



To the lady of the new Entered Apprentice Mason:

A man in your family has now received his First Degree in the Masonic Fraternity. This will undoubtedly raise some questions in your mind and we hope the following will be helpful in answering those questions.

Sincerely,

MASTER: \_\_\_\_\_

Lodge: \_\_\_\_\_

## **AMERICAN CANADIAN GRAND LODGE AF&AM e.V. (ACGL)**

Within the United Grand Lodges of Germany (VGLvD)  
Brotherhood of Freemasons

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## **FOREWORD**

You are now a Mason's lady and we take this opportunity to extend our first official greeting to you.

While you personally have not joined our organization there are certain things that may be helpful for you to know in the future. This little booklet will explain some of those things.

At the same time there are matters of general interest about your Mason and his new organization we think you would also like to know.

Save this booklet as it is very unlikely that the information contained herein will materially change in the years to come.

## **WHEN AND WHERE DID IT BEGIN?**

The Fraternity of "Ancient Free and Accepted Masons" is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. It has its symbolic roots in antiquity and is directly descended from associations of "operative masons", the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages who travelled through Europe employing the secrets and skills of their crafts. When cathedral building was on the decline in the 17th century, the "operative masons", or "freemasons" as they were known, began to accept as members those who were not actually members of the

'Masons' craft (or guild), calling these new members "Accepted" masons. From that point on the masons lodges became more 'speculative' in character, as opposed to 'operative'. In time, lodges were formed composed wholly of speculative masons.

In the year 1717, four lodges which had been meeting in London and Westminster formed the first 'Grand Lodge' by meeting jointly and then electing a Grand Master. Ever since

that time, the administrative authority within a territory or state has been the Grand Lodge; the extent of the Grand Lodge's authority is called its jurisdiction. In actual practice, aside from the actual territorial limitations, 'jurisdiction' over all its members, wherever located, is exercised by virtually every recognized Grand Lodge.

Freemasonry was brought to the United States by the early settlers, and Benjamin Franklin, in an early newspaper published by him, referred to a Lodge of Freemasons as being in existence in Philadelphia in 1730. Throughout the world, there are approximately six million Masons, with some four million of them being in the United States as Members of Lodges under the Jurisdiction of forty-nine Grand Lodges.

Masonry is not, contrary to common belief, a secret society, but rather a "society with secrets". If it were a secret society Masons would not wear Masonic jewelry or publicly mark their many Temples.

Masonry has many traditions and customs which, of course, are known only to its members.

## **WHAT DOES FREEMASONRY MEAN TO A MEMBER?**

It would be difficult to summarize in a brief space all that a Mason is expected to learn through his membership, but, briefly, Freemasonry encourages a Member to apply to his daily living broad general principles of morality. Membership is limited to adult males who can meet the recognized qualifications and standards of character and reputation.

Freemasonry should not interfere with duties that a man owes to his God, his country, his neighbor, his family, or himself, but rather by learning to understand, to live and to practice the

fundamental precepts of the organization, he has an opportunity for self-improvement.

It helps a good man become a better man --- a better father, husband, brother, or son.

## **THE APRON**

Of primary importance and one of the main reasons for this booklet is an explanation of a Mason's white leather apron, its significance and importance.

The apron is perhaps the most distinguishing badge of a Mason. It has, in all ages, been cherished by the rich, the poor, the high, the low.

It is his for life. He will never receive another one and has, therefore, been cautioned to take it home and store it in a flat position and protected from the light. It is not necessary for him to bring it to Lodge as cloth aprons are provided by most Lodges for meetings. He should bring it back to Lodge when he receives the Fellowcraft degree, and then again when he receives the Master Mason degree, so the dates and the necessary signatures can then be added under the flap!

Its sole function now is to be placed upon him at his death if his nearest living relative chooses. Its moral application is explained to a Mason during its presentation. Its physical usage is now revealed to you.

## **MASONIC FUNERAL**

Every Mason in good standing with his Lodge at the time of his death is entitled to Masonic services --- even a Masonic burial. The latter is a service that begins at the funeral home and concludes at graveside.

