# Tales of the Secret Vault

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Most Illustrious Grand Master

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## From the Grand Marshal

Illustrious Companion Michael K. Colbary, Grand Marshal

*The Most Illustrious Grand Master has asked the current Grand Council Officers to write articles each month for this supplement.*



Companions, in Freemasonry, we often celebrate the things that are easy to see. We recognize those who hold office, those who receive honors, and those who stand before the Craft to deliver ritual or speak at our gatherings. These things have their place, and the men who perform these duties deserve our appreciation. However, there is another kind of service that is just as important, yet often goes unnoticed: the work that nobody sees.

Every Council has Companions who quietly ensure that the work continues. They maintain the records, balance the books, prepare the meeting place, make the phone calls, send the notices, and attend to the countless details that allow our meetings and activities to happen. Much of this work takes place before the meeting begins and continues long after everyone else has gone home. There are no applause and no formal acknowledgments. Yet without these efforts, a Council would soon struggle to carry on its mission.

As Cryptic Masons, we should understand this kind of service better than most. The Select Master degree teaches of craftsmen who labored in secret and in silence, unseen by the world, to preserve what had been placed in their care so that it would not be lost to those who came after. Their faithfulness was not proven before an audience. It was proven in the work itself. That lesson is not meant to stay in the degree room. We demonstrate it whenever we fulfill our responsibilities, even when nobody is watching.

Something to remember, the strength of a Council is not measured only by the number of Companions on its roster, the candidates it welcomes, or the honors it bestows. It is measured by the willingness of its Companions to accept responsibility and carry out the work. A title may identify a man's office, but his dedication to that office demonstrates his character.

We should never assume that because a task seems small, it is unimportant. A record properly maintained today may preserve the history of our Council for generations. A phone call to a Companion who has been absent may remind him that he is still valued and that his presence matters. A few hours spent preparing the meeting place may ensure that the next meeting proceeds as it should. These acts may seem insignificant on their own, but together they sustain the life of our fraternity.

Many of our Councils know the reality of a roster with two dozen or more names and a meeting with only four or five Companions present. Those few Companions keep the charter alive, open and close in due form, and keep the records

straight, often with no certainty that anyone else will come next time. This is faithful service, and it deserves our thanks. But it should not be the permanent arrangement. If we leave all the work to the same men year after year, we risk exhausting those who serve faithfully while missing the chance to develop the next generation of leaders. Every Companion has something to contribute. Service should be shared, knowledge should be passed along, and every Companion should be encouraged to find his place in the work. Sometimes, that place begins with simply showing up.

Perhaps the greatest measure of our Masonic character is not what we do before an audience, but what we are willing to do when there is no audience at all. Do we fulfill our obligations? Do we care for what has been entrusted to us? Do we lend a hand when one is needed, even when there is no recognition to be gained?

The work that nobody sees is not lesser work. In many ways, it is the foundation upon which everything else rests. Let us remember those who labor quietly for the good of our Councils, and let us examine our own willingness to serve. Because when the titles have been passed on, the honors laid aside, and the meeting room has emptied, the work must go on.

*Michael Colbary*

## *Ritual Work and Your Council*

The Cryptic degrees are nothing short of beautiful. They tell a story which fills in the gaps between the Master Masons Third Degree and the degrees of Capitular Masonry. The stories told within the Cryptic degrees assist us in the total and final completion of the Master Mason's experience in the Lodge. Knowing this, why is it so difficult for us as a Council to perform these two degrees?



Several of the Cryptic Councils within the jurisdiction of the Most Illustrious Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Kansas have undertaken the work of conferring the degrees of Cryptic Masonry within their own Councils either during a stated communication or at a called communication for that purpose. By doing this, they are assisting their own members by having them learn the degrees and start to create a better understanding of what the degrees mean and the knowledge they convey.

The degrees are not long. They take about an hour for each degree. That means a Council could undertake the conferral of either the Royal Master of the Select Master degree at their own stated communication. When a Council uses its own members to confer these degrees, it brings those new Cryptic Masons into a new and closer bond with their Cryptic Companions in their own Council.



The Councils in Leavenworth, Lawrence, Wichita, and Salina have been conferring these degrees for quite some time as a part of their stated communications. Your Council can do the same thing. All it takes is someone to light that adventurous spirit of desiring to confer the degrees. Even if your Council has to read parts of the degree, it is hoped your Council's conferral will bring your own members closer together.