

St. John's Lodge No. 9, F. & A. M.

Trestleboard

March 2024

Jim Russell, editor



Serving Seattle since 1860

meets: 7910 Greenwood Ave. N.
Lodge phone: (206) 623-0261
jimrussell58@frontier.com
[web: www.seattleMasons.org](http://www.seattleMasons.org)

FROM THE EAST

[Eric Koteles](#), Master



Let's introspect and reflect on our actions



WBro. Eric Koteles
Master

In our journey as Masons, we often encounter moments that test our commitment to the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Today, I address an issue of utmost sensitivity and importance—the impact of the black cube on potential candidates and the moral fabric of our Lodge.

The black cube symbolizes our sacred duty to safeguard the integrity of our fraternity, allowing us to express dissent in the admission of new members. This privilege, however, demands from us a profound sense of responsibility, fairness, and wisdom. Misusing the black cube not only inflicts deep wounds on the rejected individual but also casts a long shadow over our collective values. The color of the black cube reflects on the person's soul that misuses it.

An unfair rejection leaves a candidate grappling with feelings of doubt and rejection, possibly deterring other worthy individuals from seeking membership. Such actions undermine our Lodge's reputation as a body committed to fairness, justice, and brotherly love. It is crucial, therefore, that our decisions reflect careful, unbiased consideration, free from personal grievances or misconceptions.

As we stand guardians at the West Gate, let us wield the black cube not as a tool for exclusion but as a testament to our commitment to the fraternity's high standards. Let our votes be cast with integrity, ensuring that every decision to welcome a new brother into our fold is made with the best interests of the Lodge and the candidate at heart.

Moving forward, let us recommit to the principles that define us as Masons. Let us remember the profound impact our actions have on the lives of others and the sacred duty we bear to act with justice, compassion, and wisdom. May we continue to build a fraternity that embodies the ideals of Masonry, where every member, present and future, thrives and contributes to the greater good.

In closing, I urge you to reflect on the gravity of the black cube's role in our Lodge. Together, let us ensure that our beloved fraternity remains a beacon of light and integrity, guided by the noble principles that have stood the test of time.

Fraternally,
Worshipful Master Eric Koteles.

CALENDAR



- March 14 (6pm): Officers Meeting *teleconference*
- March 15 - 17: Lodge Leadership Retreat (Wenatchee)
- March 20 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- March 31: *Easter Sunday*
- April 3 (7pm): Education & Fellowship Night Zoom
- April 11 (6pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- April 17 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- April 21 (11am): Celebration of Spring *buffet and flamingo dancers*
- April 27 (10am): Quarterly meeting Masonic Service Bureau
- May 1 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom *teleconference*
- May 12 – *Mother's Day*
- May 8 (6pm): Board of Trustees *teleconference*
- May 9 (6pm): Officers meeting
- May 15 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- May 18 (1:30pm): Open Air FC degree Roche Harbor (*BBQ 11am*)
- May 24-25: Grand Masonic Day *Vancouver, BC*
- May 27: *Memorial Day*

St. John's Lodge No. 9 meets every 3rd Wednesday at 7910 Greenwood Ave. N., Seattle

- Social "hour" 5:30pm
- Free parking available after 6pm on the St. John Catholic Church playground. Located ½ block west of Greenwood Ave. N. on southside of N. 80th Street.
- Dinner 6:15pm
- Stated Communication 7:30pm
- Refreshments & fellowship following

ST. JOHN'S TO EXAMINE PROSPECTS AND OURSELVES

A basic principle in Freemasonry is to be respectful and fair to everyone. In fact, this is fundamental to why Freemasonry was founded and why it exists. Masonic brethren should respect each other, and this includes “our words, our actions, our appearance and even our thoughts. Inside the Lodge and outside of it, we should strive to demonstrate in every way our respect for a Brother’s honor, feelings, efforts, hopes and any other part of his life that we may contact.” (“Standard of Masonic Conduct,” Short Talk Bulletin, June 1986.)

