

Chapter VIII

The Masonic Service Association

WHAT IS THE MSA?

Excerpts from The Short Talk Bulletin: "The Masonic Service Association" October 1988

The Masonic Service Association of the United States was formed in 1919 to provide services to its member Grand Lodges that they would find difficult to provide for themselves. Thus the national voice that the MSA has is dedicated to SERVICE to the Masonic community.

Our statement of purpose is:

The Masonic Service Association of the United States is a Servant of Freemasonry. Formed of and supported by American Grand Lodges, It Is A Voice They May Command To Speak, A Hand They Can Move To Action, that the great heart of the Fraternity be made manifest and that the will of a United Craft may be done.

We do not have, nor do we seek, jurisdictional authority of any kind! Our purpose is not to set policy, issue edicts, or otherwise become involved in Masonic jurisprudence or law-making. That is the responsibility of each sovereign Grand Jurisdiction!

The following is a brief description of what we are and what we do.

EDUCATIONAL -- INFORMATIONAL

Feel free to contact the MSA for an up-to-date copy of our Catalog which lists our publications, films and videotapes available to Freemasons throughout the country.

Our best known publication is the Short Talk Bulletin sent to all lodges and Grand Lodge officers in our member jurisdictions. We also mail this publication to our large subscriber list. This booklet is published each month on a Masonic or Masonic related subject. We now have over 700 issues in print.

We also have digests on many subjects such as "Think Tank For Junior Wardens", "How to Dress Up Your Speech" and "Leadership" which are intended to make Freemasons more knowledgeable as they develop their leadership qualities.

Video tapes and films, usually for any audience, can be rented or purchased. Some of these films and tapes were prepared by Grand Lodges and made available to the MSA for wider distribution, while others were produced by the MSA itself.

DISASTER RELIEF

The Association, after investigation, issues appeals to Masonic bodies throughout the United States and Canada for funds to relieve the human needs of Masons and their families resulting from disaster and catastrophes. The administrative costs of such appeals are absorbed by the Association. All relief funds collected are forwarded to the Grand Lodge in the afflicted area for distribution to those in need.

The following list gives an idea of the many catastrophes to which MSA has responded on behalf of the Grand Lodges of the United States and Canada.

SUMMARY OF MASONIC RELIEF

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Japanese Earthquake Relief, 1923 | 1,577.25 |
| Florida Hurricane, 1926..... | 114,236.97 |
| Mississippi Valley Flood, 1927 | 608,291.91 |
| Puerto Rico Hurricane, 1928 | 86,316.58 |
| Florida Hurricane, 1928..... | 107,622.14 |
| Kentucky Flood, 1937 | 33,771.01 |
| Austrian Relief Fund, 1938..... | 5,202.36 |
| Chilean Earthquake, 1939..... | 7,387.27 |
| Masonic Service Centers, 1941 to June 30, 1946..... | 1,538,334.42 |
| Philippine Relief Fund, 1945..... | 46,798.46 |
| European Masonic Relief, 1946 to December 31, 1955 | 206,780.51 |
| Ecuador Relief Fund, 1949 | 20,734.51 |
| Manitoba Relief Fund, 1950 | 19,210.44 |
| Holland Relief Fund, 1953..... | 29,985.32 |
| Tamaulipas Relief Fund, 1955 | 18,024.42 |
| Miscellaneous Relief, 1958 | 1,000.00 |
| Chilean Relief, 1960 | 11,436.75 |
| Cuban Relief, 1961-62..... | 54,718.90 |
| Louisiana Hurricane Relief, 1965..... | 59,395.54 |
| Italy: Flood Relief, 1967 | 20,008.68 |
| Mississippi Relief, 1969 | 87,367.33 |
| Peru Relief, 1970..... | 19,220.82 |
| Philippine Flood Relief, 1972..... | 5,960.00 |
| Nicaragua Earthquake Relief, 1973..... | 13,696.60 |
| Honduran Relief, 1974..... | 7,320.00 |
| Guatemala Relief, 1976 | 66,130.26 |
| Mississippi Flood Relief, 1979..... | 80,560.63 |
| Dominican Republic Disaster, 1979 | 32,859.55 |
| Chilean Earthquake, 1985..... | 36,927.00 |
| Florida Hurricane, 1985..... | 29,244.00 |
| Mexico Earthquake, 1985 | 6,220.00 |
| Columbian Earthquake, 1985..... | 100.00 |
| Chilean Flood, 1987 | 32,500.00 |
| Hospital Visitation Program, 7/1/46-12/31/87 | 9,456,046.00 |

TOTAL:12,870,185.63

HOSPITAL VISITATION PROGRAM

Perhaps the best known of all the MSA Programs is the Hospital Visitation Program which provides assistance and service to our sick or wounded veterans and is truly "Freemasonry working at its best!"

