

The Plumbline

WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER GUIDELINES

The Plumbline is a quarterly research journal focusing on a variety of Masonic content and related matters. Our mission is to provide our readership with scholarly, detailed writing about Freemasonry and the fraternal experience, as well as news and information about current events in the Scottish Rite and Freemasonry in general.

FEATURES

We accept scholarly feature articles in the following categories: Masonic history, philosophy, esoterica, customs, traditions, current interest commentary, and related subjects. In short, we are interested in well-crafted, scholarly nonfiction as a genre. Feature articles must be referenced appropriately. See **Style Sheet** below.

Generally, articles for *The Plumbline* should be 2500-4000 words long, but we will consider pieces outside those limits should circumstances warrant. **Every feature should be accompanied by a good selection of digital photos or images.** These images should be of high quality, copyright free, and relevant to the manuscript.

Please be aware that three types of features have become clichés in Masonic writing:

- Nostalgia — We want to engage readers in the timelessness of the Masonic experience. With that in mind, we would encourage you to develop a primary theme other than *personal nostalgia* in the nonfiction you query.
- Patriotic/Inspirational — Masonic publications are overrun with stories about Masonry and patriotism, and with inspirational tales that are not part of *The Plumbline's* mission. To be blunt: *No patriotic stories*, please. Inspirational themes are also of limited value to *The Plumbline*.

If you want to pay tribute to a brother who has led an exemplary life, for example, consider doing it in such a way that provides the reader with factual information that is historically verifiable and that merits an in-depth examination.

- “So Mote It Be!” — In this type of article, writers do little more than excerpt phrases from Masonic ritual and apply it to the topic *du jour*. The best ways to avoid this are for writers to a) focus on a themes that require more description of and exposition about other things than a rote application of the *Four Cardinal Virtues*, or other ritualistic soliloquies, b) make sure they don't refer to ritual more than they do the apparent subject of the article, and c) rely more on solid analysis and research rather than on personal opinion or ritualistic catechism for details and voices of authority.

DEADLINES

The Plumbline is published four times each year to coincide with the equinoxes and solstices. Deadlines for manuscript submissions are as follows:

Spring Issue: February 15
Summer Issue: May 15
Autumn Issue: August 15
Winter Issue: November 15

Deadlines are absolute.

SHORTS & BOOK REVIEWS

The Plumbline also publishes short items (200-500 words) concerning current events, news, and informational topics of interest to Masons. Shorts may appear in our **Bulletin Notes** department and do not require photos or

illustrations. Please query the editor.

Book reviews are generally covered by *The Plumblin*e editorial staff, but we welcome queries about recent releases. Book reviews (300-750 words) must be accompanied by a cover illustration and contain author, title, publisher, date, page count, and retail price in the header of the review.

RIGHTS

*The Plumblin*e does not pay its contributing writers. Writers who submit an article for publication grant *The Plumblin*e first world rights to stories and photos published in this journal. *The Plumblin*e will not use artwork or articles that have been published previously unless otherwise agreed upon. *The Plumblin*e retains the right to republish material previously published in its earlier volumes. Please note that the editor does not maintain back issues of *The Plumblin*e for distribution. All submissions become the property of the Scottish Rite Research Society. No part of *The Plumblin*e may be reproduced in any format without the written permission of the Scottish Rite Research Society.

ARTWORK

Every feature article should be accompanied by 1-3 high-quality, digital images (.tifs or .jpps). Images should be credited and if necessary, permission to use them should be obtained and forwarded to *The Plumblin*e with the images. Minimum size: 4 x 6 inches at 300 dpi. Please submit them via e-mail with an accompanying image name or caption in the body of the e-mail that is clearly matched to each photo or image. Photos should illustrate the subject matter contained in the article. Illustrations are desirable as well.

SUBMISSIONS

Electronic format is mandatory, and the preferred electronic format for articles is Microsoft Word, although we can accommodate some other commercially available word processing formats. We cannot, however, accept .pdf files, which require us to retype the manuscript.