When we entrust our investigation committee members to examine a petitioner, should we not place our faith that these brothers have the best interest of the Lodge in mind?

Yet, the following are actual instances that have occurred (*not necessarily in our Lodge*):

A man was blackballed because he was a car salesman. A Mason was blackballed from affiliating because someone thought he was trying to join a Lodge with low dues. Men are routinely blackballed in some Lodges because someone wants to see if they are interested enough to petition again. And, again, men were blackballed because someone in the Lodge said he would vote against any black man who ever applied there.

Is it any wonder that some people feel that rather than promoting brotherly love and civility, Masonic Lodges have become places where applicants are often rejected for no good reason? What can be done, so brethren and non-Masons will view St. John’s Lodge or Freemasonry as an organization where we meet in a spirit of brotherly love and affection?

And as we come to know a petitioner, let’s ask a few questions about his likes and dislikes; his expectations of St. John’s Lodge and our members (us!).

Before we ballot, we should try to ascertain his likes, his dislikes, his hobbies, his aptitudes, and his inclinations. If he has a fondness for ritualistic work, by all means be prepared to put him to work in that field. If he likes to read, introduce him to Masonic literature. If he likes to speak, why not encourage him to become a Masonic speaker? All this effort will help make this would-be member a better Mason for he will be doing what he likes. And the Craft will profit thereby.

One method of discovering the talents of a candidate and even a current member is a questionnaire. Each candidate/member is asked to answer certain questions so that the Lodge may have information on his hobbies, whether he plays a musical instrument, likes to sing, is interested in amateur theatricals, or has other interests. Thus, the aptitudes, the likes, the inclinations of the members are ascertained.

Freemasonry and justice must become synonyms. We need to raise the level of civility in all our Masonic activities to a higher level, to live by the Golden Rule, to promote the romance of Freemasonry, and to bring about true Brotherhood. To accomplish this, we’re now looking at our current vetting and balloting procedures to determine if we are meeting our Masonic objectives or whether we detract from them.

Please make your dinner reservations with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, March 15, prior to our March 20 meeting. If you need a ride, the secretary will be happy to find one for you. Do you know of a brother who has not attended Lodge in a while? Call him and ask if you can pick him up and bring him to Lodge.

Seattle Mariners

At our last communication, the Master requested whether the brothers would prefer a weekday evening or an afternoon weekend date for an outing to a Seattle Mariners baseball game. By a show of hands, a weekend day game was preferred. The Master will pursue a game date with this in mind, seeking not to conflict with our commitment to 30 tickets already purchased to the Everett AquaSox the first Saturday evening in August.



Celebration of Spring

No Family Brunch this year, but on April 21st at the Seattle Scottish Rite in Shoreline, we’ll host a family event featuring paella and flamenco dancers. Arrive at 11 am, food served by 11:30 buffet style, and flamenco performance no later than 1pm. **RSVP please.**

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FROM THE WEST

WBro. John Murray Louderback



I was employed for many years in an organization that had a pyramid shaped leadership structure where the “all-knowing big brain one” sat at the top. No information or ideas can be accepted or tolerated from the bottom because those at the top already know everything. You’re not qualified to know anything, and we certainly will not ask what you have to contribute.

What I found was that this is not leadership at all. Everyone in this structure is trying to outdo the other – to protect their position. The attitude being one must push the other guy down – for fear that the other guy may have a better idea – and therefore, they may lose their job. This is often accompanied by demeaning nicknames applied to the individual to hold them down as well as lack of training opportunities. Often in this organizational structure the evaluator often wants the same position as the person being evaluated. What result would be expected?

This form of “leadership” can only be described as one of intimidation. If you don’t do what I tell you – you will be punished!

In a pyramid structure you will not find people at the top asking others how they can contribute to the organization – for they just might find them ... then what? One may have a great idea or plan only to have the individual described as not being qualified.

