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MASONIC EDUCATION

Dress Code for Lodge

Fraternal Filler ~ A Matter of Opinion

By Bro. John Worlein, editeur du jour

"Around the Lodge", we often hear men discuss: How does one dress for Lodge?

Many Lodges have a 'dress code' for officers and Brethren; others are more casual or perhaps even host a "come as you are" attitude. Older members may feel that wearing better clothes shows 'respect', that's the way they were brought up. Younger members have likely not had this same upbringing and may view wearing a coat and tie as an unnecessary formality. Considering the wide age difference between the younger and older Masons (with no substantial middle age group), this can cause some misunderstandings and perhaps even a little friction.

While at the Mayo clinic recently, I observed how people waiting for appointments were dressed. I speculate that the average age was 60 years or older. Close to three-fourths of those viewed – both men and women - wore denims and a polo shirt. Most of the balance wore very average everyday clothing and only 3 or 4 percent wore 'dressier' clothing, sports coat or blazer for men and dresses for women. 20 or more years ago few persons would have wore denims in such a public setting and many more would have 'dressed for the occasion'. People today obviously have a very different philosophy regarding their public image than in the past, and in the main, I am in agreement.

Nonetheless, I approach the issue of dressing for 'Lodge' from a more traditional point of view. It can be very similar to dining out with friends, that special dinner at a fancy restaurant will be the same whether you dress for it or not, but it is the preparation and anticipation that helps 'set the stage' and the focus to make that event memorable.

A Lodge Communication is no different, without your personal preparation and the anticipation of a meaningful and satisfying evening; it will most likely be just another 'meeting', the waste of a clean shirt as I view it.

If you think about it, dressing for 'Lodge' consists of a lot more than just donning clothing; your attitude needs to be 'dressed' as well. A Masonic communication can be a very uplifting experience if everyone is properly prepared for it in mind and spirit.

Wearing the right clothing implies a seriousness and mindset for what will happen that evening. And is not just for your own benefit either, your brethren will notice and if there are candidates, they too will realize the sincerity involved. I'm not speaking about 'over-dressing' with gaudy or inappropriate formality, but rather in serious, workmanlike apparel and attitude.

One lodge I attend has a simple dress code – dark suit, white shirt and plain bowtie, it is not a substitute for a tux, simply attire that is dignified yet not attention getting – the attention is placed elsewhere – on Freemasonry."

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