The services consist of an impressive, yet simple ceremonial rite, and there are generally no expenses involved for the service itself; it is performed by a local Lodge upon request.

A Masonic service is usually performed on its own, but there have been instances where coordination with a presiding minister and the surviving family members have resulted in the Masonic service being performed in conjunction with religious rites, if desired.

When a Mason dies, Masonic services will be rendered only upon request. The Lodge will not solicit a request for Masonic services, but upon hearing of the death of one of its members will make the proper gestures by dispatching either a letter of condolence or appropriate card, and then wait to hear if it can be of any service to you.

It is important to notify the Lodge of the passing of one of its members, and this can be done through any local Lodge in the city or town you may reside in at the time.

Aside from funeral services, each Lodge holds what we call a "Lodge of Sorrow" or memorial service for its deceased members, which can only be accomplished, naturally, when the lodge is notified of the death of one of its members.

## **LET US KNOW**

Contacting the Lodge is not a difficult matter at all; a Mason's dues card bears the name and number of his Lodge. By checking in any local telephone book (in the United States, as an example) you can generally locate one or more local Lodges and through them, notify your Mason's Lodge.

If this fails, or proves difficult, you can always contact the Grand Secretary of the American Canadian Grand Lodge here

in Germany by writing the Grand Secretary, A.C.G.L. or per Email (acgl@me.com).

Should the Grand Lodge move its headquarters at any time in the future, simply refer to the proper address on the latest dues card in possession of your Mason.

## **ILLNESS**

In the event our member becomes ill we want to know. Again, the same method of notifying us can be used as explained above. In the past, members have fallen ill without our knowing it and their loved ones have been displeased with us for a seeming act of disregard when in fact we have been unaware of the problem. Please feel free to call or write us and keep us informed.

## **MEETINGS**

Lodges meet in regular monthly business sessions and on such other days as are necessary to conduct ritualistic degree work. While every Mason's attendance is earnestly solicited, yet it is not intended that a Lodge should interfere with one's regular vocation or duty to family.

Your Mason has invested time and money in joining our order and for years to come will be paying annual dues. He can best receive all that is his by frequently participating in its deliberations and events.

We hope that you will approve and encourage him to attend regularly and we hope that you will join us whenever proper, especially during planned social events scheduled by the Lodge, the District, or even the Grand Lodge.

## **TITLE**

In the years to come it is reasonable to assume that some time while you are accompanying your Mason someone will address him as "Brother".

"Brother" is neither a sentimental nor a familiar form of address, but is a title- a distinction and an honor - indicating that he has been recognized by another as a Mason.

Brother is a title dating back to ancient times and is used in place of Mister or a similar title to which one is entitled by virtue of his station in life.

In Masonry all men are equal, as no man is regarded for his worldly wealth or honor, and all distinctions are cast away. The title "Brother" is taken very seriously by most Masons.

## **ARE THERE MASONIC-ORIENTED ORGANIZATIONS WHICH MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY MAY JOIN?**

There are several groups to which ladies related to Master Masons may apply for membership if they desire, but this is entirely optional. If there are children in the family, they may find interests in Masonic-oriented youth groups (two prominent examples are the Order of Rainbow for girls and the Order of Demolay for boys) whose teaching of patriotism and love of family will, we are sure, be pleasing to you.

## **THE GRAND LODGE**

Your Mason's Lodge is one of many within the American Canadian Grand Lodge, AF&AM of Germany. All Lodges throughout the world are organized within the so-called Grand Lodge system.

As an example, each State and each Province in Canada has a Grand Lodge comprised of all the recognized Lodges within its territorial jurisdiction.

Masonry in Germany has a long and distinguished history, dating back to at least 1740 when the first Grand Lodge was established on German soil by Frederick the Great, in Prussia.

The American Canadian Grand Lodge (A. C. G.L.) is one of five Grand Lodges in Germany, part of the federation we know as the United Grand Lodges of Germany. This federation came about as the result of several varying systems which have existed in Germany for a great number of years, to which members of the American, Canadian, and British Forces serving in Europe since the end of World War II became attached when they formed what we call English-speaking Lodges. In due time, these English speaking lodges were organized into "District" and then "Provincial" Grand Lodges, and granted the full rights and privileges associated with autonomy when they became Grand Lodges in their own right.