Leadership is about leading from the front. Yes, it’s about getting things accomplished. It’s about having the moral courage to do that which is right despite your own personal self-interest. And it’s about educating others, enabling others, lifting others up, helping others to achieve their fullest potential – not pushing them down to protect a position of power.

We Freemasons are different in the fact that we believe that the only time one should look down upon someone is when you’re offering your hand to lift them up!

Only by enabling others can we ensure the passing on of Masonic knowledge into the future.

VISITORS FROM HONDURAS



I to r: MW Al Jorgensen, MW Christian Campbell, Master Eric Koteles, RW Ivan Cruz, MW Gale Kenney, VW Jaime Speicher

Speicher (DDGM7 of Honduras), RWBro. Ivan Cruz (Grand Secretary), and MWBro. Christian Campbell (Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Honduras). All had attended the recently concluded Conference of Grand Masters held in Seattle. The Master presented each with a St. John’s lapel pin.

It’s not often we receive visitors from Central America, but joining us for dinner and our stated communication in February were three from Honduras. Escorted to the East to receive the public Grand honors were VWBro. Jaime

FROM THE SOUTH

WBro. David Flood



You dropped it so pick it up!

Have you dropped your twenty-four inch gauge? Have your New Year’s resolutions faded away like the morning mist? Or, perhaps, you never made any this year. We answer a familiar question with the words “To improve myself in Masonry.” Masonry doesn’t happen just within the walls of our Lodge. It happens with our families, our jobs, and our society.

We can understand our working tool, the twenty-four inch gauge, in broad terms. Hours for refreshment and sleep can include our goals for personal health and fitness. Hours for our usual vocation can benefit from adhering to Stephen Covey’s advice in Seven Habits to “sharpen the saw,” in other words to upgrade a work related skill. Hours of service points to efforts we can make exercising friendship, morality and brotherly love towards our family, friends, and social, religious, and political groups of interest to us.

Here’s a suggestion. Keep it simple. First, form or renew just one goal in each of the three divisions of our day. Then - and here is a key step for success - put a specific time to attend to it on your daily calendar or to-do list. It doesn’t have to be a grand commitment of time since small actions quickly build up. Doing something, even a small something, is better than doing a large nothing.

The first day of Spring is rapidly approaching bearing a message of fresh growth and renewal. This is a nice starting point to pick things up again and continue growth towards being better men and better Masons.



MASONIC ENLIGHTENMENT

Knights Templar, Rosslyn Chapel & Freemasonry

At our February communication, WBro. Tom Lamb introduced our guest speaker WBro. Robert Cooper, the author of numerous articles and books on all aspects of Freemasonry. He lectures widely on Freemasonry, the Knights Templar, Rosslyn Chapel, and the St. Clair family.

WBro. Cooper looked in depth at the validity of the published material and the legends associated with the Rosslyn Chapel, challenging major differences between Scottish Freemasons’ view of their history and heritage and that described by those who are not Freemasons.

Following his lecture, he received a number of questions which he answered in full.

MASTER MASONS RAISED IN MARCH

Date Raised:

3/28/1953 Howard C. Harris, Sr.
3/26/1966 David G. Coghill
3/26/1969 Gerald S. Ostroff
3/31/1977 Michael J. Davis
3/27/1981 David L. Bolson
3/8/1984 Kenneth W. MacArthur
3/5/1998 Robert F. Sluder
3/28/1998 D. Joseph Lund
3/27/1999 Mark A. Gfeller
3/22/2003 Vaibhav Vijay (Vince) Kodikal
3/23/2006 Brian J. Downie
3/1/2013 Seann P. Maria



Saint Patrick's Day and Freemasonry

Steven L Harrison, 33°, PM, FMLR

Every school kid learns March 17 is the day we celebrate the life and deeds of Maewyn Succat, the second Bishop of Ireland, who is better known as Ireland's Patron Saint, St. Patrick. Those same school kids also learn Patrick's great triumph was chasing the snakes out of Ireland.

