



The

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Between The Pillars

The Outer Portico

By R. Theron Dunn

Masonry is divided, as we all know, into three degrees, each revealing as much as it conceals to the candidate. Masonry is a progressive science, taught by degrees alone, with the candidate lead, over time, closer to the true secrets of Freemasonry.

The degrees serve multiple purposes, and in fact, are part of the guardians of the way to the true secrets of Freemasonry. Men join Masonry for many purposes, some, craven, others, social, and others, to truly become better men.

By craven, I refer to those who simply want to obtain the secrets of Freemasonry, having no interest in anything more. These men are confused by the initiatic experience, and extremely disappointed to find they have, by their time, obtained no secrets but a grip, a word, a due guard and a sign.

These rarely come back for the second degree, thinking that there are no secrets to obtain. Some, however, come back for the second degree, and seeing only a few more grips, words and signs, drop the fraternity, and go through lives having missed the greatest opportunity ever presented to them.

Those who join for social reasons are much like the craven ones who join, though these men, discovering that there is actually work required of them, also often drop out before or after their second degree. It is the rare craven or social

animal that actually make it through the third degree, though, of course, we all know a few who do so.

The degrees, therefore, act as a kind of filter against the occasional mistake of the investigation committee.

Those who become Freemasons only for the sake of finding out the secret of the order, run a very great risk of growing old under the trowel without ever realizing their purpose. Yet there is a secret, but it is so inviolable that it has never been confided or whispered to anyone.

Those who stop at the outward crust of things imagine that the secret consists in words, in signs, or that the main point of it is to be found only in reaching the highest degree. This is a mistaken view: the man who guesses the secret of Freemasonry, and to know it you must guess it, reaches that point only through long attendance in the lodges, through deep thinking, comparison, and deduction. He would not trust that secret to his best friend in Freemasonry, because he is aware that if his friend has not found it out, he could not make any use of it after it had been whispered in his ear. No, he keeps his peace, and the secret remains a secret.[1]

In the Entered Apprentice degree, the true seeker is reborn, from the profane outside, to the outer portico of the temple. Like an infant, through struggle and challenge, he opens his eyes to the new light of Freemasonry, and sees for

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The staff at the Lodgeroom International would like to invite you to send your comments in for inclusion in the magazine. This magazine is for you, and we would like to hear what you think about the articles and about the magazine.

If you have any questions about the articles, or would like to ask the author a question, please feel free to send them in as well.

Send your comments to:

editor@lodgeroominternational.com

We will run your letters in the magazine and on the Lodgeroom US Lodgeroom International Magazine forum. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Who is the Widow?



By R. Theron Dunn

We are taught that everything in Freemasonry is symbolic. Each of the symbols have more than one meaning. Yet, there is one symbol of Freemasonry that we rarely talk about or consider, but it is a sigil of who we all are and represent.

We are all Hiram, on one level of another. We discuss who he is, what he represents, what we are to learn from him and his sacrifice. To some, Hiram represents Jesus, and to others Mithra and to others Osiris and so on. We know that Hiram is an archetype, an exemplar, a teacher... and of course, we are all, symbolically, Hiram Abiff.

The one symbol we only discuss tangentially though, is WHO IS THE WIDOW? We are told that Hiram is a widow's sons, of the tribe of Naphtali. That is certainly the biblical reference, but if you carefully read the bible, you will see that he did not die before the temple was completed, and truth to tell, according to the bible he was a worker in metals, dyes, fabric and stonework, not an architect, or master of workmen.

When the first grand lodge was created in London in 1717, it comprised two degrees. The Fellowcraft possessed the "master's word". Shortly thereafter, around 1728, the third degree was created, more or less the third degree we have today. The character Hiram Abiff was chosen for a reason, one that, given the deep symbolic nature of the degrees already extent, had to be more than simple representation of an archetype... so, who, or what, is the Widow, why are we all widow's sons, and why do we identify ourselves as Son's of the Widow?

Now, I was thinking about this the other day, actually, I was responding to a post about Mary, the "mother" of god, and how the cult of Mary arose in the Catholic Church around the 4th Century AD, just about the time the Christian faith was taking off in England. Now, arguably, the existence of the Catholic Church can be pinned on the strength of that faith in England in the first four or five centuries AD, but that is another long and involved monologue.

But, here is the strange thing... the Celtic "faith" if you will, was a worship of the earth mother, the goddess, and her horned consort. The goddess appeared in three incarnations: the Virgin, The Mother, and the Hag. Now, we all know what the Virgin represents, and we all know what the mother represents, but the crone was DEATH... not the mean evil avoid it at all costs death of contemporary culture, but the satisfying, going home, rest has finally come, welcoming grandmother.

Any of this sound familiar? Mary, the mother

of god, the eternal virgin who gave birth to god in his incarnation in flesh, and the comforting mother/grandmother that is with us in death. The cult of Mary was created by the Roman Catholic Church around the 4th c AD... in direct response the Celtic Goddess.

The widow may symbolize a separation of the material world to that of the spiritual Father. The widows son, the Hiram of Masonic allegory, therefore, symbolizes our human physical nature bound to the mother (creation/material) after the symbolic 'Fall' of mankind. The Widow reference therefore symbolizes our lost connection to our Divine essence and origin. PTBOJIM (1)

But the celtic goddess is just another incarnation of Isis/Ishtar/Anu/Anna, a fertility goddess. Of Isis, it is written:

Isis, the Virgin of the World

IT is especially fitting that a study of Hermetic symbolism should begin with a discussion of the symbols and attributes of



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Parmenides Or, Light In The Dark



by Giovanni Lombardo

Duality is the human feature. Like a tree, man's feet are on the ground and his head is turned toward heaven.

Even more, I think duality is the whole manifestation's feature: the world, which is separated from the One after creation, is a mixture of good and evil, light and darkness, *yin* and *yang*.

