

York Rite Freemasonry on the Internet: Over One Million Visitors!

by Sir Knight Dan Pushee, KYCH

Two years ago I began an article published in the May 1997 edition of this magazine with two questions. The first one asked: "Are YOU ready to surf the net?" The second one asked "Are you on-line?" At that time the Grand Encampment Web Site had just been "published on the Internet," and the Masonic "home pages or web sites were in the early stages of being published. In fact, there were only thirty-eight York Rite sites on the Internet and less than one hundred sites in the "E-Mason Web Ring."

Since that time, Freemasonry and the York Rite have "exploded" on the Internet. The Grand Encampment Site was joined by official sites for General Grand Chapter and General Grand Council in August of 1997. In addition a "National" York Rite of Freemasonry was also established in August of 1997. The "URL address these four sites have been published on page four of this magazine since March of 1998. Since early 1997, these sites and the "Masonic Sites" linked from these sites have had over one million "hits or visitors." The Grand Encampment Site has had over 16,000 and over 1,100 comments in its guest book. There are now over 160 York Rites sites on the Internet and the E-Mason Web Ring has gone over 1200 Masonic sites. The total count on the York Rite sites is now over 250,000.

There are now twenty-two (22) Grand Commanderies listed on the links page of the Grand Encampment site. As of April 1, 1997, there were twenty-four Grand Chapters and twenty Grand Councils on the Internet. Every Grand Lodge in the United States now has a "Home page" on the Internet.

The "Masonic Internet Communication System" continues to grow at a rapid pace. Requests for membership in Freemasonry and the associated bodies are received every day. Through this communication system or net, these requests can be referred to an individual in each specific jurisdiction for immediate action. My first experience with this was over a year ago when a young man in Massachusetts sent me an email declaring that he was interested in becoming a 'Mason. He lived 'very close to' my "home Lodge," Wilder in Leominster Massachusetts. I sent out emails to my fellow Brethren and by the next day he had appeared before a pre-application committee. This young man is now the Chaplain in Wilder Lodge, a Scottish Rite-Mason, and in September will be Knighted in Jerusalem Commandery No. 19. Perhaps he was "the first Internet Freemason"? An other young man thought the Knights Templar organization died with Jacques De Molay. I was pleased to respond to him in minutes via e-mail" that WE ARE ALIVE!! He is now a member of a Commandery in South Carolina.

There are now approximately 10,000 Masons on fourteen list servers which enables each member to communicate with the whole group almost instantaneously. This Spring, the Grand Lodge of South Dakota is moving to a new building and had no room for their extensive library of copies of Grand Proceedings. They *were* about to "heave them over the rubbish" when Sir Knight Perry Anderson, REPGC, SD, came to me with a request to make an inquiry on 'the nets" to see if there was anyone interested in these books.

In less than an hour, twenty-four (24) responses were received including an offer from a Brother in England offering to come to South Dakota, package the books, and ship them to England at his expense. WOW!! South Dakota Brethren selected the George Washington Masonic Memorial Library, and they will receive 274 cases of annual proceedings for their management.

The Internet also offers discussion groups such as those provided by the Philaethes Society, where our Brethren may learn more about all aspects of Freemasonry from World Wide noted, resident Masonic scholars.

Sir Knights, FREEMASONRY IS ALIVE and with the help of this new communication medium WE WILL get NEW, YOUNG, ENERGETIC MEN to help continue the great principals of this GREAT FRATERNITY into the next century!! It will also help us to keep in touch with our elderly members and give them a sense of still being able to participate in the Craft even though they may be restricted in their ability to visit a Lodge or Commandery due to their health or location. To quote a line from a recent baseball movie,

"IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME!" SO FAR OVER 1,000,000 HAVE COME!!

HOPE TO SEE YOU "ON-LINE"!! kych52va@aol.com

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