It's true, there are no snakes in Ireland; however, that's more likely because there have never been any snakes on the isolated island.



Captured and taken into slavery as a youth, Maewyn, a.k.a. Patrick, escaped to the European mainland. While a slave he had converted from paganism to Christianity, and once on the continent, he sought refuge at Marmoutier Abbey, a French monastery. There, he accepted his calling, which was to convert other

pagans to Christianity.

With that, he returned to Ireland and became very successful at making those conversions. In a manner of speaking, the "serpents" he figuratively chased from Ireland were the pagan Druids, not actual reptiles.

After a successful ministry, Patrick retired to County Down, where he died on March 17, 461 A.D. Although never officially canonized by the Catholic Church he is, in fact, recognized as a saint; and today we celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick, or St. Patrick's Day, on the anniversary of his death.

However, even in Ireland prior to the late 18th century, St. Patrick's Day was not that big of a deal. The same was true in North America, where the churches in Boston, with its large Irish population, didn't recognize the day until 1737.

"So, what," you may ask, "does this have to do with the Freemasons?"

About twenty years later, during the French-Indian War, a young Masonic Colonel recognized the morale among his troops was low and decided they needed what today we would call some "down time." It was March, at

the end of a long, brutal winter and many of the troops were Irish. It didn't take the Colonel long to figure out the best day to declare a general holiday would be St. Patrick's day.

Several years later, that same Freemason, now a general in the American Revolution, faced a very similar problem. Billeted at Morristown, New Jersey, his troops were discouraged after a long winter of devastating fighting and losses. On top of that, the preceding winter of 1779-80 was brutally cold. That General George Washington again had many Irish troops under his command and once again he saw the opportunity of celebrating St. Patrick's Day to boost morale. With that, Washington issued the order giving his troops their first day off in over two years, "The General directs that all fatigue and working parties cease for tomorrow the SEVENTEENTH instant, a day held in particular regard by the people of [Ireland]."

The respite from the ravages of war and winter went over well with the troops, some of whom were said to celebrate with a "hogshead of rum." Washington is credited with establishing the first instances of a secular celebration of St. Patrick's day, a tradition which caught on and has grown to become a major event today, with the hogshead of rum long replaced by freely flowing green beer.

Setting Maul

The "Setting Maul", in operative Masonry is used for setting stones, that is, tapping them to a firm seat in the mortar by urging them sideways into place. It is in Speculative Freemasonry a symbol, in the Third Degree, reminding us of the death of the builder of the Temple, which is said to be effected by this instrument. It is considered by some to be a symbol of untimely death. In some Lodges it is improperly used by the Master as his gavel, from which it totally differs in form and symbolic signification. The gavel is a symbol of order and decorum; the setting maul, of death by violence.

MARCH BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Date

1 Paul G. Winter
5 Jonathon D. Munday
10 Douglas L. Knight
11 David G. Long
14 James A. Wold
16 Ken Woo
19 John R. Samudio
22 Frederick M. Hutchinson
23 Charles C. Hopper
23 Gary G. Jentoft
23 D. Joseph Lund
27 Neil P. Quinn
28 David G. Coghill
30 Joseph W. Ackermann
31 Donald J. Zuck



LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER

About 20% of all members initiated stay and work in the quarries while 80% remain members but rarely help the support of the Lodge to which they join. Here's a look at an essential style of leadership in Freemasonry, *Servant Leadership*. Established by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, this style of leadership remains a focus on helping others. Characteristics are empathy, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, healing, stewardship, commitment, and listening.



THE ESSENTIALS OF ANY MASONIC BODY

Source: The Masonic Journey- Your Guide to Masonic Light
Bro. S. Godfrey – August 2019

The years that many of us individually have worked in the quarries of Freemasonry are many decades long. We constantly find ways to aid and assist the officers of our Lodge, of our Chapter, of the Rite, of Shrine, of our Council. [I will use Lodge to cover all groups onwards.]