Ancient Greeks displayed this idea in their language, for they translated "two" and "evil" with similar words, *dyo* and *dys* respectively.

No wonder, then that this feature is recurrent throughout humankind's history. To each century its own aporia: the eighteenth century is divided between Lessing's enlightenment and Cagliostro's witchcraft, while in the present era coexist cybernetics and New Age, a disquieting phenomenon which however dramatically points out the need of sacred.

The western civilisation removed the sacred from the reality and replaced it in the heights of metaphysics. From Descartes onwards, western culture adopted a dualistic approach: on the one hand *res cogitans*, the world of ideas, on the other

hand *res extensa*, the reality in which we live. Hence huge scientific progress, albeit paid at great cost: on the outer side, reification of Nature and environmental pollution; on the inner one, loss of man's psychological roots and subsequent anxiety and frustrations. Most of the mental diseases are actually affecting the human soul which was separated from divinity and is therefore wondering across darkness, fearful and unsure like a whelp missing the mother.

New Age's apparent success made me think over this: young people who are searching for light disregard western institutions, catholic church comprised, and turn toward the eastern ones, following gurus who seldom have any altruistic attitude. I remember that whenever western youngsters met Gandhi and asked him for suggestions about Hindu religious literature, Mahatma used to reply, counter-asking if they had already read the bible: a man cannot study foreign traditions if he has not yet strengthened his own ones. For this reason I attribute much of importance to rediscovering Parmenides's philosophy, which largely influenced Magna Græcia's Pythagorean communities.

We have a few of news about him. From Plato's dialogues we know that he was a wise, old man

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The Esoteric Jazz of Br. Duke Ellington



By Br. John Hirt, Jr.

“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.” (Plato)

“It Don’t Mean a thing if it don’t have that Swing”. (Duke Ellington)

The above line from Duke Ellington’s 1932 Jazz classic of the same name conveys the deepest essence of jazz music. What exactly does “swing” mean? A type of jazz music, yes, but even more so “swing” is interchangeable with the word “soul”. Ellington is poetically saying that if the music doesn’t touch your inner essence than it lacks a fundamental ingredient that makes it good music.

It is beyond the scope of this article to critic the works of Ellington or to delve into extensive lists of discography. We will look at certain pieces as they come up but our main point will be to profile this Master craftsman and Freemason as well as to delve into some of his more spiritually minded works.

Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington (1899-1974) is considered by many critics and historians to be the greatest American composer/band leader of the 20th century. His career spanned seven decades and left us with a song book of 1500 original and innovative compositions. To understand the scope of this output, recently, I saw for sale a box set collection of Ellington’s work. It contained 755 tracks spanning an incredible 40 cd’s of music! In Jazz annals only Louis Armstrong had a career comparable to that of Ellington. However if Armstrong was the performer who took Jazz mainstream it was Ellington the composer who did the same. *

A child, of middle class parents, Ellington was born and raised in Washington, DC. Although he began taking piano lessons at the age of eight he was more interested in baseball than the piano. Nicknamed “Duke” by a childhood friend because of his regal bearing Ellington considered art as a career however the experience of watching a ragtime piano player brought him back to the instrument at age 15. He began his apprenticeship in the pool halls of Washington, DC where he watched and learned from the variety of players available. When he was 18 he rejected an art scholarship to the Pratt Institute in order to become a professional musician.



He arrived in Harlem, at age 22, during the dawn of the Harlem Renaissance and began forming his Orchestra. They became leading exponents of what was called “Hot Jazz” for its expressive style and impact on the popular dance of the period. They set up shop at a place called “The Kentucky Club” and began building their reputations. In 1927 he and his players received their major break by becoming the house band of Harlem’s storied “The Cotton Club” which broadcast their shows live over the radio waves. This made Ellington a household name and during this period he composed such pieces as “East St. Louis Tooodle-O”, “The Mooche” and “Mood Indigo” among others.

The next two decades saw relentless touring. He wrote many of his compositions aboard trains (sometimes by flashlight), in hotels, and after an evening performance. Ellington and his band would often practice, compose, and improvise getting to bed long after daybreak. The period considered to be the Ellington “golden age” roughly 1938-1943 saw the composition of such classics as “Take the A Train”, “Sophisticated Lady”, and his Carnegie Hall debut “Black, Brown, & Beige”.

His later compositions included such diverse works as “Such Sweet Thunder” (1957) an album of Jazz music based off of Ellington’s interpretation of Shakespeare’s plays. The film score for Preminger’s classic “Anatomy of a Murder” (1959) and his “Live at Newport Jazz Festival” (1956) a triumph that created pandemonium among festival goers, sent critics running for bylines, and fans buying a record number of albums.

Bro. Ellington took his Masonic Degrees at Social Lodge #1 PHA, in Washington, D.C. in 1932. He would also become a member of the Scottish Rite Bodies and the Shrine. It is interesting to note that when Ellington became involved in Masonry the demands on his time were nearly constant. My research has not been able to reveal what drew the Duke to Masonry however his benevolent character, religious character (not a regular Church goer Ellington was however a deep student of the bible), and his impulse to craft musical art may all be clues.

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Magic and Mysticism



Br. René Guénon

The confusion of initiation with mysticism is largely due to those who for whatever reasons wish to deny expressly the reality of initiation by reducing it to something else. On the other hand, in such circles as those of the occultists, replete with all their unwarranted initiatic pretensions, there is a tendency to include as integral aspects, if not as essential elements, of the initiatic domain numerous things altogether foreign to it, among which magic is often the most prominent. The factors behind this error also explain why magic presents especially grave dangers for modern Westerners, the chief one being the tendency to attribute excessive importance to ‘phenomena’, to which their development of the experimental sciences bears witness.