CONTACT

Adam Kendall, 32°, KCCH, Editor
akendall@scottishrite.org
*The Plumblin*e Editorial Office: The Supreme Council, 33°
1733 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009-3103
(202) 232-3579

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STYLE SHEET

When preparing manuscripts for *The Plumbline*, please adhere to these style points.

1. Every manuscript should contain the author's name, Masonic affiliation (if any), e-mail and physical address, and convenient telephone number on the first page.
2. *The Plumbline* staff cannot retype handwritten or .pdf manuscripts. Manuscripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word or, as a less-preferred alternative, rich text format. Our editing process makes use of the *comments* and *track changes* features in Microsoft Word, and your familiarity with and participation in the editing process using this feature are essential. If your manuscript is accepted and edited, we may require that you use the *track changes* feature to confirm all edits.
3. Use the following guidelines to ensure that the electronic manuscript you submit will be ready to edit:
 - Use the same typeface, or font, throughout the entire manuscript. If a second font containing special characters not available in standard typefaces is used, please alert your editor.
 - Make sure that there are no comments, annotations, or hidden text whatsoever in the final version of the manuscript that you submit to us. In addition, make sure that all *tracked changes* or other revision marks have been accepted as final (i.e., there should be no revision marks, hidden or otherwise, in the final manuscript).
 - Do not use the space bar to center text, achieve tabs or indents, or to align text.
 - Do not use the automatic hyphenation feature. There should be no "optional" hyphens in your manuscript.
 - If sections of your article have a subhead, differentiate them visually with centering, bolding, underlining, etc.
 - To insert notes, use your software's built-in **ENDNOTES** feature. Use the feature "as is"; please don't reset any of the options. The benefit of the built-in notes feature is that it connects the text of a specific note with a specific place in the text. These embedded notes can be moved, combined, or deleted with ease; the number in the text will always carry its text with it, and the notes will automatically renumber as needed. All formatting (of number size and style, placement of the notes relative to the book as a whole, and even conversion of endnotes to footnotes and vice versa) will be performed by the typesetter. If you do not use your word processor's note-making feature, use superscript to indicate note numbers in text. *The Plumbline* uses the Chicago Manual of Style format for manuscripts, including endnotes. An example of the correct citation style for commonly encountered references are as follows:

For a book:
 1. Albert G. Mackey, *An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences*, Vol. 1 (New York: Masonic History Co., 1919), 65.
For an article:
 8. Noel P. Gist, "Secret Societies: A Cultural Study of Fraternalism in the United States," *The University of Missouri Studies Quarterly*, 15:4 (1940): 84.
4. A quick style guide may be found on-line at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.
 - Do not assign "styles" to achieve different formats for subheads, block quotes, paragraph indents, etc. The default, or "normal," style should be the only style in your manuscript. If your program automatically assigns a special style to automatic endnotes or footnotes, however, that's okay.

- Produce any special characters using your word-processing program’s built-in character set. But do not “make” a character by combining more than one character or using graphics or field codes—these will not convert for the typesetter.
 - In a list of references, for successive works by the same author, use six hyphens (i.e., -----) in place of the author’s name after the first appearance.
 - Format prose extracts (block quotations) and verse extracts with your word processor’s feature for indenting paragraphs. Insert a hard return only at the end of a paragraph or a line of verse. Do not “line up” text using the space bar; adjust the indent level instead.
 - Do not manually create hanging indents for your bibliography by using hard returns and tabs in the middle of an entry. Instead, use the hanging indent feature in your word processing program. If you are unsure how to do this, simply indent the first line of each entry (i.e., format them like the paragraphs in the rest of the book).
 - For feature articles, no two pages of your manuscript should have the same number, and no page should be submitted unnumbered. Number the pages consecutively throughout the manuscript.
5. Grammar and mechanics should follow current Chicago Manual of Style guidelines.
 6. Feature articles should keep the readers focused on the topic—Freemasonry and the fraternal experience. To accomplish this, please keep to an absolute minimum any first person references. Likewise, please *do not* use second person references.
 7. We want to present the readers with lively writing. Please *restrict* the use of passive voice verbs to the appropriate situations. In most cases they can and should be eliminated.
 8. With very rare exception, all feature articles must be fully referenced.