No matter what the fraternal organization, we find ways to assist. Some of us are members of several groups and no matter how many we belong to we find ways to contribute. The many hills and valleys that the Lodges travel along their timelines, we help when the Lodge is healthy and we help when it needs propping up.

Masonic Leaders have written innumerable articles about Leadership, team building, planning, and motivation from the time Dudley David wrote his reports to the Conference of Grand Masters of North America, no matter what Lodges or Grand Lodges were doing, about 20% of all members initiated would stay and work in the quarries while 80% would remain members but rarely help the support of the Lodge to which they joined. This was the first nationally that America faced the issue of lost members and asked a man – a statistician – to devise a survey to find out what was happening. [Dudley petitioned to join a Lodge after the work he completed.]

From that time on we saw Grand Lodges and Lodge both look for ways to maintain members – reduce dues, create large class initiations, passing and raising, make festive boards delicious banquets rather than dried sandwiches, hold leadership workshops, write articles of successes, write articles from those who had found the answer to build membership bases, – some even wrote books on the subject. Rarely in North America did we see any true and constant turnaround of numbers.

This is not going to be another article on how to be a successful Lodge. It is about what my 46 years of Masonry has shown me as key elements that I will take to my grave as being the characteristics of all masonic groups, indeed groups masonic or otherwise.

All groups must have some Leadership, good Communication, and good Relationships with all members of the group. Any one of these which is missing will find

the groups working to overcome, and will struggle. These are the foundation of all groups. Once they are in place, are set, are recognized as important, then the group can begin to build.

Leadership

The highest characteristics of a leader are Honesty, Forward looking, Competent, Inspiring. These four characteristics came up as the top four from surveys conducted three times over a 15-year period. The question was asked of seventy-five thousand people around the world. The next characteristic following these four was Intelligence and this was 20 point below the last of the four characteristics. (Kouzes and Posner, *Leadership Challenge*, p. 25).

If you review these characteristics you will note that they appear to be the way a leader would respond in discussion, would clearly show what he sees in the future, that he appears to be in control, and that he relates his goals with excitement.

John Maxwell says in his *The Leadership Handbook*, that the best Leaders are Listeners.

All leaders should take time to evaluate their skills. What skills does the leader need in the job he is about to take on? On a scale of 1 to 5, one being poor, five being high quality, where do his skills land? Where does he need to build his skills, or even where can he get help to work on improving his skills?

The style of leadership in Freemasonry, in my humble opinion, is Servant Leadership. Established by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, this style of leadership remains a focus on helping others. Characteristics are empathy, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, healing, stewardship, commitment, listening.

Relationship

The priority of relationship is trust. **Stephen Covey Jr.** said in his book, *The Speed of Trust*, that to get projects done quicker requires full trust in the team. The higher the trust, the quicker work gets done. And the obverse: the weaker or lack of trust the longer work is done together, perhaps even failing to fulfill. When trust is forefront to all communications, there is no hesitation in moving ahead.

The care of words spoken is paramount in this part of the work of any group. New masons to Lodges may tend to be cautious about speaking up and letting brethren know how they feel about a situation, and contributing



with something supportive. Our ritual is a perfect exercise book on proper speech and good phrasing. You will never find a harsh word anywhere in the work of the philosophy that Freemasonry is demonstrating. A Past Grand Master had this for his theme for the year:

Positive thinking Freemasonry: If you cannot say anything positive about Freemasonry or a Freemason, best leave it unsaid.

Important to Relationships are that we spend time with all the masonic members in a Lodge, not just the few. Take time to welcome all to each of the meeting you have, even at General Purpose meetings and practices. Make it a habit of shaking the hand of every brother who comes into the Lodge room. Greet them warmly and genuinely. Give time with each with a few words of greeting and welcome.

Keep a note of requests that require you to do some homework, and get back to the brother needing assistance immediately.

