

## COMPANIONS OF THE STONE

For circulation to all Initiate Companions

GENERAL LETTER #1 -- On Lodge Names

(Issued 5 September 1994)

Companions:

As there has been some confusion about the use of lodge names, the Council has requested this clarification.

Historically, lodge names started out as simple aliases, meant to protect the identities of lodge members during the years of persecution. Over time, it was found that they served several other useful purposes. Like masks -- which were also used at one point in the tradition -- they concealed personality in order to reveal identity; they helped lodge members set aside the ego demands of their public personae, and so assisted in the formation of the "magical personality," the deliberately constructed persona used by the magician in the work of self-transmutation. (A more complete discussion of the magical personality can be found in W. E. Butler's The Magician: His Training And Work, chapter XVII.)

Several different versions of the lodge name have been used in the tradition down through the years. In the Golden Dawn, phrases in Latin or other languages ("magical mottoes") were the standard form; other traditions have tended to use names of Classical or Hebrew derivation. In both cases such names have come to be used as a symbol of aspiration and a focus for the transformative will.

Unfortunately, a similar notion -- the "Craft name" concept of modern pagan revivalism -- has been heavily influenced, not to say distorted, by overlaps between the neopagan community and such things as role-playing games and the Society for Creative Anachronism. Names have come to be treated as a kind of fashion accessory, like pentagram earrings or all-black clothing, used to feed the ego rather than to transform it. The result has been a great deal of pretentiousness, "cuteness" and unintentional self-parody in magical circles.

The present writer has seen two fifteen-year-old boys get into a fistfight over who had the right to style himself "Lord Merlin." It is of some importance that this level of silliness be prevented among Companions of the Stone.

For this reason the following guidelines concerning lodge names have been set out by the Council. These guidelines are not hard and fast rules, but any exceptions to them must be submitted to

the Council for approval, with an explanation of the reason why the exception is desired.

1. The lodge name used by an Initiate Companion shall be an ordinary English (or American) given name different from any of the Companion's legal names. Names of any ethnic origin are suitable, as are names or forms of names no longer in common usage. Thus Johanan, an old form of John, would be suitable, as would names such as Letitia or Osmund.

2. It is recommended that the lodge name be chosen with an eye toward its meaning. The meanings of names can be found in most name dictionaries or "baby name" books. Thus a Companion whose aspiration was toward the mastery of the lessons of strength might choose to be known as Companion Ethan (from Hebrew, "firmness, strength"), while one working principally with the elemental forces of Nature might be called Companion Silvia (from Latin, "forest").

3. The names of gods, demigods, or major mythological persons will not be acceptable as lodge names, even if these have entered use as personal names. Thus Companion Arthur is out of bounds. On the other hand, names derived from but not identical to divine or mythological names -- for instance, Dennis, which is derived from Dionysos -- or names including mythological names as an element -- for instance, Demetria (Greek, "belonging to Demeter") -- are suitable, particularly if chosen for the symbolism of the source name.

4. Finally, "made-up" names of the sort common in the 60's counterculture and the present neopagan community -- Moonflower, Starwolf, Elfraven and the like -- are completely out of bounds as lodge names. The same is true of names taken from fantasy fiction and similar sources -- Aragorn, for instance. Don't even ask.

It's important to remember that these restrictions only hold within the ambit of the Companions of the Stone. Companions who are involved in other aspects of the magical community are free to call themselves whatever they please in those contexts. Equally, however, the lodge name chosen by a Companion should not be used outside of this Order, in any other context.

Please forward any further questions about this subject to the Adept Dirigent of your lodge or to the Secretary of the Grand Assembly.

In Fellowship,

Companion Jerome  
President, Grand Assembly COTS