



Ensuring the Timeless Vitality of Freemasonry in Ontario

PROTOCOL & ETIQUETTE ESSENTIALS

Prepared by the Grand Lodge P. & E. Committee

Issue No. 30 – April 2014

Greetings from Your P. & E. Committee

Welcome to the April issue of “*P&E Essentials*”. It is anticipated that these informative and easy-to-read newsletters will be published several times a year.

“*P&E Essentials*” is intended to be an interactive instrument, designed to help you make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. It will hopefully also assist you to achieve high quality in the delivery, comprehension and insight of the lessons communicated on the floor of the lodge. The Committee welcomes questions and/or suggestions for topics that could be addressed in future issues. Questions or suggestions not related to Protocol and Etiquette will be forwarded to the appropriate Grand Lodge Committee for response.

Committee Members

The current Protocol & Etiquette Committee members are:

Gordon Crutcher (*Chairman*); Steven Armstrong; Art DiCecco; David Fernandes; Dennis Hawman; Saliem Khoury; Michael Litvak; George McCowan; Bryan Middleton; James Pearson; George Pohle; David Purvis (*Secretary*); David Stevens; and Refik Yoney.

With appropriate advance notice – and subject to travel constraints – any member of the Committee would be happy to make a presentation about P&E in your Lodge, or at a District Meeting.

THE DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES' BATON

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND BACKGROUND

The wand has had its place in all ceremonial rites throughout the ages. It is known by various names (e.g. “stick”, “staff”, “stave”, “rod”, “mace”, “sceptre”, and baton) according to their usage and custom and they can be of varying lengths.

It has been carried by kings and others in authority as the sign and token of office or importance, of power, strength and government.

History shows that the person's power or right to act is by virtue of his holding or carrying the wand.

From this the lodge officer – be he Director of Ceremonies, Deacon, or Steward – learns that he, too, derives his authority from the actual carrying of a wand, which was placed in his hands when he was invested. It is the badge of his office. His wand is an emblem of power, dignity, and significance derived from ancient days.

How ancient? Well, in addition to rods and staffs being mentioned throughout the Bible, you may also be interested to learn that on the south coast of England, in the county of Sussex, near the town of Wilmington, there is carved into a hillside, the figure of a man with arms outstretched and in each hand he holds a staff. The figure is approximately 125 feet in height. Nobody knows who carved it there but it is has been verified to be several thousand years old.

For additional historical background information from a Masonic perspective, please refer to a most interesting treatise by Bernard E. Jones in his “*Freemasons' Guide and Compendium*”, 1956 edition, pp. 380-384.

HOW TO CARRY A BATON

There are instructions in the newly-released 2014 edition of the “Red Book”, (the ***Guidelines for Lodge Officers in The Mechanics of The Work***) as to how Deacons and Stewards are to carry their wands. However no instructions are provided as to how a Director of Ceremonies should carry his baton.

This has prompted a brother to enquire if there is a “proper” way to carry the baton. Yes, there is.

While this method is not mandated for a lodge Director of Ceremonies in this Grand Jurisdiction, it is taught to every Grand D of C and every Assistant Grand D of C. Lodge D of Cs are encouraged to adopt it as well.

The baton is carried parallel to the ground, with the “butt” end wedged between your upper left arm (just above the elbow) and the left side of your body. Hold the upper

Please share this newsletter with other members of your Lodge – and your Masonic friends

end in your left hand, with the tip pointing forward. (See the photo below.)

You will note that the D of C can also hold any notes listing the names of brethren to be presented or introduced in his left hand.



We often see the baton carried with the top and bottom ends reversed, cradled like a baby in the crook of the left elbow. While this may be an acceptable method in other concordant bodies, it is not the “right” way in a Craft lodge.

LODGE ELECTIONS

This is probably an appropriate time of year to remind lodges of the importance of **Section 223** of the Book of Constitution. SEPARATE, written ballots are required for the offices of Master, Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary.

Contrary to what was indicated in Issue No. 18 (May 2012) of *P&E Essentials*, (page 2, the penultimate paragraph), lodges MUST NOT prepare and distribute a printed information sheet which lists the names of brethren willing to stand for any particular office. Such a sheet can be perceived as the presentation of a pre-determined slate of Officers and of electioneering, both of which are forbidden by our Constitution.

It is suggested that the Worshipful Master meet with all officers prior to Election Night to determine if any are not

prepared to move forward. If there are any, then they would be requested on Election Night, (when the office to which they were to progress was announced), to stand up and advise the membership they did not wish to move up. That would leave it to the membership to have officers move up accordingly. While not a perfect method, it takes away the inference of nomination. This could be done at the outset of the ballot segment of the evening.

At Election Night, the ballot papers which are distributed should only name the office. No members’ names are to be pre-printed on the ballot papers. Only the name of the office can be indicated.

When it is time for the members to vote on the office of Worshipful Master, the Worshipful Master could say something along these lines:

“Those eligible for this office are all Past Masters, or any member who has served twelve months in the office of Warden.”

The ballots, which have nothing but the office written on them, are then distributed and each member marks the ballot accordingly. No names are mentioned at all.

The same procedure would then be followed for the office of Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Warden and Junior Warden.

Now the Worshipful Master could preface each ballot with a comment that any member of the lodge is eligible to be elected to that office.

There is to be no discussion among members, as the ballot is to be a secret one. If a member does not know who a present office holder is, he may be given a Summons which shows the list of all current officers.

The role of Scrutineer at lodge elections is an important one. Usually three brethren, ideally members of other lodges, are appointed by the Worshipful Master to count the votes. They shall report the result of each ballot. When they have so reported, the Worshipful Master will confirm that the brother receiving the majority of votes is duly elected. After this declaration, the scrutineers are instructed to destroy the ballots.

As a cautionary note, it is suggested that the Scrutineers be very careful when counting the ballots.

Sometimes Scrutineers may sort the ballots into two piles. This makes it easy for everyone in the lodge to see whether there were several votes for someone other than the eventual winner.

In a lodge where tensions are present, this is an unnecessary and a debilitating factor upon unity.

You can request a direct e-mail subscription to *P. & E. Essentials* from: Gordon@Crutcher.ca