John Maxwell said in his book, *Everyone communicates, few connect (2010)*:

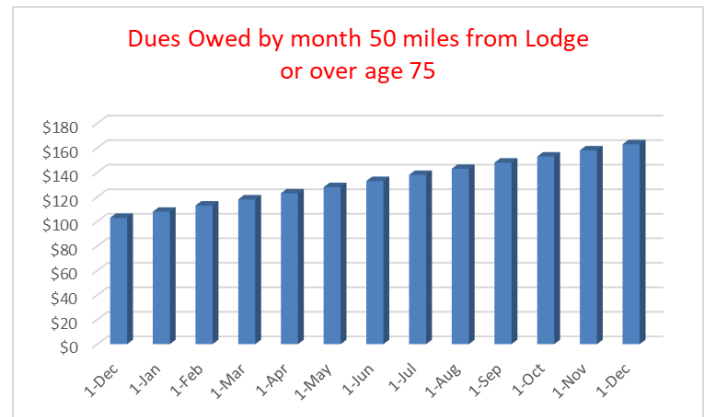
- Connecting increases your influence in all situations.
- Connecting is all about others not you
- Connecting goes beyond words
- Connecting requires energy
- Connecting is a skill more than a talent.
- Communication

As Maxwell says so clearly – Everyone communicates – few connect. Since the late 70s the methods of communications have increased with the development of electronics, internet computers – getting smaller every day it seems. Conversely some communications have been lost – or should we say are less used. Semaphore, Morse code, and yes to some extent letter writing. Fewer and fewer stamps are being used by society and sadly the personal letter from one brother to another has gone. Emails is quicker. Thank you notes received by letter post get rarer and rarer. The whole hobby of stamp collecting has almost disappeared. In the 1970's Fort Street in Victoria boasted close to 10 stamp shops where one could purchase stamps of old to complete a collection. In 2020, there is one left.

Communication, however, is still just as important today as it will ever be. The YouTube webpage is all about sharing ideas through a speaker. TED videos & podcasts, Spotify podcasts are similar. Conversations are how we express ideas and thoughts to another. **Listening** – the other part of conversations – is just as important.

Leaders have to have both relationship savvy and be good communicators. This is the reason why these three – Leadership, Relationship, and Communication – are the essence of all organizations. All three have to be prime skills for success. You lose one, or one is poorer than the other two, and the organization will break down.

Lodge Dues Climb as Momths Pass



Centralia Masonic Temple to Hold Centennial Cornerstone-Rededication

The Chronicle, Centralia, Wash.

May 6—The Centralia Masonic Temple has reached the century mark.

Since the Masonic Organization still owns the building and Freemasons continue to meet in the third-floor Lodge Room, Washington Freemason Grand Master MW Cameron Bailey will rededicate the cornerstone of the temple at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 14, as a centennial celebration.

The Centralia Masonic Temple is located at North Pearl and Magnolia streets in the historic district of Centralia.

The ceremony will take place by the temple's Magnolia Street entrance. That section of Magnolia will be closed to traffic for the event.

WASHINGTON MASONIC SERVICES SCHOLARSHIPS

Masonic Legacy Scholarship

(4 awarded at \$3,750 each)

Scottish Rite Masonic Legacy Scholarship

(8 awarded at \$3,250 each)

Masonic Youth Group Scholarship

(One per Youth Group at \$3,000 each)

Henry and Jenifer Herrmann Scholarship

(5 awarded at \$3,000 each)

To Apply: <https://www.masonscare.org> and click Youth Investment

Timelines: Opens November 1, 2023. Closes March 31, 2024

Students can apply to all scholarships they are eligible for.[are](https://www.masonscare.org)

The Greatest Masonic Testimonial I Ever Heard

by Midnight Freemason Contributor
Ken JP Stuczynski

I decided I must go, right then and there. I put aside the concerns of my usual vocation, after asking myself, “What am I waiting for? There’s only a three-hour drive between me and a dying Brother.”

