2. With hackers both amateur and criminal constantly looking for information to either infect systems or to hijack information for identity theft, a national database would be a very inviting target.

3. If I get into a “pique or quarrel” in my jurisdiction (but not brought up on Masonic charges) I should be able to go to another jurisdiction and enjoy my Freemasonry.

4. A national database of lodges and members could be used against the whole fraternity by certain groups or government organizations. Imagine if the Nazis had such data. Don’t say it couldn’t happen here. Remember the Morgan Affair, the rounding up and treatment of Japanese-American citizens during World War II, and the McCarthy witch hunts in the early 1950’s.

5. What a great temptation to a Grand Lodge in financial difficulty to “sell” the national list of members to a marketer. Information that has been provided assuming it to be held confidential, but now sold to the highest bidder.

The protest that the GWMNM will be the holder of this data is meant to reassure us, and those in charge today are honorable men, but what of those in the future. It is just too dangerous to have all this information so readily available.

Sincerely and fraternally,
Stephen A. Rubinstein

Dear Bro. Nelson:
I was going through some old emails Nelson, looking for something from Ernest Gran from Norway who was on this e group about ten years ago - I used to email him occasionally as he always had a nice story about what was going on there in Lodge or during a Holiday or just about the weather, and ran across this old one from you - thought you would get a kick out of it.

Anyway, on to the reason I was looking for something concerning Ernest Gran - our SGIG asked me several weeks ago to have dinner with him at the Balto. County Country Club as he had a friend of his in town from Norway, which is where our SGIG came from - the dinner was tonight, and as we were chatting during dinner I realized why the fellow sitting next to me had a name that was so familiar - it was Ernest Gran - I asked him if he was the same fellow on that egroup and he confirmed it - how is that for a strange coincidence. He disappeared from the egroup suddenly and I thought he might have passed away, and low and behold, his old email address is still in my address book. I have his new address now and I am going to write this “strange circumstance” up for our quarterly Grand Lodge newsletter - and thought maybe you would like to put it in the Philalethes magazine?

Sincerely and fraternally,
Jack Biggs Grand Master
The Grand Lodge of Maryland

Dear Bro. Nelson,
As I was re-reading the December 2006 issue of “The Philalethes”, I had the feeling there was something a little odd about the detailed article concerning the foundation of Internet Lodge No. 9659, UGLE. As a “first joiner” in that lodge, I am proud of my membership, and interested in learning what I can about the efforts that went into its planning and founding.

It took me a couple of read-throughs, but I finally realized that, with all the info about tea and biscuits before meetings and the wine served after the consecration, one major detail was missing: the identity of the Founding Worshipful Master of the

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**The Test**

Author Unknown

Several years ago, the story is told of a Mason who always wore his Masonic ring and lapel pin when in public. On some occasions, he rode the bus from his home to the downtown area. On one such trip and when he sat down, he discovered the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change.

As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, “You’d better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it.” Then he thought, “Oh, forget it, it’s only a quarter; who would worry about this little amount.” Anyway, the transit company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a ‘gift from God’ and keep quiet.

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, “Here, you gave me too much change.”

The driver with a smile replied, “ I noticed your Masonic ring and lapel pin. I have been thinking lately about asking a Mason how to join. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. You passed the test. Can you tell me how to become a Mason?”

When the Mason stepped off the bus, he said a silent prayer, “Oh God, Grand Architect of the Universe, I almost sold you and my beloved Masons out for a mere quarter.”

Our actions are the only Masonic creed some will ever see. This is a really almost scary example of how people watch us as Masons and may put us to the test even without us realizing it! Always be diligent, whether it be at the theater, restaurant, grocery, service station or just driving in traffic.

Remember, whether it be a lapel pin, a ring, or an emblem on the car, you carry the name of our great fraternity on your shoulders whenever you call yourself a Mason. You never can tell who might be watching!
The Philalethes Needs You

by Terry Tilton, MPS

As I begin these thoughts, I want you to know that the "you" in the heading of this article includes me, too. I am very honored to be elected by the Society as the new Second Vice-President at our last Annual Feast and Forum in Washington D.C. in February. To look at the luminaries of Masonry that have guided and preceded my election is truly humbling. I hope that I can be an active voice for your concerns about our Society and its direction over the next six years.

Your officers discussed many of the issues that confront our Society today. Especially we asked how we might be better able to respond to our mandate of continuing the guiding principles of Masonic education through a magazine format which gives opportunity for Masonic research and education with an open exchange of ideas. That is not easy for many reasons. Politics is certainly one of those problems. How do you critique long-established traditions and concepts that may or may not be in the best interests of Freemasonry today? How do you keep personalities out of this equation and as much as possible talk about ideas?

Some of our members have suggested that our Society should stick only to historical research or monographs and not be forum for discussion of current trends or directions. As members of the governing Board, we came to the conclusion that this simply does not fulfill our mission as a Society. Indeed, we acknowledge there are dangerous waters in the uncharted courses of where we believe Masonry is going and how we can best get there. Certainly not every idea or critique is equally worthy of consideration and too often many of the sentiments express only what the author believes we are doing wrong. But if the paradigm is true that real change for the betterment and growth of any organization and more especially our fraternity will come from ideas on the edge then we must be open to hearing and discussing these concepts.

Another critique that we are hearing more regularly is that The Philalethes magazine is not of the quality that many would hope to find in this premier Masonic publication. If that is true (and it may be) then as your editor has so often stated he simply cannot publish what he does not have. This means that it is incumbent upon our members and more especially the Fellows of the Society to take the responsibility to submit articles.

I would like to challenge every Fellow and Member of the Society to make a commitment to write at least one article from your research that could be submitted to our magazine. That takes time I know. But if we care about the quality of The Philalethes magazine, it is the only way to make it better by having more articles from which to choose to put in your publication.

My brothers The Philalethes needs you. I want to encourage you to help make us the one magazine for Masonic education that you will want to keep and read from cover to cover.