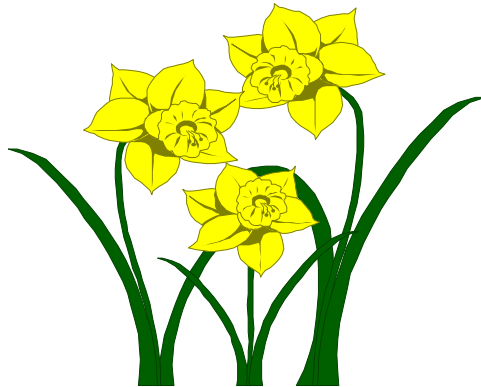


# The Mason's Lady



A man in your family is now a member of the Masonic Fraternity. He is a Mason and you are now a Mason's Lady. Blue Hill Lodge would like to take this opportunity to extend its first greeting to you. While you personally have not joined our organization, there are certain things that might be helpful for you to know in the future. At the same time, there are matters of general interest about your Mason and his new Fraternity that we think you would like to know.

## When and Where did Masonry begin?

The Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A.F.& A.M.) is the oldest and most widely known fraternal organization in the world. It has its roots in antiquity and is directly descended from the association of "operative masons," the cathedral builders of the Middle Ages, who traveled through Europe employing the skills of their craft. The organization, as we know it today, began in 1717 in England where the cathedral building was on the decline and the "operative masons," or "free masons" as they were known, started to accept members who were not members of the mason's craft, calling them "speculative masons" or "accepted masons."

Freemasonry was brought to the United States by our early settlers. Through out the world there are approximately five million Freemasons. Nearly three million of them reside in the United States.

## What is the Purpose of Freemasonry ?

The basic purpose is to make "better men out of good men", better fathers, better husbands, better brothers and better sons. We try to place emphasis on the individual man by strengthening his character, improving his moral and spiritual outlook and broadening his mental horizons. We try to build a better world . . . by building better men to work in our communities.

Membership in Massachusetts is limited to adult males, 18 years of age or older, who can meet recognized qualifications and standards of character and reputation.

## **Is Freemasonry A Secret Organization or a Religion ?**

The answer is NO. A secret organization is one which conceals its membership, has secret meeting places and of which the public has little knowledge regarding its organization or its principles. This does not fit the Masonic Fraternity at all. Our secrets are a very few in number and deal with methods of personal recognition, some details of our degrees and the privacy of each member's ballot.

Freemasonry is not a religion, although it is religious in character. Every applicant for the degrees in Freemasonry must express a belief and a trust in a Supreme Being. Masonry does not take the place of religion, but stresses personal commitment, and involvement in the individual's faith community.

The Masonic fraternity encourages every member to attend and support the religion of his own choice.

## **What are the Degrees ?**

Lessons in Masonry are taught in three separate stages or degrees in our Masonic Lodges. The degrees, in order are Entered Apprentice (First Degree), Fellow Craft (Second Degree), and Master Mason (Third Degree). Each degree blends Masonic moral philosophy in a unique lesson that is intended to have a serious impact and influence on the man who receives it.

## **What are Masonic Aprons ?**

An apron was worn by Operative Masons to protect themselves from rough stones and tools. Presently, it is a badge of fraternal distinction. During his first degree, each Mason is given a plain white leather apron, it represents the white lambskin, a symbol of innocence. Here in Massachusetts, at least, it is Masonic tradition that after a man has completed his three degrees, he no longer wears that apron to lodge meetings. Instead he carefully puts it away and wears one of the cloth aprons each lodge supplies for its members and visitors. The white leather apron becomes a keepsake throughout his life and finally, at his passing, he wears it in death as an eternal symbol of hope. Every Mason should tell his wife and family where he keeps his apron.

## **What Do Masonic Symbols Mean ?**

The most widely recognized symbol of the Fraternity is the Square and Compasses with the letter "G" in the Center.



Members wear it to remind themselves of their obligation to the lessons learned in their Lodges, and to identify their membership to other Masons and all people. Masonic symbols have wide meanings, some directly related to the tools used by actual Operative Masons and some, represent the need for order and direction in life. The letter "G" represents Geometry and also it is the initial of God, the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

## When are Meetings Held ?

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

Your Mason has invested time and money in joining our Fraternity. He can best receive all that he should by frequently participating in its deliberations and events. We hope that you will approve and encourage him to attend regularly, and we hope also, that you, too, will join us whenever possible for the guest activities at the Lodge.

## Should I Contact Anyone when My Mason is Ill or Hospitalized ?

In the event a member becomes ill, his Lodge would appreciate knowing. You may call the Master, Wardens or Secretary of the Lodge. (The lodge's monthly notice has the phone numbers of the Master, Wardens and Secretary printed on the front cover). Your Mason has joined an organization which wants to assist him and you when in need, and we need your help to do that.

## What Can Your Involvement Be ?

Countless opportunities abound through active participation and membership in any of the numerous Masonic-related ladies' organizations. You are encouraged to share in many social activities, parties, dinners, dances, tours, civic events, and charitable efforts of the Lodge. Many full family activities are regularly scheduled. Non-Masonic friends and families may also take part in many Masonic programs.

We hope you will be proud that your man has chosen to become a member of the world's oldest and best fraternity. We welcome you as a "Mason's Lady."

Sincerely yours, *Ralph W. Staples*

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For more information about Massachusetts Masonry go to the World Wide Web.

Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts: <http://www.glmasons-mass.org>

Blue Hill Lodge, A.F. & A.M. – Canton: <http://www.BlueHillLodge.org>

A Page About Freemasonry: <http://MasonryPage.org/>