Earlier that afternoon, the Worshipful Master had gotten the call. The daughter of an infirmed member wanted him to be among Lodge Brothers in his final hours. The staff of the Masonic Care Community in Utica, New York, said he may not last the night. She lived on the other side of the country and had just gotten the news, unable to make immediate arrangements to travel.

I was hesitant as Senior Warden to take it upon myself, wondering if a closer Brother who actually knew him personally should go. He had not been to Lodge since before I was a Mason and so I know I had never met him. Speaking with both daughter and Master, there didn’t seem to be anyone who could go and at some point, I just snapped. The clock was ticking. What was I waiting for?

Two hours on the Thruway, one to go, and I got the call. He had passed. When I got there, the staff respectfully had put his Masonic cap on his head, a Past Master’s Apron gently placed across his waist. There is no telling if his presence was still there; I gripped his hand in a way only a Mason could know anyway. It was strange spending a few moments with a Brother I had never met, and would still not meet until my own attendance of the Celestial Lodge. But he was my Brother, nonetheless.

I talked with his daughter over the car’s phone speaker on the way home. Even a lone Brother making the trip, and being too late, was deeply meaningful to her. And then she repaid me by giving me the greatest testimony about Freemasonry I ever heard.

It wasn’t that my Brother didn’t have other family that might have made the trip, but that early in life he had alienated his family and friends. Plainly, she explained he was a horrible husband and father. His family distanced themselves from him.

And then he became a Mason. Over a few short years, she realized he was a changed man — a better man. She was the only one in her family willing to see a difference. And that difference was profound. He did not die without family that loved him, after all. And he had been assured a Brother was on their way, perhaps the last words he had heard.

I have seen a number of Brothers grow, in things like confidence, gentility, and general amicability. Looking back, have other Brothers seen such changes in me? Am I a better husband, father, friend? I realized that day the best testimony of one’s value from Freemasonry may not be their own, but from those they Love.

← Bro. Ken JP Stuczynski is a member of West Seneca Lodge No. 1111 and recently served as Master of Ken-Ton Lodge No. 1186. As webmaster for NYMasons.Org, he is on the Communications and Technology Committees for the Grand Lodge of the State of New York. He is also a Royal Arch Mason and 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, serving his second term as Sovereign Prince of Palmoni Council in the Valley of Buffalo, NMJ. He also coordinates a Downtown Square Club monthly lunch in Buffalo, NY. He and his wife served as Patron and Matron of Pond Chapter No .853 Order of the Eastern Star.



George Washington was just 20 years old when he took his first oath on this Bible.

George Washington, destined to become leader of a new nation emerging from the shot and shell of the American Revolution, was just 20 years old when he took his first oath as a Mason on Nov. 4, 1752.

The Avenues We Choose

In our pursuit of fulfillment, the avenues we choose to invest our time, money, and energy profoundly shape our journey. Freemasonry stands as a beacon among these paths, offering a unique form of wealth transcending the material and venturing into the realms of the spiritual and moral.

Unlike traditional investments measured by the accumulation of tangible assets, the Masonic journey enriches us with virtues that illuminate the mind and elevate the spirit.

Our commitment to Freemasonry is an investment in self-improvement and community service. It demands not only financial contributions but also the devotion of time and the engagement of one’s full being in its teachings.

This might seem a steep price, but when compared to other investments, ***the returns of Freemasonry are of a nature money cannot buy.***

Where stocks and real estate offer financial security and physical comfort, Freemasonry awards its members a wealth of wisdom, moral uprightness, and a deep sense of brotherhood. These are treasures that remain invaluable across the vicissitudes of life.

Our investment in Freemasonry is unparalleled in its ability to enrich our life on a profound level.

As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, let us cherish and deepen our investment in Freemasonry, recognizing it as a lighthouse guiding us toward a richer, more meaningful, richer existence.

~ MasonicFind.

