

## WHAT ARE THE SECRETS OF FREEMASONS?

by WBro William Larson 33° Kenton Lodge #145 G.L. A.F. & A.M. Oregon, USA.

Well I asked the question "What are the secrets of Masons?" Intriguing question, wouldn't you say? I've really thought hard on this question; I've asked myself a lot of times; what are our secrets? I've studied the ritual, and the manual and done some deep digging in the Scottish Rite Library. But to no avail. About two years ago I was conferring a degree on a candidate and I stopped to think what I was telling him. I was really surprised. The answer was in front of me all the time, but I just didn't see it. I could not see the forest for the trees. Was I dumbfounded. I don't know how many degrees I have conferred, but I'll tell you this, it's a lot of them. The problem is that to find the secrets, you need to know both the lectures and the conferral work too. I knew all the lectures and had been giving them since I was a Fellow Craft Mason. The first lecture I gave was when I was a Fellow Craft, and it was to a new Entered Apprentice. So I was very familiar with the work and the lectures, but I didn't know and understand what I was saying!

I mentioned in one of my e-mail letters that I do something with the new Entered Apprentice that would knock your socks off. This is nothing that is illegal or contrary to our Ritual. As a matter of fact, I think it should be added to our work. It would enlighten our new Entered Apprentice, and make them, and their family and friends, more knowledgeable with our craft. I have spoken with two Past Grandmaster's, and others also of Masonic intellect, and have been given their blessing to continue what I am doing. I would say this to you though, let others read this letter first so if your Lodge does try this, so it doesn't come as a huge surprise to your Brethren in the Lodge.

As an example: One evening I gave this presentation, and one of the elderly brothers on the side lines almost came unglued. Believe me, it was very obvious to see that he was upset! After a simple explanation, at the refreshment table, he told me "I wish that I would have been told that when I became a Mason almost 50 years ago." I have had many others who have expressed their delight in what I tell the new Entered Apprentice, and they also felt that it should be added some where in our work. Well; if I still have your attention, let's see what I tell the new Entered Apprentice.

Bear in mind as you read this, that our Ritual (the coded work) is not the secrets of Freemasonry. Contrary to the belief of many, our Ritual (coded work) contains none of the secrets that we harbor. There is nothing secret with the way we open a Lodge of Master Masons (or any other degree) or with any of the degrees that we confer. There is not one thing that is a secret in any of the lectures or degree work which is written (or coded) out. From the first page to the last page of our Ritual, not one word contains the secrets of Freemasons!

If you are in or near Washington D.C. go over to the George Washington Memorial and look around. You won't need to go far in looking at this fine building and guess what? There are Masonic symbols every where! You just need to know what you are looking for. Go to almost any old church in your town. Look at the stained glass windows very carefully and you will see all kinds of Masonic symbols. See I told you we were not a secret organization, didn't!! Listen to the oath the President of the United States takes when he assumes office. If this is not taken straight from a Masonic Ritual, I'll have dog food for breakfast for the next month!

So now that I've laid down a little bit of past history, I suppose I should get to the purpose of this explanation. about Freemasons and their secrets. I am going to use the Oregon Ritual work and the lectures of the degrees in Oregon to explain myself. I'm sure that your ritual is very close to ours and being as how I have never seen any of the other jurisdictions work I will just hope that I am right.

After the new candidate has been obligated, has received his apron, has been presented with the working tools, he is taken to the place whence he came. He is then re-vested with the things of which he was divested, and returned to the Lodge. Upon his second admission into the Lodge he is placed in the Northeast corner on the first step in Masonry. The Worshipful Master then recites a very short part. Then the candidate is conducted to me for the Lecture of the Degree. I place myself just West of the Alter to receive the candidate and to speak with him. I then request that the Worshipful Master call the Lodge at ease. I have laying near the Alter all the garments that the candidate wore during the conferral of his degree and will explain them to him during the Lecture.

I extend my hand to him and say something such as:

*Congratulation Brother John. You have just been made a Mason. You have received the first degree, and I can tell you that the next two are very similar in nature to this one. You have made a very wise decision in regards to your future. A decision that you will never regret. Brother John, there are a few things that I would like to explain to you at this time. Should you have ANY QUESTIONS, stop me at anytime and ask me that question. This applies to even when I am speaking. No question that you would ask is foolish or dumb. As a matter of fact, I would welcome you to ask questions. For that is how I learned, and it is also how you will learn.*

*In a Lodge of Mason's, when we are at what is called "Labor", a business meeting, if it becomes necessary for you to go from one side of the Lodge to the other, you are not to pass between the Worshipful Master and the Alter. You must go toward the West then to the other side of the Lodge. Should you find that you must leave during a business meeting, you should approach the Alter and salute the Worshipful Master with this due guard and penal sign. He will nod very slightly then you may leave. There are other courtesies of protocol and they will be explained to you as you progress in Freemasonry.*