Originally conceived as a sort of temporary solution for the English-speaking Lodges under the United Grand Lodges of Germany, to facilitate correspondence and the necessary government of these Lodges in accord with the world-wide system of Masonic administration, the American Canadian Grand Lodge continued to grow to the point where it now ranks as the third largest Grand Lodge within the United Grand Lodges of Germany. Its members are spread throughout the world and it is very probable that military members in particular will never be very far from a number of other "A.C.G.L." members, no matter where they are stationed or retired.

The only real problem that exists is due to the particular circumstances resulting from constant reassignment of military and government personnel. This results in fairly frequent

changes in the staff of these Lodges, including the Secretary, and loss-of-contact. Sometimes this is due to the inability or failure of a Lodge to maintain some form of constant and frequent communication with its far-flung members; very often it is the result of forgetfulness by the members, who fail to notify their Lodge or the Grand Secretary of their address changes.

In this respect, you can be very helpful in safeguarding your Mason's membership rights and privileges, by ensuring his dues are paid annually (in early January), and advising the Lodge of address changes when you notify others such as relatives, friends, insurance companies, etc.! The permanent mailing address of the Lodge is generally on the member's dues card, but contact can always be made by simply making the dues payment check or money order payable to the Lodge, and sending it, together with a brief note with your name and address and other details, direct to the Grand Secretary of the "A.C.G.L.", whose address is printed on the dues card.

Lodges will generally communicate regularly with their members, but mailings often go astray when the address is incorrect. The so-called 'Privacy Act' in the United States makes it rather difficult to contact "lost" members ... so you can see your assistance in this respect will be gratefully appreciated.

Finally, it should be noted that membership in any of the many associated and appendant organizations allied to Masonry is dependent on good standing in the Lodge ... which, because of the proliferation of so many other organizations, is popularly known as the 'Blue Lodge'. Membership in the 'Blue Lodge' is a prerequisite for membership in almost all the other bodies, which is simply another good reason for maintaining fairly close contact with the Lodge.

## **"MOTHER LODGE"**

This Lodge, where your Mason was received into Freemasonry for the first time, will always be known as his "Mother" Lodge, for reasons you can well understand. Once he has become a Master Mason, he can join (affiliate) other Lodges and still keep his membership in his Mother Lodge, unless the regulations of the other lodge(s) specifically prohibit membership in more than one lodge (some Grand Lodges do not permit what we call "dual" or "plural" membership).

Most Masons develop such an attachment for their Mother Lodge, they will never withdraw or terminate membership there; we hope your Mason will, in time, develop the same feeling toward his Mother Lodge.

## **TERMINATING MEMBERSHIP**

Every Mason is charged to remain a member in good standing always. However, when circumstances require him to terminate membership in his Mother Lodge, he can do so by submitting a request (over his signature) either directly to his Lodge or to the Grand Secretary, asking for a "demit" (sometimes spelled "dimit"). That is the Masonic certificate of discharge from a Lodge, and is usually granted automatically by the Lodge at a regular meeting, if dues are paid for the current calendar year and there are no Masonic reasons for denying such demit.

## **MASONIC ASSISTANCE**

Across the United States is a network of Masonic Service Association offices. If, while traveling, dire need of aid should arise, consult the telephone directory of a major city for the number. If none is listed, a local Lodge will be able to make connections for you.

We hope the information in this booklet has been helpful and informative, and will assist you in better understanding your Mason's role in life, his relationship to his Lodge and the fraternity the world over, and the relationship of his Lodge to the Grand Lodge.

Again, we urge you to save this booklet and refer to it when questions arise in the future. Be assured you can always contact the Lodge (if contact is lost with the current Secretary) by writing or calling the Grand Secretary at any time, at the address shown on the dues card.

Here again, we publish the address and telephone number for your convenience.

**The Grand Secretary  
AMERICAN CANADIAN GRAND LODGE  
AF&AM e.V. (ACGL)**

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