The Masonic Service Association of the United States conducts an active Hospital Visitation Program in more than 140 Veterans Administration Medical Centers, several state operated Veterans Homes, and in a number of Military Hospitals, using hundreds of volunteers who contribute more than one-half million volunteer hours of service each year. This program is wholly financed by the voluntary contributions of Masons and Masonic bodies. More than nine million dollars have been expended in the operation of this Program since 1946.

The Masonic Hospital Visitation Program, working on behalf of all Freemasons, gives us an opportunity to show the community at large what a "great heart" our fraternity truly has!

The Masonic Service Association of the United States salutes all Freemasons for making this outstanding program possible!

The MSA exists solely to serve Freemasonry through all of these wonderful programs.

We do these things in your name!

This logo is now the official insignia of the Masonic Service Association of the United States. Using the Square and Compasses, widely recognized as the visible symbol of Freemasonry, we have



added the Book of Knowledge and the Eternal Flame. Both of these symbols are visible expressions of MSA involvement with the Masonic Fraternity and the public at large.

The Book of Knowledge symbolizes learning and faith since knowledge is available both through reading books and reading The Book or The Holy Bible, the rule and guide of our faith!

The Eternal Flame symbolizes hope and is best expressed through the hope given to patients by our Hospital Visitors through our National Hospital Visitation Program.

Hope is also given to those who have suffered natural catastrophes and have had an appeal made on their behalf through our Disaster Relief Program.

How To Use *The Short Talk Bulletin*

Reprinted with permission from the MSA Short Talk Bulletin
"How To Use The Short Bulletin" September 1960

Although the Masonic Service Association published "Speakers' Bulletins" as early as 1920, the famous *Short Talk Bulletin* began in January, 1923, when Short Talk No. 1, "Paul Revere", appeared. The *Bulletins* have been published continuously ever since; a new one is issued every month. This, the September 1960 Bulletin, is the four hundred and fifty-third consecutive Short Talk to appear since they first began almost forty years ago.

The Association is taking the unusual step of making this issue a guide for the use of the *Short Talk Bulletin*, because it wishes to help its readers and to strengthen the programs for Masonic information and culture set up by the various Grand Lodges which are members of the Association. These monthly messages are one of the many services which a Grand Lodge provides for its constituent lodges. Approximately 16,000 *Bulletins* are mailed each month, of which three-quarters go to the Masters or Secretaries of the lodges in member Jurisdictions. Eighteen per cent are delivered to Grand Lodge officers, Past Grand Masters, District Deputies, and chairmen of committees designated by the Grand Master or Grand Secretary. More than nine out of every ten *Bulletins* are being furnished to Grand Lodge personnel and the constituent lodges as part of the Association's services to member Jurisdictions. The remaining seven per cent of the copies are sent to Association personnel for use in the Veterans Administration Hospitals, to Masonic publications all over the United States, and to individual subscribers, many of whom received their first subscription to the *Short Talk Bulletin* as a present from the lodge, when they were made Master Masons.

The Short Talks were conceived as a supplementary tool for every program of Masonic education. These little pamphlets, which can be easily read aloud in approximately twenty minutes, are designed to bring to lodges and Masonic teachers short, informative or inspirational essays, which may be used as lectures, addresses, or reference materials in the library of the lodge. While no claim is made that they are exhaustive treatments of any Masonic subject, they do present accurate information, scholarly insights, and sound inter-

pretations of Masonic symbolism, philosophy, and ethics.

