

The Mentoring Corner (August 2016)

Hello, Brothers!

A dear Brother asked me a very interesting question during the recent *St. John's Weekend*, in Utica. "What are you up to", he said, "with all your work on Mentoring, and all the articles that you write for *The Word*? What are you pursuing? What is your agenda?"

This is a very legitimate question that maybe others may also have. So, I will answer it here, through a story about something that happened to me a few years ago.

At the time I was struggling with a presentation on *Cuban Freemasons* that I was going to give at the *American Lodge of Research*, in NYC. Watching me work, an intelligent, well-read and well-travelled young man (but not a Mason) asked me, point blank:

"Why do you dedicate so much time to Freemasonry, this *unknown* organization?"

I looked at him and thought: Should I be insulted? This young fellow respects me and has no reason to do so. Maybe Freemasonry is really unknown, to him and to his peers, in spite of all our efforts to make the Craft better recognized. Maybe we are not doing the right things...

Proclaiming that George Washington was a Mason, and that we support the MMRC in Utica, may sound too remote for them. Maybe, like in politics, the key issues "*are all local*".

Perhaps, we should stress more our local activities such as *Easter Egg Hunt*, *Halloween*, *Child ID*, and *Breakfast with Santa*; our participation in food banks, our blood bank donations, or volunteering for children story-telling and school subject reviews, We can also organize our own activities, such as public presentations on interesting topics (e.g. hobbies, travels, history), given for the community at large. We can open and close Lodge, before and after the public function takes place in the Lodge social room, or in another appropriate area of the Masonic Temple.

We could also identify outstanding *XX Century Freemasons* in our own districts or state. We could draw up a list of such and sponsor a competition among Senior High School students. Then, we can give a \$250 scholarship to the best Biography, and have a reading in the Lodge.

These are just some things that could be done to attract and keep community members in our Fraternity. Community activities that provide visibility to our Craft are also an important part of Mentoring! *The Craft makes some good men better, and the tree is known by its fruit!*

So, I answered back to my young friend: "Thank-you! You defined my agenda for the next 30 years: *to contribute in any way I can to make our Craft better known and more relevant*".

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