*On the Alter you will notice that the Bible here displayed is of the King James version. This is the Holy writings that this Lodge prefers to use. However these holy writings could just as easily be the Veda, the Koran, the Jewish book of faith, or any other sacred book that you prefer. We, as Masons, make no distinction of one Bible to another. During any prayers, which we offered up this evening, you will notice that we referred to God. We as Masons believe that there is only one Supreme Being. You may refer to that Supreme Being as you would please. You may ask the*

*blessing of Jehovah, Allah, Yod, Mohamad, or any other Supreme Being that you believe in. We make no distinctions in what you believe that Supreme Beings name is. This is your preference and the preference of all Masons everywhere.*

*There are two things that we as Masons do not discuss in a Lodge. One is Religion and the other is politics. Not that we don't talk about them, but that we don't go into details. For by going into details of these two items, we may come to arguments, and from arguments can come bitterness and from bitterness can come, perhaps, physical violence.*

*Brother John, are you married? (Yes I am) That's good, and I suppose that you have some very close friends, or maybe those that you work with every day, or supposedly a neighbor next door that you are very familiar with. (Yes) Brother John, I would ask you to do me and the Lodge a favor when you get home this evening or perhaps tomorrow, or in the following days. The chances are very good that when you get home this evening, your wife will greet you and ask something as "Well what happened?" Or maybe she will say "Tell me, you are now a Mason, how did they do it?" Or some question that is very similar to these. Brother John, I want you to tell her every thing. Every thing that happened to you tonight. I want you to tell your friends, co-workers, and neighbors exactly what happened. I don't want you to leave out one thing. Tell them that you wore the candidates uniform, and I will explain that to you very soon. Tell them that you were blindfolded (hood winked). Tell them that you had a rope around your neck (cable tow). That you only wore one shoe. That you gave three knocks at a door. That you were received on the point of a sharp instrument. That you were caused to kneel for the benefit of Lodge Prayer. That you were conducted once around the Lodge. That you were caused to kneel at the Alter. That your right hand was placed on the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses. That you took a solemn obligation. And if you can remember even tell them what was in that obligation. Tell them that you received a white apron, and that it the badge of a Mason. That after all this there was a Lecture about the degree that I gave you. I ask that you tell them all. Try not to leave anything out. Tell them every thing! You will have that which is called a candidates proficiency to give, and if they will listen, I want you to repeat that to them too. Do I make myself clear? (Yes) Good!*

*But Brother John, there are two things though that I forbid you to reveal. Two things that through out the rest of your life that you will not repeat to anyone who is not a Mason. And then you will only speak them when you are with a brother of this degree, or in a Lodge, or for instruction. Those two things are the pass word of this degree and the mode of recognition, or handshake. They are the secrets of Freemasonry. These two items are scared to all Masons and are never to be reviled to any other persons. Do you understand this request? (Yes) Good. Do you have any questions at this time that you would like me answer? Worshipful Master, I am now ready to deliver the Lecture of this degree to our candidate."*

Well, that is what I tell the new Entered Apprentice. I can hear you now saying "Bill just let the cat out of the bag. He wants the world to know what we in Lodge do and how we go about doing it." Yep, you are right! I want the whole world to know. I'm standing on my soap box and telling every one I can interest in listening to me, the whole story! Now I can hear you say "By what right does Bill have in revealing what goes on in a degree, and telling this new candidate to go tell his wife and friends about him becoming a Mason or how he got their!"

Well, let's take a look and see what our ritual (Oregon Edition) says:

In the latter portion of the Master Mason Degree, (and other degrees as well) when the candidate is knelling at the Alter, the Worshipful Master says "You have, or are about to receive all the secrets of Masons in Masonry to which this token alludes." You well notice that it does not say one of the secrets or some of the secrets. It says "All the secrets." So then first of all, we remember that the token (from the Entered Apprentice Degree) is the hand shake, or the mode of recognition. We have also learned in the Entered Apprentice Degree that this token is the name of a word. So if the token is the name of a word, then the secret word for that degree is \*\*\*\*. Or in the Fellow Craft Degree the token, or secret word is \*\*\*\*\*. And in the Master Mason Degree the token or secret word is \*\*\*\*\*. Therefore, all the secrets of Mason in Masonry are the pass words and the mode recognition. These are ALL the secrets that we have. There are no other secrets in our order. Only these three simple words! Nothing which I asked the new candidate to tell others is a secret. We as Masons should not keep the whole world in darkness regarding our order! We only need to protect our three small secrets!