Some of the *Short Talk Bulletins* deal with Masonic history or famous Masons in history. Others deal with Masonic records and literature. Many deal with lodge practices, Masonic law, or custom and usage. Some describe the great benevolent undertakings of American Freemasonry, including the work of this Association during World War II, when the Fraternity succeeded brilliantly in helping its sons and brothers in the Armed Forces. Such an opportunity had been denied American Freemasonry in World War I, because the Government refused to have forty-nine different Masonic organizations serving at camps and in the field. This denial was the principal reason why the Masonic Service Association was founded, -- to give American Grand Lodges a single unified agency to promote its national benevolent and educational objectives.

Among the writers who helped to produce the early *Bulletins* were such famous Masonic scholars and interpreters as J. Hugo Tatsch and Joseph Fort Newton. Beginning in 1924 some of the Short Talks came from the pen of Carl H. Claudy, who from 1929 to 1957 wrote all the *Bulletins* of the Association in the years that he served as its Executive Secretary. His imperishable fame as a Masonic writer and speaker is the result of those rich and productive years. Today the Association again publishes Short Talks contributed by outstanding Masonic writers and speakers everywhere, as well as those of its own editorial staff.

All *Short Talk Bulletins* are kept in print and back numbers may be ordered from the Association. An up-to-date catalog is issued.

Because the *Short Talk Bulletins* are published primarily to promote Masonic knowledge in the constituent lodges of member Grand Lodges, it is imperative to ask, "How are you using them?", and to offer some specific suggestions about ways and means to make these little Masonic messages more valuable.

Grand Lodges are concerned with the welfare and progress of their lodges. They provide this service at no extra cost to the local Masonic organizations. The lodges, therefore, have an obligation to use the Short Talks effectively.

The most important idea to remember is this: "*The Short Talk Bulletins* are the property of the lodge." Member Grand Lodges decide whether the Short Talks are sent to the Worshipful Master or the Secretary. In actual practice, about half the Grand Lodges prefer that they be sent to the Secretaries, because of their relative permanence in office and their experience in handling correspondence and informational materials. The other half request that the *Bulletins* be sent to the Masters, because they are the chief executives of the lodges, responsible for programming and for "good and wholesome instruction" to the Craft. In either case, the *Bulletins* are provided by the Grand Lodge for use in the lodges.

Whether the Short Talks are sent to Masters or Secretaries makes no difference to the principle stated above. It is the recipient's responsibility, as custodian of a bit of lodge property, to see that each copy of the *Short Talk Bulletin* is taken to lodge, used, and kept there, as part of the lodge library or archives. The Grand Lodge wants this service used. It does the brethren of a lodge very little good if a Masonic message of some value is left at home or dropped in a wastebasket. It does little more if it lies on a desk or in a file. At least, let it be circulated among the interested members of the lodge, making sure that it is returned each time to the lodge library.

Where Secretaries receive the Short Talks on behalf of their lodges, fewer interruptions in delivery occur. Worshipful Masters go out of office annually; Secretaries, much less frequently. In both cases, however, each change makes the Association's mailing list out-of-date. For this reason, the SPECIAL NOTICE on page 2 of every *Bulletin* is more than a hopeful request:

"If you are receiving these *Short Talk Bulletins* -- as Master or Secretary, and you do not now hold such office in your lodge, please notify us to this effect and give the name and address, including street and number or post office box, of the brother who has succeeded you."

Your own name and address as well as your lodge name and number on such notification will expedite corrections of the mailing list. Ideally, Masters and Secretaries should interpret the phrase, "do not now hold such office", as the day after leaving office! A Master's or Secretary's successor deserves such prompt attention to a detail concerning the lodge's educational materials.

However, in those Jurisdictions where the *Bulletins* are mailed from the Grand Lodge office,

such notification should be sent to the Grand Secretary. The Grand Lodges of North Dakota, Utah, and the Philippine Islands handle the distribution of the *Short Talk Bulletins* in this manner.

In other Grand Lodges the complete list of Masters and Secretaries with their addresses is sent annually to the Masonic Service Association for correcting its mailing lists; but since these lists in large Grand Lodges take considerable time to compile and to print, there is often a gap of three or four months between the time an officer is elected and installed and the month in which he begins to receive the *Short Talk Bulletin*. Individual officers can overcome this difficulty by following the suggestions in the SPECIAL NOTICE above. The Grand Lodge Committee on Information and Education in Ohio solved this problem by having Grand Lodge provide each incoming Master with a special notification card to be mailed to the Masonic Service Association *as soon as he takes office*.

