



## *The Overy Papers*

### **Number 24 - The Sponsor's and Mentor's obligation**

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

This paper is based on the talk of Author: Donald M. Scandrett

As our records show many newly-made Masons drop out in the early stages of their Masonic career.

Is this their fault, I ask???

And I answer No! It is our fault!!!

So tonight I will concentrate on the Sponsors and Mentors.

In many lodges the sponsors and mentor of the new members, start ignoring him before the ink from their signature had dried on his petition for initiation.

They were often not there for his initiation, his passing or his raising or maybe they just ignored him in Lodge.

They failed to assist him with his memory work. They failed to introduce him throughout our jurisdiction by not inviting him out to visit other lodges with them. They failed to phone him on a regular basis or visit him, to ensure he is not having any difficulties with his memory work. They failed to meet his wife to ensure his wife felt part of the Masonic community and so supported him.

We must realize he probably does not know the protocol for our functions and all of us must never assume he does.

So basically, he was not actually just alone but also not made welcome. This left him with the feeling he is not yet a part of our Masonic fraternity and subsequently lost interest in his lodge and he never returned.

I felt this when I affiliated with our Lodge even though I had been a Master Mason for many years. Our Ancient ritual was totally foreign to me and nobody helped me through the difficult task of becoming an accepted member. I will never forget sitting outside the quite Lodge only to find out everyone had gone to Sedrow Whoolly and nobody had bothered to explain to me what it was all about.

So my brethren this attitude is OUR fault, not those members who lost interest and never bother to come back. They lost interest because they were not stimulated in the lodge, or the festive board that followed. Their Sponsors or Mentors forget their obligations and most of all; they were often generally ignored or disregarded amongst the lodge members who should be taking these new members under their wing and making him feel welcomed and part of the circle.

Would you believe one Entered Apprentice phoned me up and asked me if he could be called Brother yet?

It is very important this procedure should start with the Introduction of the Candidate to Freemasonry. Grand Lodge have provided us with "The 6 steps to Initiation" and although we would not be able to do it all, the important first 4 steps can easily be done.

Of course this may mean we could have a high failure rate at the beginning of the investigation but at least those who do pass this first basic introduction to our fraternity will be very likely to continue.

The first contact is a phone call where the very basic ideas and concepts of Freemasonry are explained. If this is satisfactory he is met, usually at a coffee shop, and a more comprehensive question and answer takes place between the Candidate and one of the Brethren that usually lasts about one hour.

At the end of the meeting if the candidate still wishes to continue he would receive a package that includes such items as "Address to the Brethren", "Grand Lodge PDF booklet", Landmarks, and "History of Freemasonry" for his perusal at home.

The "Prospective Candidate is then advised that, "no one is ever asked to become a freemason, **you**, must approach Freemasonry and with this understanding it will be your responsibility to call to arrange any future meetings."

A "Prospective Candidate" report is then passed to the secretary who if the report is satisfactory will pass it to the Investigation Committee to peruse prior to their own Investigation.

I was introduced to this process during the summer. The first failed at the initial phone call and the second candidate was what I felt would make a good mason but it turned out he was the one who decided he did not want to be a Brother.

It was his choice and all we wasted was about an hour of our time.

But if the Candidate still wished to join, the Worshipful Master will then select two Sponsors to carry out the additional investigation. The Sponsor should be at least one WBro. and one MM who will investigate the suitability of the new prospective Candidate and report back to the Lodge.

Many candidates will not be known to the Sponsors and as they carry out their in depth study they should get to know him and maybe his wife to ensure he is comfortable with becoming one of us and we are comfortable with him joining us.

You should be ensuring that he is cared for, supported and directed throughout his becoming a *Master Mason*.

This could last longer and must continue until such time he is either accepted into the circle, which should be automatic, considering our purpose, or until he is comfortable enough on his own to build his own friendships amongst the brethren.

With me the friendship lasted a life time. Both my sponsors have gone to the Grand Lodge above now but the son and grandson of one have become masons and I keep in touch with them and his wife even though they live in England. Such friendships are priceless and to me they are one of the important jewels of Freemasonry.

At this point the primary work of the sponsors will be completed but they will be expected to keep their eye on him and make sure he is made to feel comfortable and welcomed especially if the mentor is unavailable.

### **This leads us to the Mentor.**

Once he is voted on and accepted the worshipful Master should then select a mentor for the new member.

This person will look after the member and as it is almost a full time position it will be necessary to use someone who is not an officer of the lodge.

Don't just assume that because our new Brother receives his monthly summons he feels welcome to attend the regular meetings. Ensure you remind him of the meetings and offer to drive him there for the first few times. At the beginning you should be there from his entering the lodge, signing the porch book, introducing him to members he has not yet met, and sit with him. After the close of the lodge, sit with him at the festive board and once again introduce him to other members.

So if you are going to be a mentor to someone, be there for him from start to finish. I realize that many of us, due to family and work commitments, cannot be there all of the time. But there are always the two sponsors who should be willing to assist.

I feel this could continue up to one year after he takes the sublime degree.

Remember that every new member we lose, we are also losing the possibility of the ten people he may have sponsored throughout his Masonic life. If we, as a fraternity, are to survive, we must remember the duties and obligations owed to our new members.

So when you sponsor someone or are chosen to be a Mentor, be there for him. New members are the life blood of the lodge and it is important they, from the beginning are taught that being an active member of the lodge and getting involved is a very important function.

We were all told that as a new member we are expected to spend at least two evenings a month in Lodge. I realize age and distance can be an issue but why is it that so many of our lodge members have forgotten that, even ones that went through the chair of King Solomon and do not bother to come on a regular basis.

And finally remember the famous quote:

"After all is said and done, a lot more will usually be said than done.

Thank you and whatever I say may we continue in peace and harmony.

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