If they are so easily seduced by magic and entertain such illusions as to its real import, this is because it is indeed also an experimental science, although certainly quite different from those the academic world designates by this term. We must not deceive ourselves on this point: this is an order of things

that contains absolutely nothing ‘transcendent’; if such a science, like every other science, can be legitimized by its connection with those higher principles upon which everything depends, in accordance with the general conception of the traditional sciences, it can still only be situated in the last rank of secondary and contingent applications, among those furthest from these principles, which therefore must be regarded as the most inferior of all. This is how magic is

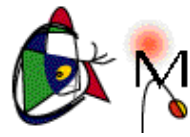
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The Lodgeroom International Bookstore

If it's Masonic, we probably have it, either in printed format, or from our large selection of digital books in PDF format. Whether its for Reference, like Morals and Dogma by Albert Pike or the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Albert Mackey, we have it.

Visit our online library at:
<http://lodgeroomuk.net/wwwserver.net/catalogue.php?shop=1>

Masonic Dog Tags



MURDER/TREASON ONLY



Wr. Jason Smith, Master of Barstow Lodge wrote:

My military brothers will love this one, as they have all been there.

Before going back to Iraq I had new DogTags made up. (Identification tags).

Normally it is in this format.

- NAME**
- Social Security Number**
- Blood Type**
- Religious Preference**



When I went in to have mine done, I changed my religious preference from Protestant to instead read: **“MASONIC FUNERAL”**.

The lady behind the counter came out and asked me what this was about and that I needed to give her a religious preference and this was not one. She argued with me about it, because I told her to put it on there. She even grabbed a chaplain to come over and argue with me about it.

He was one of those Anti-Masonic types and said that this proved that we considered Masonry a Religion. I just laughed and told them both, that I have made my peace with God and I don't need last rites. I just want my earthly Masonic Funeral.

They went as far as to look up the regulations to keep me from doing it. I proved them wrong. After they finished the new tags, I went around to all my brothers and showed them my shiny tags.

They were amazed and ask how they could do it too. 12 Brothers got new tags that day. This gave us all a peace of mind that our true last wishes would be honored.

Also, I bought 12 funeral ritual books and gave them out. We each carried one in our combat packs at all times. **JUST IN CASE!!!**

Brother: Here's hoping you never need either! ed.

By Br. Ed King
www.masonicinfo.com

In some Masonic obligations, there appears a phrase which will cause a law-abiding citizen to pause. While the wording may be slightly different from place to place, the essence of the promise is that a Mason agrees to protect a Brother Master Mason's secrets as his own, murder and treason alone excepted.

One may rightfully ask, then: what about other crimes? Robbery, assault, or other crimes against persons or property surely should not be the subject of 'Masonic protection', should they?

Of course not! And no Mason would believe that they were. Immediately prior to taking that Masonic obligation, the candidate is advised that nothing he is about to promise will in any way interfere with any duty he owes to God, his country, his family/neighbor or himself.

Clearly, an obligation each person in our society has is to report knowledge of a crime. In fact, hiding knowledge of a criminal act is a criminal act in and of itself, sometimes punishable by only a slightly lesser penalty? Accordingly, no Mason has an obligation to protect another Mason should he learn of criminal wrongdoing of any kind. Were he to do so, he interferes with his duty to family/neighbor that he live as a peaceable citizen, obeying

the laws of the land. He would also severely violate his duty to himself, to live a clean and upright life, providing for his family and his community to the best of his ability. Thus, the hiding of a crime by another, be they a Mason or not, is inappropriate for a Mason under any circumstances.

Masons are obligated to protect the laws and to live as law-abiding citizens. As such, it would be unthinkable to allow a criminal to avoid the appropriate punishment simply because of a common membership. In fact, most Masons would be so distraught at the thought of a criminal in their midst, they would quickly take action to ensure that the perpetrator was brought to justice and be removed from their ranks as well.

Freemasonry does not condone criminal acts nor does it condone the hiding of them when known.

The admonition in the obligation is to impress upon a candidate that a Brother Mason should feel free to share their innermost thoughts without concern about 'blabbing' or reprisal. To suggest that (a) a Mason would commit a criminal act and then (b) tell another Mason about it in order that (c) it would be concealed is foolish in the extreme.

Masons as a group are not law-breakers nor do they support them. The charge that they do is specious at best and there are no supportable examples of Masons concealing the criminal acts of other Masons.

Masonic Traditions in Our Past and Our Future



by Paul M. Bessel
Presentation at La France Lodge #93, F.A.A.M., Washington, D.C., September 8, 2000

Introduction

The subject we are discussing this evening is the most important one in Freemasonry, for we will be exchanging ideas about what Freemasonry has been in the past, what it is today, and what it can and will be in the future.

This does not mean that we must follow our traditions simply because they have existed. We could say that some of them were wrong and should end, just as the traditions of slavery, or of women having no rights, were traditions that properly ended. Or we could say that some traditions made sense in the past, but no longer. But we should be honest with ourselves in

examining what Freemasonry has been in the past and what it is today, so we can make better choices about what we want to make it in the future.

I believe we can place Masonic traditions -- what Freemasonry has been, what it is today, and what it can be in the future -- into 5 categories.

Learning

We do not know much about the origins of Freemasonry, as we know it today, in the 1600s and 1700s, and maybe that is good because it allows those interested in Masonic history to explore all sorts of threads of events in that era.

We do have a pretty good idea that men who were interested in learning were among the leaders who founded and promoted Freemasonry in the early days, particularly the 1700s. Scientists,

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Catechism Corner

By Br. John S. Nagy

An Occasional Contribution of Light from a Not So Occasional Contributor.

MASONIC WARNING: Although all of what is written below is openly available to everyone with access to archaic books, if you're on a Masonic track, it's wise that you save reading this until after you're raised a Master Mason.