The original purpose of the *Short Talk Bulletin* was to supply constituent lodges with lectures or speeches which would bring fresh ideas as well as authoritative Masonic information to brothers who were hungering for Masonic knowledge. In every generation there has been emphasis on the need for more Masonic education.

The Short Talks can be used most effectively if they are regularly read to the members of the lodge by a brother who is practiced in the art of reading. Such a program takes very little time in the course of a year, but it really enriches any systematic effort to disseminate Masonic information or inspiration. Masters and Secretaries who have used the *Short Talk Bulletins* faithfully are enthusiastic about the results they have achieved.

However, many a brother prefers to give a talk of his own. What he needs are some facts or ideas which he has insufficient time to look up himself. *The Short Talk Bulletins* supply these for him. With the large number of titles now available in the catalog of *Bulletins*, the choice of subjects is infinitely wide. For such speakers, or for the brother who prefers to give a short Short Talk by abstracting one of the *Bulletins*, the editorial staff now provides an "Outline for a Short Talk" at the end of most of the *Bulletins*.

Lodges which preserve each issue in a lodge file or library soon have a valuable "little Masonic library" for those members who wish to read more about Masonic symbols, history, philosophy, customs, or charities. The brother who is looking for

speech materials will be proud of his lodge when he finds that it has a good supply of Masonic lectures and addresses available. He will be grateful to discover that he need not "dig" for facts and subjects. They are right at hand.

Occasionally a brother with a well-trained memory desires to deliver one of the Short Talks which he has "learned by heart". The Masonic Service Association is glad to have its publication used in this way. It hopes that Masters or program chairmen will encourage such efforts to be of service to the Craft. A brother with a good memory and a fine voice makes a real contribution to the program by such a performance.

Lodges also like to use excerpts from the *Short Talk Bulletins* as timely or appropriate messages in their trestle-boards or local Masonic publications. Permission is always given for such use, provided proper acknowledgment is made. In the case of excerpts, acknowledgment should be made by stating at the end of the quotation, "from *The Short Talk Bulletin* by permission of The Masonic Service Association." Whenever an entire Short Talk is reproduced, the following acknowledgment should appear at the beginning of the *Bulletin*: "Copyright, (date), by The Masonic Service Association of the United States. Reprinted by special permission."

Excerpts can also be used effectively in the lodge for short periods of Masonic instruction. A Master, or brother designated by him, may read an interesting, thought-provoking, or inspiring paragraph just before the closing of the lodge, as "A Thought for Today". The reading of a challenging paragraph to prompt a short discussion about the Masonic custom, tenet, or procedure which the *Bulletin* touches upon, is a stimulant to Masonic thinking. To be effective, such a five or ten minute discussion period should be prepared for in advance, with questions ready for the Craft, and with possible participants alerted to the proposed discussion.

One Master, at the start of his year, selected twenty-four short Masonic statements and typed them on separate sheets of paper. At each meeting he gave one of these statements to a member of the lodge and asked him to study it privately. When the question was asked, "Has any Brother about the lodge anything to offer . . .?", the member arose and read the statement. Excerpts from the *Short Talk Bulletin* could be used in the same way. The same Master had thirty-six *Bulletins*

bound into permanent form in one set of covers, an excellent way of preventing the loss of these valuable Masonic messages, or of combining those which deal with a particular area of Masonic symbolism or procedure.

One of the most important areas in which brethren need Masonic information and instruction is that of benevolence. Every lodge has its own program to help, aid, and assist the widow and orphan. Every Grand Lodge has its own great project to care for the destitute, aged, or infirm Mason, his wife or widow and children, by means of a Charity Fund or a Masonic Home or Hospital.

A thorough and widespread re-emphasis on Masonic charity is a "must" if American Freemasonry desires to recapture the effective "public relations" it enjoyed a century ago. Too few Masons, however, are even aware of the one great benevolence in which Symbolic Freemasonry in the United States is unitedly engaged, -- the relief work of this Association's Hospital Visitation Program. Your sons and brothers, whose service to their country in two World Wars has made them periodic or permanent patients in Veterans Administration and Service Hospitals, are being visited daily by the Field Agents of the Masonic Service Association. They bring to these handicapped veterans, non-Masons as well as Masons, the spirit of brotherhood: a word of cheer, a thoughtful useful token, or a personal service which the veterans cannot perform for themselves. Freemasonry may well be proud of this remarkable service of love.

