



If you were ever in the service - you well know the meaning of hurry up and wait.

That's exactly what is happening to our brothers who have petitioned to become a Royal Arch Mason. They're hurrying up to get their petition in, and then having to wait. Many, or should I say, a lot of Chapters are minimally staffed and therefore are unable to confer the required degrees. And let's face it my fellow companions, knowledge and delivery of the Ritual isn't exactly easy. And taking shortcuts with the Ritual to rush someone through the necessary degrees is a no-no. Degrees are stories and lessons to be remembered always, just like those of the Craft Lodge.

Young folks today do not have the time to be hanging on and waiting. When you have someone interested in becoming a Royal Arch Mason, it is your duty to give that brother an estimated date as to when he can expect to receive his degrees.

All too often a brother is elected to receive his degrees and only manages to get as far as the Mark Master and then he's put on hold. Often, too long. Many of you will disagree with my philosophy - but I believe when a person takes the time to petition for membership, he should receive all of his degrees shortly after being elected, versus linger on and wonder if he'll ever finish. Companions, we've all witnessed this and it is sad.

Now, to get around this all together there is another way and a far better way to expedite the process of membership. Yes, it will take planning, but the end result will be satisfaction for all concerned.

I believe having a "Degree Festival" twice yearly throughout the Commonwealth is the only way to eliminate long waiting periods between degrees. Quarterly would be even better. Festivals allow groups of brothers to be exalted in a one-day Convocation. And knowing the schedule of these Festivals makes it easier to inform the candidate when he can expect to be exalted. Personally, I think this is the only way to go if we are to increase membership versus a one at a time hit and miss attempt at the local level.

Receiving degrees at the local Chapters is absolutely wonderful, provided we have the time and resources. This is not always the case. Mainly due to manpower and/or Ritual

proficiency. I have attended Festivals, and to be candid - the floor work is unbelievable and so impressive. The degree teams that conduct these events are to be commended for their Ritual expertise. We owe degree work like this to each and every brother who is desirous of taking "The Best First Step to More Light." By doing this it would rid the "hurry up and wait" process and avoid any shortcuts in rushing a candidate through the Capitular and Cryptic Degrees of our Order.

Each individual District needs to confer with the Grand Chapter for discussion and implementation of a speedier way to step up membership. If we don't do something, that light at the end of the tunnel will go dark.

Make it a point to be heard. The brass at Grand Chapter needs your input. If they don't know the problem how can you expect them to fix it? Food for thought! Go for it!

So Mote it Be!



Edward (Ed) Tooma

High Priest - Shenandoah 17