The Significance of the Four Ruffians

Ritual tells us that there were three Ruffians. With a little research, one can see that there is clearly four and his working tool is quite telling. – Dr. John S. Nagy

Summary:

The three Ruffians are infamous and have been immortalized in our Ritual. It is the connection that they have to their fourth Brother that provides for us a working tool that is mentioned in lecture but seldom seen for what it is.

It was years after I had been raised that I went back through ritual to make connections that are never communicated directly in Lodge. To make such connections, a Mason must have a sound mind and retentive memory. He must also be willing to go back through his VSL and read about characters and references that are spread out throughout its pages. Included in this might also be actions that are directed to other sacred texts that he might not be too familiar with. It is not an easy task but it is well worth the effort.

I was called upon to do such a task when I volunteered to provide Masonic Education that was far beyond the usual ritual instruction and tests that determine Digest Law knowledge. To do so, I readily combed through old ritual books and differing versions of VSL. One such question that arose in my search was the *significance of the Ruffian's names*. Why were they so similar? What clues presented themselves in their differences? What connections might be made when I examined these similarities and differences? I had many questions and I knew that my work was cut out for me.

I started flipping through old ritual books and Bibles. What came to Light were connections that went far beyond ritual and the VSL toward sacred texts in the East. The first connection that was not so obvious was as mentioned before, the spelling of the Ruffian's names. As intimated in the catechism provided, the differences spelled out a word that is used by Buddhists monks and the word that was shown has a specific reason for use. That spelling, and the "correct" rendering and pronouncement of the word lead me to understand that there was indeed a fourth Ruffian that went unnamed in ritual.

The unnamed Ruffian though is characterized in the

VSL much different than I imagined and it is his placement in a his family that lead me to another Brother that is also mentioned in ritual – but the connection that I made when I heard of him during ritual is not the connection to the Ruffians that I knew!

There was much Light the revealed itself to me as I continued to make further connections. Included in this Light were the connections between the penalties, the steps in the East, the working tools* used by the Ruffians, integrity (how to maintain it and what occurs when one doesn't!) and how one might view one's life unfolding continuously.

AS before, I found that simply asking obvious connections and searching for answers started the unfolding of a wonder filled catechism that I found most enjoyable.

Here now for your perusal, enjoyment and possible further enlightenment is the Catechism that I provided on this subject during Masonic Education spots in Lodges around my area.

One final note of two:

The greatest challenge many Masons have is to make sure one honors their Obligation and the laws of their Jurisdiction. Keeping this in mind, I made sure to the best of my ability that this specific Catechism came from historical documents and not from current day ritual. It may not match your Jurisdiction's ritual exactly but the Light it has to offer is as significant today as it was then.

I've purposely left some specific names out and relied on the provided hints to help stir your curiosity. In addition, I've purposefully not footnoted this catechism in the hopes that you will use its hints as a road map to find much valuable treasure. To aid you in this I've provided the references used to create this herein.

- § Duncan's Monitor and Ritual
- § Webb's Masonic Monitor By Thomas Smith Webb, Edition 1865
- § Holy Bible – Lamsa's Version
- § Transformations of Myth Through Time – Joseph Campbell

May this Catechism shine a bright Light on your current day ritual and your life as well!

Enjoy!
 Brother Dr. John S. Nagy
<http://www.coach.net>

PS – Everything herein can be found within Blue Lodge Masonry.

* These working tools vary from one place to another so please forgive me writing a catechism that would include these tools without having some jurisdictions left out by doing so.

The Significance of the Four Ruffian Catechism

I: Be you a Master Mason?
 R: I be.

I: Then you have the integrity of a Master?
 R: I have so been tried and found to have such.

I: How have you so been tried?
 R: Ruffians did so try me.

I: What was tried?
 R: My integrity.

I: How so?
 R: At first, by the demands of Time.

I: By whom?
 R: By the first Ruffian.

I: How was this so conveyed.
 R: By a 24 inch gauge and with good measure.

I: What does it teach us?
 R: Time demands us to keep sacred that which is necessary to maintain our work, refreshment and belief.

I: How may we corrupt this?
 R: We may be tempted to borrow from one for benefit which will lead to debt and detriment to another.

I: When does this occur?
 R: In a Mason's Youth.

I: What step was this?
 R: A Mason's first step?

I: Where was this so symbolized?
 R: A Mason's EA Degree.

I: Where else?
 R: In a Mason's EA Step.

I: Is there more?
 R: Yes, in the first step leading to the station of the Worshipful Master in the East.

I: Where else is this symbolized?
 R: In the seasons of a Mason's life, it would be considered "Spring."

I: And last?
 R: By the last letter of the first Ruffian's name.

Continued on Page 15 - Catechism

Travel Experience



By Steinarr Kr. Omarsson

Foreword:

I come from Iceland. I was initiated in 2001 and have reached the VI° in the Swedish system of Freemasonry. I have been interested in International Freemasonry from day one. My activities have been limited to the web, but that changed last October when I travelled to London.

A meeting in a different masonic rite:

For a long time I have been interested in Freemasonry as it is practiced in England, especially in London which is in a way the cradle of modern Freemasonry.

In Great Queen Street in London the United Grand Lodge of England has a very beautiful and big Grand Lodge building. Visiting that building is alone a great masonic experience, but I wanted more, so I packed my tails and regalia and went to a meeting.

When I first entered the building I was directed to a relations office, where my masonic passport was examined and I had a choice of meetings to go to, an Installation or a 3rd. I took the third. I was given a letter for the secretary of the lodge and sent on my way. Before the meeting I was of course tested in my knowledge of grips, signs and words.

If one comes prepared gaining entrance to a meeting is easy.

The meeting:

I went to a meeting of the lodge The Royal Albert no. 907. There I met true gentlemen of the craft. I was made most welcome from the beginning and all possible questions I had were answered. I was „assigned“ to a very experienced brother who knew a thing or two about Freemasonry.