Except in July and August, Part II of the *Short Talk Bulletin* tells the story of this Masonic achievement. Part II is called Your Masonic Hospital Visitor. Every member of the lodge is entitled to know the story of the Hospital Visitation Program. It will make him "stick out his chest" as a Mason.

Masters and Secretaries can use the Hospital Visitor as they do the *Short Talk Bulletin*. It should be brought to lodge. Some of the "lead articles" and stories make excellent Short Talks by themselves. Because of the pictures in this Supplement, it is an attention-getter when posted on a bulletin board. The list of Masonic Service Field Agents on the back cover of this monthly journal is constantly kept up-to-date. It is a valuable reference for every lodge which wants to keep in touch with brothers who are known to be in Service or Veterans Hospitals. When used and dis

played, Your Masonic Hospital Visitor will make the Craft proud of their membership in the Fraternity.

Masters who have made specific uses of the *Short Talk Bulletin* and the Hospital Visitor will find it stimulating and profitable to evaluate the results which have accrued to the lodge and its programs. An exchange of such evaluations with other Masters in the District will undoubtedly lead to some worthwhile suggestions for Masonic education and information, to forward to the District Deputy Grand Master or Grand Lecturer. Sharing one's experiences makes them more significant.

One brother in the Midwest has written that he uses the *Short Talk Bulletins* for short talks in various lodges. "My brethren tell me that my speeches are tops!"

A subscriber in a non-member Jurisdiction, who has been receiving the *Bulletins* for many years, reports that he enjoys the Short Talk every month. "I passed it on to some of my brothers. They enjoyed it too, and I have a number of requests to read it from other brothers who have heard about it. As it is easy to read and understand. I wonder if I could get a dozen copies or so to give to the new members that I expect to raise this year?"

From one of New England's oldest lodges the Secretary writes to inquire if he can purchase copies of "Duly and Truly Prepared", a recent *Short Talk Bulletin*, in quantity, "to send out to brethren appointed to Committees of Investigation."

A Master Mason's wife orders a subscription to the *Bulletin*, as well as a dozen back numbers and some other books and pamphlets published by the Association, with these words: "My husband is hospitalized and cannot write for them himself." What a thoughtful wife can do for an interested Mason, an interested lodge can do for its members who are lonely or distressed.

The Secretary of a Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education asks for permission "to reprint about 50 copies" of a Short Talk "for use among the Craft in one of our 1960-61 Work Shops". Such permission is gladly given; the *Bulletins* are meant "to go to work".

Such are some of the uses of the *Short Talk Bulletins*. They are designed to be used. Your Grand Lodge wants them used. When Masters and Secretaries who receive them for their lodges take them to lodge and see that they are used, they

inevitably receive some of the satisfactions and benefits suggested by the correspondents above.

Finally, the Masonic Service Association sincerely desires to improve its service through the *Short Talk Bulletins*. It is always grateful for suggestions about the contents of a particular Talk about subjects which brethren would like the *Bulletins* to cover, and about Masonic information that could be disseminated. Engaged as it is in the great task of bringing Masonic light to American Freemasons, the staff of the Association is just as eager to learn as to teach others, how to use the *Short Talk Bulletin*.

OUTLINE FOR A SHORT TALK

I Background Information

- A First *Short Talk Bulletin*
- B Distribution
- C Purpose of *Bulletins*
- D Subjects treated
- E Writers of *Bulletins*

II How Are *Bulletins* Distributed?

