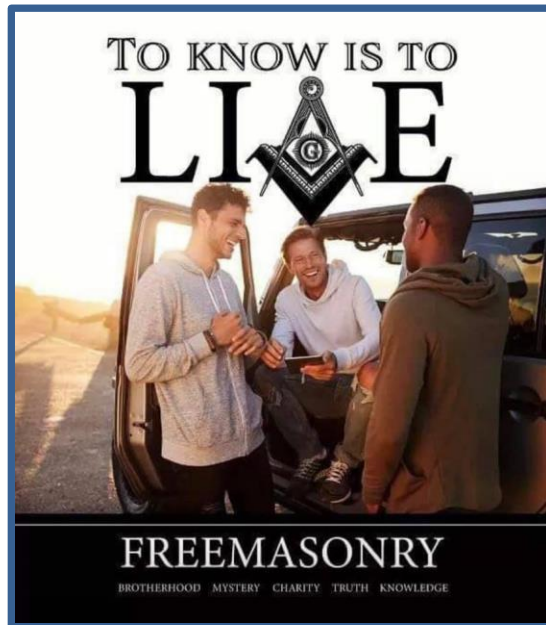


Living the Journey: Our Future Brothers

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I often hear the “pool” of potential new masons is too small to support growth in the fraternity. “There are just so few places to find good men”, or “men today aren’t interested in joining organizations that compete for their time and attention against their families and time off”.

I disagree. Each of those two statements may have a small element of truth, but I reject them as definitive statements of fact. I actually believe the demand for the fraternal offerings of freemasonry is as big as ever if not, perhaps, bigger. I offer some thoughts and points for your consideration.



Have you visited a volunteer fire department lately? How many of the volunteers are service-minded? How many are community-minded? How old are many of the volunteers? I know that from city to city, county to county, all of these factors are affected by local situations. But how often do local masonic lodges host dinners for volunteer firefighters? Under the Grand Lodge of Texas, we have the “Community Builder Award” which is a great way to thank these men and introduce masonry to them. Do they have to buy their own equipment? Or Pay for their training? Suppose a lodge set up a scholarship or grant program to help some of them out?

Does your county or city police department host some version of a volunteer police cadet program and/or a “Citizens on Patrol” program? Would you say the men involved in these programs – both the citizen participants and the program staff – are service oriented? Would you suppose them to be of a fraternal nature that enjoys the brotherhood of these organizations? Do lodges seek these members out

and introduce masonry to them? Again, Community Builder Awards, scholarships or grants, or other forms of recognition are great ways to introduce some masonry into their lives.

How many service and volunteer organizations are in your community? Have you visited a food bank, homeless support center, Habitat for Humanity site? If so, did you notice an attitude of service to mankind? Did you spot men giving of themselves and asking nothing in return? Has your lodge recognized any of these organizations? Does your lodge support any of these organizations?

Does your local college or community college have an ROTC program? Have you considered a something like a Community Builder Award for the commander or key staff member? Perhaps you could present it in a program in front of the cadets? Maybe (in Texas) a lodge might consider a Lamar Medal for an ROTC cadet, presented in front of a class? Or maybe your lodge can create a scholarship or grant program targeted for ROTC students.

How about your local police stations and fire stations? Have you held a “public service dinner” or some similar event or program to honor our public servants? Maybe you can raise money to support one of their charitable efforts? We do attract many good men from law enforcement, especially here in the San Antonio area. But how many firefighters are we initiating? Are we even talking to them?

These were just a few suggestions to demonstrate my belief that there is a pool of future masons out there. There are a lot of young men that have demonstrated good, service-oriented character and may be looking to deepen their fraternal opportunities outside their particular work environment. But if they don’t know about masonry, it’s not going to occur to them to ask.

I think back to when I was very young, younger than eight, probably six or seven years old. My mother, sisters, and I were downstairs at my father’s lodge and the men were upstairs in the lodge room. The “all hands call” siren on the fire house next store sounded and you could hear upstairs what sounded like a stampede. Looking out the window you could see the line of men running from the lodge to the fire house and a few minutes later, the two trucks rolling out of the station. That moment has been with me for around 51 years now and it is vivid in my mind. It was just a natural occurrence in the life of my father’s lodge. Our public service agencies are still with us and will always be. And as long as there are men willing to serve their communities and neighbors, I say there will always be a pool of future brothers big enough to keep our fraternity growing into the ages.

I agree that times have changed. Men are challenged by complex commitments that compete for their time and attention. But they are out there and when I hear a brother say that masonry is not what they’re looking for, I would counter with “how do we know”? Have we taken masonry to the potential candidates and shown them the opportunity? And I disagree completely when I hear that masonry is dying because there aren’t many men today that are both interested and qualified for the degrees. I say we need to go to where they are, where the volunteers labor every day, donating their time and energy to mankind. And when we get there we don’t need to recruit, rather we need to be ready to show them why they and masonry were made for each other and demonstrate masonry in action.

Brethren, it all starts with the mindset that says we know the men are there, we know who the men are, we just need to go to them to extend our hands and show them a new possibility. It all starts with us leaving the safety of our lodge buildings and venturing out into communities. Do you know where the good men in your community are?

My brothers, I remain, as always, sincerely and fraternally yours.