Almost everything was different from what I am used to. The layout of the lodge was different, the way men travelled around the lodge was different, the signs were different, the lecture was different, but in the end a brother was raised to the third degree. For me this experience was like going through a degree myself.

In this meeting I experienced something which I was told is rare. The Tyler gave a Walking Charge. I wish I had it on video, it was awe inspiring and thought provoking.

The festive board:

What a good time we had. In this short time we

spent together I felt like I had known these gentlemen and brothers for a long time. Again things were done differently, but now I had the opportunity to give a response to a toast like we do it, so I was able to give them a little glimpse into another masonic world. I also gave a short speech about Icelandic freemasonry and the Swedish Rite which I hope was enlightening. The Tyler gave the full version of the Tylers toast in my honor. What an experience.

I thank the members of The Royal Albert Lodge and the guests present at the meeting from the bottom of my heart for an unforgettable experience and hospitality.


Reflections afterwards:

Afterwards, when thinking about what I learned

and experienced that night I had the humbling thoughts of how little I really know about Freemasonry. The road is long ahead and the journey will take a long time. I saw things that I know done in a different way, sometimes so different that it adds a new meaning or changes the meaning I had drawn from them considerably. In some ways I got questions answered, but at the same time I had more questions.

Is either system better? No. I think this is one of the greatest things about Freemasonry that it is possible to do things in so many different ways, but yet reach the same goal. It is a great strength that there are so many flavors in Masonry International.

The visitation right that is built into our system is one of the greatest assets we have. Whenever possible I am going to visit a lodge wherever I am. I encourage everyone who has the opportunity to do so.

If you have any questions or comments please send me an e-mail to okunnurleitandi@gmail.com 

NJ Masons Making Blood Donations

by Craig Butler

November 13, 2007 - People with thalassemia know the importance of maintaining the nation's blood supply: their lifelong transfusions make them the single largest consumers of blood products in the U.S. This is why CAF is constantly encouraging people to donate blood and to take an active role in organizing blood drives.

Of course, millions of people without thalassemia benefit from efforts to increase the blood supply, as 4.5 million people in the U.S. and Canada need blood products every year, and 95% of all residents will require blood at some point in their lives. And with only 5% of the population donating blood, there's plenty of room to grow in terms of donations.

In New Jersey, blood banks and hospitals which collect blood are helped enormously by the efforts of the New Jersey Masons. According to Robert Giudice of Madison Masonic Lodge No. 93, who organizes the blood drive program in the state and whose wife, Lisa, has thalassemia, New Jersey needs approximately 70,000 units of blood per year. Last year, the blood drives arranged by the Masons brought in about 1,900 units; this year, they're on target to collect almost 3,000. And Robert is determined to see that number rise to 10,000 within 3 years.

“We had a 600-pint month this last June,” Robert says of the Masons' efforts, adding that this was the first time that had occurred in 8 years. He is working with the 137 Lodges in the state to try to increase both the number of drives – currently about 15-20 every month – and the number of donors at each drive.

“Only about 3% of New Jersey residents give blood,” he says, “so there's definitely an untapped pool out there.” The Masons work with all 4 of the major blood service organizations in the state – Blood Services of NY and NJ, Blood Center of NJ, Penn-Jersey Red Cross and Community Blood Council of Trenton – as well as with hospitals to make their drives happen.

“But to have a successful drive, you can't leave it all up to the blood services,” he says, pointing out that they bring the equipment and trained personnel needed to collect blood. “They can give you posters and flyers, but you need to get those up – and you need to come up with your own ways to draw attention.”

The New Jersey Masons put a large sign announcing their blood drives outside their halls, so that people passing by see it. Then they try to put up other signs – or posters or flyers – in the community, so that the message sinks in.

“If a person drives by and sees the sign every day, and then sees another message about it at the supermarket, it makes an impression – and hopefully gives them just enough guilt that they'll come in,” Robert says. He also says the Masons make use of the internet, word-of-mouth – anything that will help. “If the priest can talk about the blood drive from the pulpit, that's a great motivator. Enlisting the aid of girl scouts to hand out flyers is good, too – and it helps the scouts with their community service badges.

“I used to work in real estate, so I know the power of big signs – but I also know that real estate agents

Continued on Page 21 - Blood Drive

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Widow

Continued from Page 3

the Saitic Isis. This is the Isis of Sais, famous for the inscription concerning her which appeared on the front of her temple in that city: "I, Isis, am all that has been, that is or shall be; no mortal Man hath ever me unveiled."

This Egyptian deity under many names appears as the principle of natural fecundity among nearly all the religions of the ancient world. She was known as the goddess with ten thousand appellations and was metamorphosed by Christianity into the Virgin Mary, for Isis, although she gave birth to all living things—chief among them the Sun—still remained a virgin, according to the legendary accounts.(2)

The term 'widow' denotes a separation from one's husband. In Isis case, she as a symbol of the material world is identified as separated from the spiritual side of existence, symbolized by her brother/husband (the nature of this relationship is meant to emphasize a unity between material and spiritual existence) the vital principle of Nature or creative Force.

Horus himself is the classic archetype and symbol of unifying our spiritual and material aspects. He is the personification of the transcendent nature of humanity, in other words, a different way to express the same nature of the creative forces symbolized as Isis and Osiris. As above, so below - expressed in Hermetic terms.(3)

"The only reasonable explanation that we had come across regarding the actual name of the Masonic hero was that Hiram meant 'noble' or 'kingly' in Hebrew, while Abif has been identified as old French for 'lost one', giving a literal description of 'the king that was lost'."