- A Received by Masters or Secretaries
- B Should be taken to lodge
- C Change of officers
 - 1 Notifying Association
 - 2 Correcting lists

III Uses of the *Bulletins*

- A Read as lectures
- B Shorter talks by abstracting original
- C A little lodge library
- D As complete addresses, memorized
- E For trestle-board or Masonic publication
- F Excerpts for discussion

IV Your Masonic Hospital Visitor

- A Masonic benevolence
- B Educating Masons for benevolence
- C The Hospital Visitation Program
- D Uses of Visitor in lodge

V Further Uses of *Bulletins* and Visitor

- A Evaluation
- B Letters from users
 - 1 Public speaking
 - 2 Personal instruction and gifts
 - 3 Tools for committees
 - 4 Cheering the sick
 - 5 Work Shop Materials

VI Conclusion: Helping the Association

USING THE SHORT TALK BULLETINS IN LODGE

Reprinted with permission from the MSA Short Talk Bulletin
"Using The Short Talk *Bulletins* In Lodge" December 1962)

It may seem facetious to say that the most important way to use *The Short Talk Bulletins* effectively is actually to use them! But that statement is not intended to be humorous. It points out the chief obstacle to the effective use of *The Short Talk Bulletins* in the constituent lodges of the member Grand Lodges of The Masonic Service Association. The Talks are not used in all the lodges to which they are sent, even though they are a part of the services provided by the Grand Lodges to increase Masonic information and inspiration in the constituent lodges. (What The Masonic Service Association is and does has been explained in The Short Talk for August, 1962, "What Is The M.S.A.?")

"Good and wholesome instruction" should certainly include an explanation to all the members of every lodge just what The Masonic Service Association is and why *The Short Talk Bulletin* and *Your Masonic Hospital Visitor* are sent each month to every constituent lodge of the Grand Lodges which compose The Association. This information can be supplied very quickly and easily by the Worshipful Master or Lodge Education Officer, if he will abstract the August, 1962, Short Talk referred to above. If he wishes to save time in preparing such a brief report, the following short "readings" from that Bulletin might be made: the first three paragraphs on page 3; the second and third complete paragraphs on page 5; the first three paragraphs on page 6; the second complete paragraph on page 7; the first three paragraphs on page 9; and the last paragraph on page 11.

Questions following such a brief report could be answered by making the August, 1962, *Bulletin* available for interested brethren. Such a small beginning may create the need for a lodge librarian and a desire for

further Light in Masonry. The purpose of this *Short Talk Bulletin* is to suggest ways in which such goals may be achieved.

However, the first step is making sure that the available materials are actually put to use. *The Short Talk Bulletin* and *Your Masonic Hospital Visitor* are sent to one of the following lodge officers, as the Grand Lodge directs: the Worshipful Master, the Secretary, or the Lodge Education Officer. That Brother becomes the key man in seeing that those publications are really used by the lodge. If he is a "bottleneck" who keeps the copies at home, believing they are for his own use, or who merely files them away quietly somewhere in the lodge room, the *Short Talks* and Supplements become unused tools which are soon forgotten. The Grand Lodge's purpose in providing some Masonic Light has been thwarted.

Consequently, the lodge officer who receives *The Short Talk Bulletins* should be thoroughly familiar with the following principles which the member Grand Lodges of the Association recommend. They should make them known to all officers of the lodge so that they, in turn, may transmit them to their successors who will administer the affairs of the lodge:

1. The *Short Talks* are furnished to the lodges by the Grand Lodge, as supplementary materials for Masonic education.
2. The copies belong to the lodge, not to the officer to whom they are directed.
3. The *Short Talks* should be brought to lodge, used there, and preserved as part of the lodge library.
4. They may be used in whole or in part--for addresses, excerpts in

trestle-boards, instructional manuals-
-as long as proper acknowledgment
of the source is made. In reprints the
usual reference is: "Copyright by
The Masonic Service Association of
the United States. (Date) Reprinted
by special permission."

Freemasonry has been described as a
benevolent, fraternal, and educational
institution; and the devoted labors of Grand
Lodge Committees on Information and
Masonic Culture during the past decade
suggest that the leaders of the Craft are
seriously concerned with the educational
aspects of the Fraternity's purposes.

In fact, most of them would be glad to be
classified among those Masons who believe
sincerely that Freemasonry is fundamentally
an educational institution, that "we must
teach and re-teach our principal tenets or
die." How to "teach and re-teach" is actually
the purpose of these suggestions for using
The Short Talk Bulletins in lodge.

All of us would concede that a university
without a library is a contradiction in terms.
Similarly, a Masonic lodge without a library
can hardly be considered "a lodge of
Speculative Builders". One needs ideas and
knowledge to speculate, to think, to transmit
"our tenets unimpaired" to future
generations.