City of Seattle: Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (URMs) Subject to Lawful Retrofitting

All Seattle Masonic buildings subject to retrofitting

In the next 50 years, Seattle has an 86 percent chance of experiencing a magnitude 6.8 earthquake and a 33 percent chance of experiencing a magnitude 8 earthquake. The Seattle City Council is on track to adopt a mandatory unreinforced masonry retrofit ordinance to improve the life safety of over 1,100 collapse-hazard buildings. The required earthquake retrofit will reduce the probability of injuries, fatalities, and long-term displacement to the over 22,000 people who live or work in URM buildings.

So, what or why are we concerned? Most of this city's Masonic Centers are of this construction. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. The City is looking at requiring retrofitting some buildings (churches, civic centers, and others in which Masonic Centers fit into this category) within the next seven years.

In December 2021, the City Council passed [Resolution 32033](#) which establishes the framework for a mandatory retrofit ordinance for Seattle's 1,100 unreinforced masonry buildings (URMs). These buildings, typically built before 1945, are made of brick or clay tile without structural reinforcement and are prone to collapse in an earthquake.

The primary goal of the future URM Retrofit Ordinance is to protect life safety by reducing the risk of injury from collapse of URM buildings in the event of an earthquake, additional goals include:

- Preserving Seattle's historically and culturally significant landmarks and structures that contribute to neighborhood character
- Improving the City's resilience to earthquakes
- Minimizing the impact of the retrofit program on vulnerable populations to the extent financially feasible

In October 2023, City Council passed [Resolution 32111](#) which directs SDCI to use the Draft URM Retrofit Technical Standard to inform a Voluntary URM Retrofit Ordinance. This future ordinance, with a goal of adoption in mid/late 2024, will establish a compliance standard to recognize URMs as retrofitted. It should be noted that a voluntary seismic improvement on its own does not trigger a Substantial Alteration designation.

The long-term goal remains adopting a mandatory retrofit ordinance with supportive resources in place, as directed by Resolution 32033 (2021).

To implement Resolution 32033, SDCI has begun work through two separate tracks: *policy development*, focused on communication and financial resources, and *technical standard development*, focused on the update to the 2012 Draft Technical Standards for the retrofit of URM buildings.

Policy Development:

Work is underway, in coordination with other departments and external partners, to develop a communication strategy for the community (including building owners as well as those living in current URM buildings) and identify resources to reduce the costs and impacts associated with seismic retrofits. A series of working groups have been developed which are focused on communication and financial resources.

The URM Policy Development Working Groups include:

1. A Technical Standard Briefing Working Group with the intent of providing a forum for questions and answers on the retrofit technical standard.
2. A Communications Working Group with the intent of developing materials to support community engagement and acceptance.
3. A Funding Working Group with the intent of exploring ways to mitigate the cost of URM retrofits.
4. An Owner and Tenant Needs Working Group with the intent of addressing physical and economic displacement associated with URM retrofits.

Technical Standard:

A team of structural engineers have been updating the 2012 Technical Standard to reflect changes in building codes and a better understanding of Seattle's earthquake hazard.

Added Project Benefits

Additional benefits of the mandatory URM retrofit ordinance include increasing the earthquake resilience of many historic, landmark, and culturally significant buildings throughout the city.

The End Result

An ordinance requiring the mandatory earthquake retrofit of URMs will be adopted. The earliest a mandatory ordinance adoption could occur is summer 2025 due to the resources needed to support building owners and tenants throughout the retrofit process. Building owners will have advance notice of this ordinance, retrofit requirements, compliance timelines, and available supportive resources. The future mandatory ordinance will include a baseline retrofit standard for URM buildings, requiring stabilization of the building to reduce probability of collapse in an earthquake. The baseline retrofit standard will not bring URMs up to current code; building owners are encouraged to consult a structural engineer to retrofit to higher performance standards and consider additional resiliency factors such as energy efficiency and emission reduction upgrades during the retrofit process.



Greenwood Masonic Center - St. John's meeting place

St. John's Lodge No. 9



April 21st, Celebration of Spring. SR Center
Shoreline