"Masonic ritual refers to Hiram Abif as the 'Son of the Widow'... In Egyptian legend the first Horus was uniquely conceived after his father's death and therefore his mother was a widow even before his conception. It seemed logical therefore that all those who thereafter became Horus, i.e. the kings of Egypt, would also describe themselves as 'Son of the Widow'." Bill McElligott(4)

So, if the widow is Isis/Mary, then Hiram is Osiris/Jesus. The Widow, of whom we are all symbolic sons, is the archetype for the mother, the earth, the mortal and material world. Hiram is the archetype of the spiritual, arising from the widow. This makes sense when we consider that the goal of the Mason is to transcend the mortal, to rise above the intellect, to become one with the creative



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principle, the Great Architect of the Universe in the Sanctum Sanctorum, where master masons hold their lodges.

- (1) ptbojim, http://thefreemason.com/forum/topic.asp?ARCHIVE=true&TOPIC_ID=3193&whichpage=1
- (2) <http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/sta/stal0.htm>
- (3) ptbojim, http://thefreemason.com/forum/topic.asp?ARCHIVE=true&TOPIC_ID=3193&whichpage=2
- (4) Bill McElligott, http://thefreemason.com/forum/topic.asp?ARCHIVE=true&TOPIC_ID=3193&whichpage=2

Paramenides

Continued from Page 3

who favourably impressed Socrates because of his inner depth and his open mind.

He was born at Velia, perhaps in 520 b. C.. This town lies on the coast somewhat south of Naples and was founded by some inhabitants of Phocaea seeking relief from Persians invaders. Phocaea was an important commercial centre, with close ties with Samos, Pythagoras's homeland: commercial relationship anticipate the cultural ones.

Parmenides wrote a poem, describing his journey in a chariot, led by the Daughters of the Sun, to the Gates of Day and Night, where he meets an unnamed Goddess who is the source of all wisdom. It is worth of notice that all features are females.

At first time there is a contradiction between the content of the poem – a journey toward darkness – and the form, it being written in hexameters, which man used to tell about heroic gestures; the contradiction is however merely apparent, as we shall discover later.

In the Greek mythology Tartarus is also the Sun's dwelling, the place where it goes after the sun-set to rest and to recover energies for the subsequent day.

Parmenides teaches us that underworld is not only the house of darkness and death, as we modern men think because we lost any contact with afterlife. Tartarus is a paradoxical place, where opposites meet each other. Light's source is in the darkness!

This is not only a poetic imagine, but a rigorous philosophical idea. Parmenides argued that the everyday perception of reality of the physical world (doxa) is mistaken, and that the reality of the world is 'One Being' (aletheia): an unchanging, not engendered, indestructible whole. Everything belonging to One Being, opposites are complementary.

Parmenides's teachings were similar to the Pythagorean ones. Pythagorean communities were aware of the orphic traditions and of the sunny mythologies. Their villages were near volcanoes, the fire of which had a twofold meaning: destructive, hellish, but also a means to convey heat and light, so life. They thought a man cannot long for heaven if has not already purified himself: volcano's dark caves were like a womb, preparing men to be symbolically reborn. Here is the ground for which Tartarus's inhabitants are of feminine gender.

As the Sun rests in Tartarus, so the initiate finds the light in his deepest conscience. By uniting the opposites he carries on a cosmogony. He will act with love (eros), that is with strength: in this sense he will be a 'hero'. He will consider life as 'non conforming concordance'. Being aware that harmony is thereby stemming, he will take care of any life's events.

The initiate wisdom does not divide them in first and second class: every aspect of human life is equally important, also – but I would say: mainly – the political ones, in their etymological meaning: polis, city, tyche, destiny.

In conclusion, let me recall an excerpt of "The Alchemist", by Paulo Coelho.

A certain shopkeeper sent his son to learn about the secret of happiness from the wisest man in the world. The lad wandered through the desert for forty days, and finally came upon a beautiful castle, high atop a mountain. It was there that the wise man lived.

Rather than finding a saintly man though, our young lad, on entering the main room of the castle, saw a hive of activity: tradesmen came and went, people were conversing in the corners, a small orchestra was playing soft music, and there was a table covered with platters of the most delicious food in that part of the world.

The wise man listened attentively to the boy's explanation of why he had come, but told him

Continued on Next Page

that he didn't have just then to explain the secret of happiness.

He suggested that the boy look around the palace and return in two hours. "Meanwhile, I want to ask you to do something," said the wise man, handing the boy a teaspoon that held two drops of oil. "As you wander around, carry this spoon without allowing the oil to spill."

The boy began climbing and descending the many stairways of the castle, keeping his eyes fixed on the spoon. After two hours, he returned to the room where the wise man was.

"Well", said the wise man, "did you see the Persian tapestries that are hanging in the dining hall? Did you see the garden that took the master gardener 10 years to create? Did you notice the beautiful parchments in my library?"

The boy was embarrassed, and confessed that he had observed nothing. His only concern had been not to spill the oil that the wise man had entrusted to him..

"Then go back and observe the marvels of my world", said the wise man.

Relieved, the boy picked up the spoon and returned to his exploration of the palace, this time observing all the works of art on the ceilings and the walls. He saw the gardens and the mountains all around him, the beauty of the flowers. Upon returning to the wise man, he related in detail every thing he had seen.

"But where are the drops of oil I entrusted to you?", asked the wise man. Looking down at the spoon he held, the boy saw that the oil was gone. "Well, there is only one piece of advice I can give you", said the wisest of wise men. "The secret of happiness is to see all the marvels of the world, and never to forget the drops of oil on the spoon.."

This story serves as just a little reminder that while we get all caught up in the frenzy of work and assignments, we mustn't forget about the "drops of oil", the things in life that really matter... friends, family, stuffed toys... and the ties that bind.



Portico

Continued from Page 2

the first time with new eyes.

Like a newborn, everything presented to him is new; he is the student of life. Like all students, knowledge comes to him in stages, in degrees. Each degree of Masonry grants new insights, new ways of seeing, and new ways of applying old knowledge.

When we were young, we were taught to add and subtract. Then we were taught to multiply, then to divide. All along the way, the skills we mastered are expanded upon until we can find the area under

an arc or the cosign of a tangent.

