



PROTOCOL & ETIQUETTE ESSENTIALS

Prepared by the Grand Lodge P. & E. Committee
Issue No. 22 – February 2013

Greetings from Your P. & E. Committee

Welcome to the latest 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. 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; William Elliott; Saliem Khoury; Michael Litvak; George McCowan; Bryan Middleton; Richard Morreau; James Pearson; George Pohle; David Purvis (*Secretary*); Brian Seabourn; David Stevens; and Terrance Van Horne.

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.

DRAPING THE WARRANT

Each constituent lodge in our Grand Jurisdiction must have a Warrant issued by our Grand Lodge. This Warrant authorizes the lodge to meet in a specific community, at a stated time, to discharge the duties of Masonry. The Warrant must be displayed at all meetings. Otherwise, the meeting would be illegal.

Each lodge also has its own set of Bylaws but it is the Warrant which formally authorizes the lodge to operate under the Constitution and oversight of our Grand Lodge.

Warrants can only be issued by Grand Lodge to lodges coming under its jurisdiction. While the Warrant is displayed within the room where the lodge holds its meetings, the Warrant remains the property of the

Grand Lodge that issued it. Consequently its Warrant is returned to Grand Lodge should that lodge ever “go dark”, or for any of the reasons set forth in our Constitution.

It seemed appropriate to review this background information as all our lodges will have draped their Warrant in black this month to mark the passing of M. W. Bro. David C. Bradley to the Grand Lodge Above. This was done in the memory of, and as a mark of our respect for, our Past Grand Master.

The Warrant may only be draped following instructions to do so from Grand Lodge. This occurs normally with the passing of a Grand Master, a Past Grand Master, or the Deputy Grand Master.

The Warrant may not be draped at any other time.

In this particular instance, the draping of the lodge Warrant was to be done for the entire month of February. Thus at least one regular meeting of the lodge would be encompassed within this time period.

Brethren witnessing this protocol sometimes get the mistaken impression that the Warrant can be also draped to mark the passing of a member of their lodge. Such is not the case.

As mentioned above, a Warrant may only be draped upon receipt of specific instructions from Grand Lodge.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

With respect to the passing of members of your lodge, everyone is reminded that Grand Lodge has promulgated two Memorial Services which are designed to be held in a lodge room.

One of these Services is virtually identical to that typically conducted in a funeral home, or a church. The lodge is **not** to be open for this Service. (If open,

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

the lodge is called from labour to refreshment before conducting the Service.) As this Service is held to remember a specific departed brother, his family and friends can be invited to attend. *(Please refer to page 13 in our Memorial Services booklet for an explanation how this Service is to be conducted.)*

For this Service, it is suggested that a small table be placed on the level in the East. The table can be draped in black. On the table can be placed a photograph of the brother, his regalia, a small basket for the evergreen, flowers, or possibly a plant.

The other very moving and impressive Service is typically held once a year in the memory of **ALL** members who have passed to the G.L.A. during the preceding twelve months. Only Masons may attend this second Service, as – in this case – the lodge must be opened in the First Degree before the Service commences. *(See pages 5 – 10 in our Memorial Services booklet, where this ceremony is detailed.)*

It would also be acceptable to set up a similar draped table in the East for this annual Memorial Service, upon which flowers may be placed, one at a time, as the names of the departed brethren are read out.

Should the lodge wish to place a small black ribbon on the altar – but not on the V.O.T.S.L. – during the few minutes that a deceased brother is being remembered, (i.e. while the details of the deceased brother's Masonic life are being recounted), that strip of black cloth is to be removed immediately following those words of remembrance.

THE ALTAR

We all remember, as initiates, kneeling at the altar for our obligations. And whether as an initiate or a long-serving Mason, the altar is typically the first object that claims our attention when we enter a lodge room.

The altar has been described as the rallying point of Masonic thought. It is the point within the Masonic circle at which all distinctions among men are swept away, and at which every member may stand related in a common endeavour to achieve a splendid equality of Virtue, Morality, and Brotherly Love. *(William Harvey, J.P., Provincial Grand Master of Forfarshire.)*

It is the place where we make our solemn vows and take lasting obligations.

How appropriate then, that the altar is the resting-place of the three great Lights of Masonry.

The altar holds such special significance for all Masons that certain restrictions apply as to what objects may be placed on the altar.

The only objects which should be placed on the altar are:

- The three Great Lights;
- The candidate's hands;
- The two items used during the Junior Warden's lecture, i.e. the three moveable jewels and Jacob's Ladder;
- A white ballot box for inspection;
- A closed V.O.T.S.L. of another recognized faith, on a regular basis – provided the lodge has so amended its Bylaws to specify which recognized V.O.T.S.L. it will be and also provided that Grand Lodge has approved such amendment.
- * The personal V.O.T.S.L. of the candidate, for the taking of his Ob;

* *Refer to Question #72 in the General Section of the Q&A Booklets, i.e.:*

72. Q. May another book of faith be placed on the A., in addition to the V.O.T.S.L.?

- A. In the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario most lodges, but not all, use the King James Version of the Holy Bible as the V.O.T.S.L. Freemasonry, however, is universal and other Grand Lodges choose to use other Holy Books as their V.O.T.S.L. Our Grand Lodge simply seeks from petitioners their belief in the existence of a Supreme Being.

When we have a (?) whose faith emanates from another Holy Book, it is permissible to interpose this Holy Book between the V.O.T.S.L. and the S & Cs for the Ob. After the Ob., the Holy Book is closed but left on the Altar.

It is a matter of extreme importance that we extend this courtesy to our members, and honour our commitment to universality.

It is absolutely not permitted for a **visitor** to place a book, or any object of religious significance to him, (e.g. a feather) on our altar, (or to request it to so be placed). **No such requests are to be accommodated.**