

# LEO Soapbox

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Regional Provost Newsletter, Region 10

July 28, 2022

*Editor's Note: This is part of a presentation by Rt. Wor. Stormy Thorson, presented at Peyton Randolph Lodge of Research No. 1774.*

I have always been a proponent of Masonic Education. I have been an LEO the majority of my years in Masonry.

I was and still am concerned that right from the start, candidates receive lectures giving them a lot of information but we don't really explain it to him. During the lecture, he is told that this . . . is the "due guard". He is told what it alludes to but never why it's called "due guard". With "due" meaning proper like in due course and due process and taking guard from En Garde (fencing) which means stance or position. We know that due guard simply means proper stance/proper position. It wouldn't be difficult to explain this new Masons. I believe that imparting this kind of explanation is the job of Masonic Education.

Candidates are given a lecture after each degree. The downside: No one on the sidelines is listening as they're not "involved" in the degree at this point. The candidates are largely in information overload and have ceased to take in any more information. One year as LEO I had an Education Night and part of it was a spelling test. It wasn't graded and everyone kept their own papers. One of the spelling words was "Pythagoras". A Past Master on the sidelines uttered "never heard of him"! Here is a Brother who had been through the degrees and going through the chairs, witnessed many more, yet the word Pythagoras was unknown to him.

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I believe that Masonic Education should give you "Aha" moments throughout your Masonic career. Sadly, it's giving you very few moments . . . When I was a District Educational Officer (DEO) back in the '80s, DEOs were required to have an District Education Seminar each year now the requirement is for an Officer Training Seminar, if it's done. The DEO used to "Officially" visit every Lodge, being received in the East, saluted, etc., which would "require" a talk and a chance to impart some Masonic Education to every Lodge in the District. Sadly, this has fallen by the wayside. Now you have to invite the DEO to speak at your Lodge.

Remember, it used to be called the DELC; Division Education Leadership Conference. It used to be the Reid Simmons Academy of Masonic Education, now it's the Reid Simmons Academy of Masonic Ritual or Leadership, depending on where you look. Today Masonic Education is almost exclusively about preparing the Master for his Year. I couldn't agree more that this is a very important function of Masonic Education, but all of Masonic Education shouldn't be aimed at those 300 Brethren and leave the other 30,000 wanting.

My paper this morning is about a very small part of the Fellowcraft's Senior Deacon's Lecture. It's about the battle that led to the origin of our Fellowcraft Password. The candidate gets the gist of it with the Senior Deacon's lecture, if he's paying attention and then in his catechism, assuming he's given that method, he learns that it's about wheat and corn? And he's never are given anything further. The story is about a military battle tactic and utilizes a sheaf of wheat or ear of corn suspended at or near a Waterford? To say the least, this is confusing.

Anyway, The Battle is a story right out of the Bible. I am not a Biblical scholar and the Bible has always given me trouble in trying to understand it. A lot of the words have

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changed meanings over the thousands of years or they have just become extinct. I was a Police Detective for over 20 years and I never ever heard of anyone being "smote". The unusual sentence structure in the Bible just confuses me. In the Short Talk Bulletin (August 1999) on the Master Masons Circumambulation Prayer, Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7 it says: "One can read this passage over and over without actually understanding its meaning. At least two different Bible commentaries [together] however, offer [an] explanations". So, I feel a little vindicated. Over the years, I have been fortunate enough acquire some books to help me. In my home library. I currently have 15 different versions of the Holy Bible. I have 3 or 4 Bible Commentaries, 6 Bible Dictionaries and 2 or 3 books on word history and origin and, of course the Works of Flavius Josephus.

Whenever any research takes me to the Bible, I look up the story, passage and/or certain words in most of the sources to help me get a better understanding and in turn, hopefully make my paper or talk a little more understandable.