The same is true of Freemasonry, what we learn as an Entered Apprentice is expanded upon as Fellows of the Craft, and we look back on the lessons of the first degree and chuckle at how simple those lessons were... sometimes forgetting that the profound often seems simple in retrospect.

As we progress in the degrees, our eyes are opened further to the light, until as masters of the craft, we are told that we are now in possession of all the light that can be conferred upon us in a lodge of Master Masons. We possess the light, but we are now searchers, traveling men.

And what are we traveling in search of? More light in Masonry, of course. Our studies of the craft only begin when we are raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. The foundation has been laid, the tools explained, the fundamentals mastered. It is then time to go out, measure our work and use the tools to erect a spiritual house with perfected stones.

As Entered Apprentices, we are on the outer portico of our journey in masonry, having taken the first steps. This is the allegory of the first degree. Yet, as Masters, we are told that we are always Entered Apprentices in the ritual.

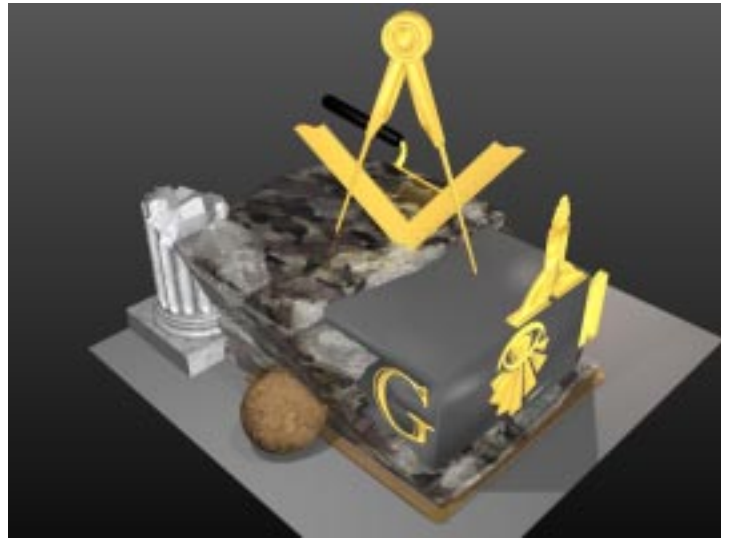
When I was the Junior Warden, I studied to sit as Master in the first degree conferrals. One of the first things I noticed in opening the lodge was my question to the Senior Warden in opening the lodge:

Brother Senior Warden, Satisfy yourself that all present are Entered Apprentice Masons.

Worshipful Master, all present are Entered Apprentice Masons.

Now, looking at the brethren in the lodge, all were Master Masons, but the ritual, and the Senior Warden, all assured me they were Entered Apprentice Masons. We all proved it by giving the due guard and sign of Entered Apprentice Masons.

It occurred to me then that we are all still Entered Apprentices, on a certain level, and though as Masters, we symbolically worked in the Sanctum Sanctorum, we were all still on the outer portico, learning, and searching for more light.



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Ellington

Continued from Page 4

Is there a relationship between Jazz and Freemasonry? A question I sought more insight into. My research indicated that as within every other sphere of life Freemasons were well represented among Jazz musicians as well. Besides Ellington, other members of the Craft included Big Band Leaders William "Count" Basie and Glenn Miller, Singers W.C. Handy (author of the famous "St. Louis Blues") the legendary Nat King Cole, and Al Jolson performer in the first "talkie" movie "The Jazz Singer", pianist Oscar Peterson, and interestingly Antoine Joseph Sax, who while not a Jazz musician did invent the Saxophone.

However not content with just finding that members of the Fraternity were active within Jazz musicianship I hoped to find an esoteric connection. Which I did with a wonderful article posted online and authored by Bro. Tuncel Gulsoy, in Turkey.

Bro. Gunsoy in his article "Jazz and Freemasonry" draws interesting parallels between Jazz and Freemasonry such as "one cannot ignore the fact that the simplest jazz chord is made up of the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th notes in the diatonic scale. In fact, it is essentially the use of the 7th note, which differentiates a jazz chord from a classical chord. You simply flatten the 7th note. As the chord structure gets more complicated you flatten the 3rd note next to the 5th." He finishes this paragraph with a very apt " I will leave you to draw the symbolic parallels according to your Masonic experience. (1)

"Jazz music is a new art form in music with a unique rhythmic structure and sound color. It demands the

Continued on Next Page

utmost technical virtuosity and creativity from its performers and followers. It is clear that in order to achieve this level of virtuosity and creativity is only possible by being a sincere and a free-minded person". Here Bro. Gulsoy strikes upon a point related directly to our profile of Bro. Ellington. What Ellington was hoping for and achieved was a discipline and precision within the freedom of Jazz. Read in Ellington's own words:

"What exactly is Jazz? A matter of trick rhythms, blues-notes, and unorthodox harmonies? I think not. Those matters may enter into it, but only in the nature of a result and not of a cause. To my mind, jazz is simply the expression of an age, in music. Think of the terms classical music, romantic music. An entire picture comes to mind-a picture of the way people thought and felt: an expression of human reactions to the conditions under which they lived. You wouldn't dream of associating a certain rhythm, or a fixed tone quality with either of them. Jazz is exactly the same- not in its forms, of course, but in the large, overall pattern of its expression. Just as the classic form represents strict adherence to a structural standard, just as romantic music represents a rebellion against fixed forms in favor of more personal utterance, so jazz continues the pattern of barrier-breaking and emerges as the freest musical expression we have yet seen. To me, then, jazz means simply freedom of musical speech! And it is precisely because of this freedom that so many varied forms of jazz exist. The important thing to remember, however is that not one of these forms represents jazz by itself. Jazz means simply the freedom to have many forms." (2)

Consider the above statement in relation to Freemasonry. We as Masons are free to interpret and contemplate the many forms of the Supreme Architect as each Brother finds within his own faith and conscience. Where basic human freedom is evident so are varied forms of worship and spiritual expression.