The publications of The Masonic Service
Association could be the nucleus of such
lodge libraries. They are short and, it is
hoped, clear and simple enough for the
average Mason to read with understanding.
They are not designed as "final answers", but
they do have the merit of answering
questions briefly and of encouraging further
search for Light. No forbiddingly lengthy or
exhaustive tomes are published by the
Association.

However, every lodge library needs a
librarian to manage it, to preserve it, and to
make it a working tool for "good and
wholesome instruction" for the members of

that lodge. Here is one more place in which
a wise Master can set to work another
Craftsman who might otherwise lose interest
for lack of work to do. A real Builder
doesn't want a Master's Wages if he hasn't
earned them, but it takes all kinds of jobs and
assignments to keep all the members of a
lodge at labor. A librarian is one more active
Mason if he is carefully chosen and
encouraged.

Such a lodge librarian, after arranging
and indexing the materials at hand, can
become a tremendously valuable aid to the
Educational Committee or the Lodge
Educational Officer. For example, he can
classify *The Short Talk Bulletins* into
various groups which would be useful to the
officers, to the new members, or to the
general reader of Masonic information.

He might, for example, arrange a packet
of available *Short Talks* which can help a
Senior Warden prepare himself for his year
in the East. The librarian could let it be
known frequently, by announcements in
lodge and in its trestle-boards, that such
selected packets are available. For the
prospective Master he could group such
Short Talk Bulletins as the following: *The
Lodge; Master; The Art of Presiding; The
Powers of the Worshipful Master; The
Gavel of Authority; Installation; The Laws
of Masonry; Lodge and Grand Lodge
Organization; Lodge Inspection;
Parliamentary Law in Masonry; Masonic
Debate; The "Why" of Initiation; Lodge
Finances; Minutes ARE Important; Lodge
Courtesies; The Visiting Brother; Masonic
Manners; Masonic Offense; Increasing
Lodge Attendance; What Can I Do?;
"Well-Informed Brethren"; "They Ought to
be Married".*

Here, of course, it has been assumed that
a lodge has carefully preserved all the issues
of *The Short Talk Bulletin* since its
inception; but a lodge librarian could make a
narrower selection if only some of the
Bulletins are on hand. He can at least make
a beginning of such packets if very few have

been preserved. The chief thought here is that a librarian can be more than a custodian of Masonic information and literature. He can be the pump that activates the fountain.

In furnishing a selection of *Bulletins* for initiates in the various degrees, the lodge librarian could arrange a packet, for example, of those which deal with the symbolism of the Fellowcraft Degree, such as: "A Survey of Nature"; *The Architecture of Masonry*; *Two Pillars*; *Columns and Pillars*; *The Five Senses*; "From a Point to a Line....."; *The Significant Numbers*; 3-5-7; *Masonic Geometry*; *Mathematics*; *Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences*; *Seven Cardinal Virtues*; *Passages Of Jordan*; *Sanctum Sanctorum*; "G"; *The Letter "G"*; *More Light*; *Signs*; *The Level and Plumb*; *Square, Level and Plumb*. Similar packets could also be put together for the symbolism of the other degrees.

He could also arrange a collection of *Short Talks* which would be useful to Lodge Officers, Program Committees, instructors and speakers. Among these would be: *So You're Going to Make a Speech?*; *How To Use The Short Talk Bulletin*; *What Is The M.S.A.?*; *The Learning and Delivery of Ritual*. There are three particular *Bulletins* which were written for the new Brother, to give him a historical understanding of the operative Craftsmen and their modern Speculative counterparts: *Apprentices*; *Fellowcraft*; *Master Mason*. The lodge librarian could put these into one packet and place them in the hands of each new member, to start him on his way to becoming a "well-informed Brother".

These samples should be sufficient to show the variety of subjects contained in *The Short Talk Bulletins* of the M.S.A. A good librarian could create a considerable amount of interest in Masonic study and reading by a judicious arrangement into small groups of the *Bulletins* which the lodge already has, and which will be augmented by a new one every month. It will require a bit of work to organize such a little Masonic library and to

find various devices to stimulate interest in its use; but if we really mean it when we say we must give more brethren something to do, good leaders will readily see the potentialities in a lodge librarian for increased participation and for increased interest in Masonic reading.

