #90



Our Ritual



Charlie Babb
Grand Lecturer

How many times have you heard the question: “What distinguishes us from other civic and fraternal organizations?” We all know the answer is “Our Ritual”. At the Warden Retreats this year, I included a paper by Jim Tresner in his book, *But I Digress: A Collection of Masonic Musings & Writings* from 2012. The article was titled “Ritual: Who Needs It?” You should seek out this book; it contains so much wisdom from one of our sages. As you can probably predict, he answers his own question with “We do It is what makes us, us.” These words speak to me so much that I shared them with the participants at the retreats and want to plant this thought into your awareness. Brethren, I encourage you to learn and then teach our Ritual.

Blue 2.0

If you have not heard of Blue 2.0, I encourage you to contact a Deputy Grand Lecturer or your DDGM. This program is designed to raise our lodge’s proficiency. It is not a competition with anyone other than yourselves. A lodge needs to show it is proficient in opening, closing, and going to refreshment in the Entered Apprentice degree, conduct business in accordance with our Constitution and Code, and receive the DDGM. Just some of that basic substance that “makes us, us”.

Ritual Competition

For those of you who are interested in a little competition, August 1st should be on your calendar. The competition is fairly simple: complete the first portion of the Entered Apprentice degree, up to and including the Interrogatories by the Senior Deacon. The competition will be held at the Grand Lodge building in Guthrie. Registration and specifics are on the way.

Regional, District, and Lodge Schools

If your District has not held a District school this year, there is still time to comply with the C & C, which requires every District to hold at least one school per year and recommends that each lodge hold a school each year. In addition to District and lodge schools, there are several Regional Schools still scheduled (Way out West at St. Alban ##192 on July 11th, Tough School at Durant #45 due to building damage at Oklahoma #4 on August 8th, and Cowboy Boot Camp at Sand Springs #475 on September 12th). These schools bring several Deputy Grand Lecturers together to demonstrate and educate participants on our Ritual. Hope to see you there.



**Yes, the Tyler's
job is simple...**

**It's to keep off all cow
hands & leaf droppers.**

- Coach Miller

Gavel Capture



Mangum Lodge #61 captures Bobby Laws Gavel from Altus Lodge #60

Clinton Lodge #339 captures Bobby Laws Gavel from Mangum Lodge # 61



Making a Difference

MMRI's 3-5-7 Campaign Brings Masonic Values to Modern Medicine

By R.W. Ross V. Stoltz, Development Officer - Masonic Medical Research Institute

MMRI, a nonprofit research institute established almost 70 years ago, is the only research institute in the world founded, governed, and supported by Masons. Within its laboratories, scientists are studying conditions that affect each of our families in some capacity, whether it be heart disease, autism, lupus, PTSD, or other debilitating ailments. For example, researchers at MMRI are examining how the heart produces and uses energy. In individuals with obesity or diabetes, this process can become disrupted, sometimes leading to serious metabolic conditions that affect heart function. By identifying the biological pathways involved, our scientists are discovering ways to protect the heart, work that could eventually lead to new treatments for heart failure. In addition, researchers are exploring how genetic mutations can lead to the development of lupus, autism, and congenital heart diseases, steadily building knowledge that may one day translate into meaningful therapies in the clinic.

At its heart, MMRI is about improving lives through discovery, and one way to support this mission is through the recently launched 3-5-7 Campaign:

3 Steps to hope

5 Steps to discovery

7 Steps to a cure

As many of you know, these numbers hold deep meaning in Freemasonry, and our initiative creates a natural bridge between a Lodge's lessons and the work of modern science. It offers a simple framework for something that can otherwise feel complex.

"Three Steps to Hope" reflects how research begins, as scientists work to understand the

root cause of disease, secure the funding needed to pursue these questions, and bring together the expertise required to move answers forward.

“Five Steps to Discovery” represents progress made in fields such as molecular biology, genetics, and chemistry. It also highlights the use of technological advancements to help researchers move faster and more efficiently than ever before.

“Seven Steps to a Cure” traces the long path from bench to bedside, which often involves collaboration, regulatory approval, and partnerships. Ultimately, we work to bring new therapies to the people who need them most.

While the 3-5-7 steps are intricate, the idea behind them is straightforward: begin with a question about human health and follow it to a solution that helps people live longer and healthier.

This idea is where the connection to Freemasonry becomes especially powerful. Not every Mason is a scientist, and not every family member will step into a laboratory, yet through the 3-5-7 Campaign, everyone has an opportunity to take part in this work and make a difference.

It is a familiar truth: when many people give what they can, the result becomes far greater than any one person could achieve alone. For Masons, the idea of building something that endures is nothing new. Whether constructing a lodge, strengthening a community, or preserving a tradition, the goal has always been to create something lasting and meaningful. We are asking for this support. Your pledge of \$357 per lodge, or \$5 per Mason, can make the difference that saves someone’s life.

Visit mmri.edu/357 to learn more or donate.

Community



**Anchor-Crescent Lodge #104
Hosts Annual
Fishing Tournament**





The Grand Lodge *of* OKLAHOMA

We do everything we can
to be present. And still
be part of history.



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