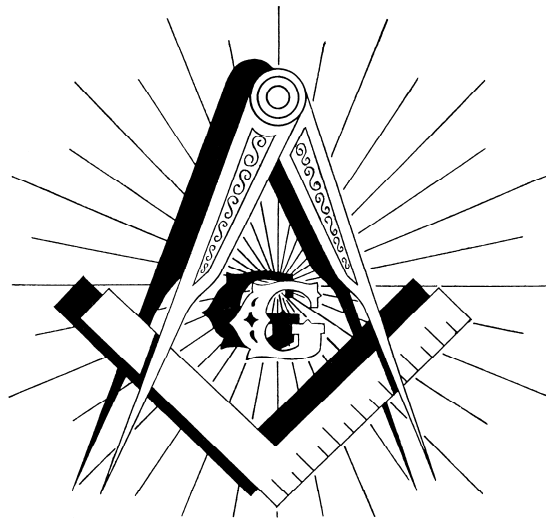


THE QUESTION OF *Solicitation*



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THE QUESTION OF SOLICITATION

The matter of asking others to join Masonry, usually referred to as solicitation, is a perplexing problem to many of our members and deserves clarification.

We do not have a written policy that prohibits solicitation but we do have a tradition that discourages direct recruitment. This tradition has become an unwritten rule, probably unique to our Order. It certainly sets us apart from most clubs, societies and similar organizations.

This tradition has stood the test of time for well over two hundred years and there are good reasons for its continued validity. An applicant who has not passed the ballot and who feels that he had been urged to apply, will likely be angry at the person who talked him into it and at Masonry in general. The tradition allows an applicant to sign his application, and later respond to the question on improper solicitation without hesitancy or doubt.

Our tradition of nonsolicitation should not be interpreted as a prohibition to discussing Masonry with others. We should feel free to do so and particularly with someone who has expressed an interest in our Order. Neither should we be hesitant about arousing the interest of someone considered to be a potential suitable applicant.

A Mason need not remain silent if a nonmember expresses an interest in Masonry or inquires about the nature or objectives of the Order, its history, philosophy or its activities. He may explain the qualifications required, or the application procedure, should the situation warrant. If there is an interest in joining, it should be explained that no invitations are extended by Masonry but assistance is readily available. The first step might be to provide the pamphlet "For Your Information."

Neither does the rule of nonsolicitation prevent us from initiating a proper discussion on Masonry with someone considered to be a suitable candidate. There is no objection to determining his attitude or interest in such a manner that we do not solicit his membership. As with the nonmember who has volunteered an interest in joining, we may later remind him, but only once, of an apparent interest. He should then be left to make his own decision or to reopen the discussion.

In each situation, circumstances and the relationship with the potential candidate can dictate what might be taken as persuasion. At all times, however, we must remember that the future prospects are much brighter for all concerned when the candidate can say with sincerity that he comes of his own free will.

[With thanks to the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.]