

Silence Is Golden
By Michael Himes, Past District Deputy Grand Master

One of the first lessons we receive as Masons is that silence is a virtue. For too long we let that sentiment carry over into our daily lives, until many of us are disinclined to share the beauty of Freemasonry with those who are not members. Fortunately, this attitude is changing, and now there are many avenues available to spread the truth about our glorious Craft.

There are times, however, when silence still is a virtue. I am referring now to those Masonic meetings when we portray our degree work. I am sure that many of you have attended degree nights, and even inspections, when the din on the sidelines was so loud that the officers on the floor could not be heard.

This is the worst type of rudeness, and shows not only a lack of respect and appreciation for the officers, but also a total disregard for the impression that we make upon our candidate.

There is NO ONE in the room who is more important than the man who kneels at our altar, and we must do nothing that will in any way tarnish the luster of the work that he will receive.

Several years ago, after attending an Inspection where I sat through an evening of straining over the tumult on the sidelines to hear the work, I wrote down a few words of verse, which describe what is too often a typical situation at our meetings.

I think that I shall never see
A Lodge room that is whisper free,
For as the Master bravely strives
To bring new light into the lives
Of candidates, both young and old,
With lessons through the ages told,
Yet on the sidelines brethren feel
A sordid tale they must reveal,
And so to men on left and right
They talk and talk throughout the night,
Their words just simply cannot wait,
Who cares about the candidate?
And then the Master's vocal chords
Are strained as he shouts out his words,
His lecture's perfect, line for line
Retelling lessons must sublime,
A shame our candidate can't hear
The Lessons passed from mouth to ear.
Remember, Brethren, one and all

Your talking casts a heavy pall
On all our beautiful degrees,
So QUIET DOWN! We beg you, PLEASE!

Brethren, when you visit another lodge, act as you would want brothers to act when visiting your lodge. Be a part of the positive image that our new member receives, not a negative that may keep that brother from returning to lodge. Remember that the officers have put a lot of energy into being able to proficiently exemplify the work, and those who want to both see and hear them should have that opportunity.

I have heard a member say that he learns something new every time he attends his lodge. Think of what you may have missed by not paying attention!