



IOWA SUPPLEMENT

W Charles Smithson
Grand Commander

Greg Kenkel
Supplement Editor

kt.iayorkrite.org

Greetings Sir Knights:

We are fresh off the heels of a York Rite Festival in Des Moines that brought in around 25 new Sir Knights for the state. A great turnout. Thank you to everyone who participated from performing parts, to moving props, and recruiting these men.

Turning from that, we spend a great deal of time trying to answer the question of why we join Masonry and stay active. The demands of family, occupation, and simply time and money often force us to question ourselves (let alone those individuals in our lives who question us).

Apart from that, we spend a lot of time trying to understand Masonry. The esoteric nature, the mysticism, the "making good men better," the history, the connections to something larger than us. All of those topics that invariably show up in at least once in every magazine, every educational conference, and is the standard "education report" for most Masonic meetings.

I have participated in those discussions *ad nauseum* and I often leave those interactions somewhat unfulfilled. There was also times this year, for reasons that need not be discussed herein, when I contemplated whether or not it was time for me to make some major adjustments in my Masonic participation. However, some things happened that not only changed my mind, but also gave me a better answer and perspective of why we join and stay active.

On some rare occasions, the lady in my life goes with me to the post office box where I get my Masonic and law practice mail. She will then read me the return address or try and identify the letter so I can have her read me the mail that is not protected by attorney-client privilege. It is a way for me to get my mail opened and read while being able to drive to save time (again, she never sees confidential information).

Anyway, a few weeks ago she read me the return address and I told her to open it as it was going to be an invitation to a Grand Lodge reception or notice of some meeting. I know the Mason who sent me the letter, but I have never spent time with this individual. We know next to nothing about each other and have never sat at the same table for a Masonic meal. So you can see why I drew the conclusion that I did.

She starts to read the letter and he is sending me a personal note about one of the magazine articles I had previously written and how much he enjoyed it. I could hear the pride increasing in her voice as she read the letter. Here what a Brother who took time out of his day to send me a very nice note - and he had no reason to do so. He is not someone looking to be appointed to something. He does not need or want any favors or work from me. He was not complaining about anything (yes, I get plenty of those communications). He was simply going out of his way to express thanks for an article. It had a deep impact on me. The fact that it also scored "Masonic points" with my lady also was beneficial. We need to take more time to let the Brothers, Companions, and Sir Knights in our lives know that we appreciate them or simply thank them.

I was having a very difficult day of work. It seemed like it was nothing but incompetence and fighting. This was after a long stretch of trying times in my professional life. That night I had been invited to a Sir Knight's house. We enjoyed an evening of steak, wine, and great conversation. We discussed Masonry and politics for several hours. No contention, no drama, no arguments.

Just two men getting together and enjoying the company of each other. It is times like this that I will treasure the rest of my life. We need more times like this. Men enjoying the company of other men in a relaxed social setting. Unfortunately, our schedules are often too busy for this activity to occur frequently enough. A solution to that needs to be worked on.

There were other examples that also helped me get regrouped, recharged, and reinvigorated. A Brother who calls because he was proud of an award he received and wanted to share the news with me as a friend. The Brother who sends me a text to see how I am doing. Another who sends me a political joke every Friday. One who gives me updates on men's clothing sales. And so many other countless interactions with other Masons.

This, my Brothers, Companions, and Sir Knights, is ultimately what the fraternity is about. Everything else we read about, discuss, and wrestle with is great. Yes, I am one of those who thinks that if you understand Masonry you have the keys to understanding some of the great mysteries of life and the universe. However, the basic foundation is the relationships that we create with each other. All of us need to take more time and reach out in a positive manner to each other. It does not take much. A text, an email, a letter, a quick phone call. Trust me; these communications can definitely make a positive difference in the lives of your Brothers.