The Short Talk entitled "*How To Use The Short Talk Bulletins*" (page 288) contains a fairly comprehensive discussion of methods which can be used to make the *Bulletins* effective tools for Masonic instruction and inspiration. Those ideas will not be repeated here. That *Bulletin* is readily obtainable from The Masonic Service Association. However, it may be helpful to go into more detail about one minor use of these pamphlets for stimulating interest in things Masonic. It is suggested that the Master (or someone requested by him) could prepare a short five or ten minute period of instruction by selecting a paragraph or two from one of the *Bulletins*, reading it aloud, and then asking a question or two based on the passage read. He might even warn one or two of the brethren that he will call on them for answers. This device, used as frequently as it elicits interest and participation, can do much to send the brethren home with a feeling that they have received some good and wholesome instruction. Such a feeling helps to bring members back to lodge more frequently.

For example, the Master could read the short paragraph on page six of the *Bulletin* entitled *Master Mason*, "Few operative Masons became Master.., etc." Then he could ask for replies to the following question: "Do you think that every Mason today really becomes a Master Mason?" If the question fails to arouse interest or replies, he might continue by reading the paragraph on the bottom of page nine and top of page ten, and by asking the same question again.

Or, the Worshipful Master could read from the July, 1962, Short Talk, "Three Distinct Knocks", the two paragraphs beginning near the bottom of page six, "Even

before he presents himself at the lodge.....", and ending on page seven, "... for this lack of understanding on the part of new members." A worth-while discussion could be started by asking this question, "What is a Master Mason really seeking?" This simple device frequently stimulates interest, especially after a lodge has gotten used to it.

If the Master has regular officers' meetings, he may find that occasionally a little wholesome instruction will go a long way to make his fellow officers feel that such meetings are Masonically profitable. For example, a short reading of the first two paragraphs on page six of the August, 1961, *Bulletin*, "Presenting the Working Tools", may help to improve attitudes toward the performance of ritualistic work. That Short Talk might also be called to the attention of Past Masters who habitually present the working tools to the initiates on a particular degree.

For instruction in the idea and practice of Masonic benevolence, the Master could substitute the reading of a paragraph or two from the Supplement to *The Short Talk Bulletin*, *Your Masonic Hospital Visitor*. For example, he could read the feature story of this month's Hospital Visitor (December, 1962) to convey to his brethren a picture of Christmas activities in a large Veterans Hospital. Then a word or two about the work of Masonic Field Agents. No questions, -- just good and wholesome instruction. If there is available a Brother who has done volunteer work in a Veterans Administration Hospital, he could be asked to comment briefly on the satisfactions he has derived from such labors of love. Prior warning to such a commentator would not only be courteous; it will produce better results.

Connecticut's Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Culture and Public Relations has recently produced in one of its service letters

to constituent lodges an "Outline for a Meeting Presenting The Masonic Service Association of the United States". The emphasis is placed on the Hospital Visitation Program, so that the brethren may learn how their money is being spent in this great labor of love for our hospitalized sons and brothers. Connecticut is one of the Grand Lodges which levies a small assessment on every member to support this benevolent work.

Every conscientious Master or Education Officer can use these devices for short, "snappy" discussion periods to convince his members that Freemasonry believes in good and wholesome instruction. *The Short Talk Bulletins* are recommended because they are usually available. Other Grand Lodge Officers, like the District Deputy Grand Masters, can apply these devices to other publications of the Association like the Digests, the most recent one being Ronald Heaton's *Masonic Membership of the Signers of the Constitution of the United States*. These booklets do not reach the local lodges, but they can be similarly employed by the Grand Lodge Officers who receive them, especially when they are called upon to take part in the program of a particular lodge.

Two final suggestions might be made: make Masonic education programs brief, varied, and interesting. Make them continuous and consistent. Freemasons want Light, but they want it in "flashes of insight and inspiration".

The great aim of Freemasonry is to make its votaries wiser and consequently happier men. They become wiser only as they learn how to use the Great Architect's designs for Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. They become happier only as they practice the skills involved in such building. This we must teach, or our Fraternity dies.

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