As Duke Ellington said "Put it this way. Jazz is a good barometer of freedom. When pure Jazz is not accepted and pseudo jazz with political and dogmatic coatings takes over, you can look for freedom of expression to step out of the picture. In its beginnings, the USA spawned certain ideals of freedom and independence through which, eventually, jazz was evolved and the music is so free that many people say it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of freedom yet produced in this country". (3)

Bro. Gunsoy in his article "Jazz and Freemasonry"

essentially concurs, with Bro. Ellington with some interesting parallels as follows:

"Both in Jazz and Freemasonry wisdom not knowledge is exchanged.

Both in Freemasonry and Jazz, one loves, and love lessons cannot be given

Both in Freemasonry and Jazz knowledge can be transferred not wisdom

Both in Jazz and Freemasonry wisdom cannot be explained, but only lived." (4)

"Wisdom is something that man partially enjoys-One and only One has all the wisdom. God has total understanding. There are some people who speak one language and some who speak many languages. Every man prays in his own language, and there is no



language that God does not understand". – Duke Ellington

One of Ellington's great achievements was his contribution in bringing Jazz from a folk music status to that of a major art form. Perhaps, THE major art form of the 20th century when one considers the far reaching and borderless appeal of Jazz music. Ellington was there, from near it's conception, in the pool halls and speakeasy clubs all the way through to the world's great symphonic Halls and Jazz Festivals. Never content to rest on what he had done Ellington constantly challenged himself, his orchestra, and listeners to broad redefinitions of previous compositions to experiments in longer forms he called "Jazz Suites".

Ellington also recognized the spiritual power of this new art form. His 1943 composition of "Come

Sunday" (later bolstered by the addition of lyrics sung by Gospel great Mahalia Jackson) bespoke the power of God in the lives of African-Americans. In 1965, Ellington was commissioned to due a concert of original sacred music for San Francisco's Grace Cathedral. Reportedly when initially visited by the Cathedral officials about the project Ellington was relaxing in bed but when he heard the proposal he immediately sat up and exclaimed "What?" Ellington had been long looking for an expression of his faith in music and here was an opportunity that Ellington threw himself in whole heartedly. The success of the concert was repeated by two other original compositions of sacred music culminating in a 1973 performance at Westminster Abbey. It is should be noted that despite his long career of triumphs he considered his sacred music compositions among the most important things he created.

Bro. Ellington composed his first simple piano piece at age 15 then spent the next 60 years continuously crafting compositions. Endlessly searching for new directions into which his music could flow and gathering all manor of sounds and instruments Ellington personified the Master Craftsman allegorically always chipping away from the rough stone of inspiration to create a smooth compositional art that transformed Jazz music and made his a cornerstone of the 20th century music.

"Communication itself is what baffles the multitude. It is both so difficult and so simple. Of all man's fears, I think men are most afraid of being what they are-in direct communication with the world at large. They fear reprisals, the most personal of which is that they "won't be understood"...Yet, every time

God's children have thrown away fear in pursuit of honesty-trying to communicate themselves, understood or not-miracles have happened." – Duke Ellington

- (1) Tuncel Gulsoy & Alan J. Hutchison, Jazz and Freemasonry
- (2) Unidentified author, "Why Duke Ellington Avoided Music Schools" ** excerpt from the New York newspaper PM, 9 Dec.1945. Source: "The Duke Ellington Reader" edited by Mark Tucker, Oxford University Press, 1993.
- (3) Duke Ellington, "The Race for Space", 1957, typescript in the Ellington collection, Smithsonian Institute.
- (4) Gunsoy and Hutchinson, "Jazz and

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Freemasonry”.

(5) Duke Ellington, Program note for “A Concert of Sacred Music” 16 Sept. 1965. San Francisco, Ca.

* Ellington and Armstrong would record one album together “The Great Summit”, in 1961.

** One should not consider this title an indictment of Music Schools by Ellington. The same article mentions that Ellington had recently established three music scholarships for graduates of New York High Schools and at the Julliard School of Music.



Magic

Continued from Page 4

considered in all the civilizations of the East, and although it cannot be denied that magic exists there, it is far from being held in esteem as Westerners very often imagine because they are too easily disposed to project onto others their own tendencies and ideas.

Even in Tibet, as well as in India and China, where the practice of magic is something of a ‘specialty’, it is left to those incapable of rising to anything higher. This of course does not imply that others cannot in exceptional circumstances and for limited purposes also occasionally produce phenomena outwardly similar to those of magic, but the objective and even the means employed are really altogether different. Besides, confining ourselves to what is known of these things in the West, we need only consider the stories surrounding both saints and sorcerers to see how similar are the facts in both cases; and this shows quite clearly, contrary to the belief of the modern ‘man of science’, that phenomena of whatever kind can never prove anything in themselves.¹

Now it is obvious that illusions about the value and importance of these things considerably augment their danger, and what is particularly problematic for those Westerners who ‘dabble in magic’ is their complete ignorance, unavoidable in the current state of affairs and in the absence of

any traditional teaching, of what is involved in such matters. Even leaving aside both the many mountebanks and charlatans who in short do nothing but exploit the credulous, and the simple-minded fantasists who would improvise a ‘science’ of their own design, those who would seriously study these phenomena lack both the necessary data to guide them and an organization to support and protect them and are thus reduced to a sort of crude empiricism, reminding one of children who, left to themselves, want to handle redoubtable forces without knowing anything about them; and if deplorable accidents too often result from such imprudence we should not be unduly surprised.

Speaking of accidents, we especially want to point out the risks of mental imbalance to which those who act in this way are exposed, such disequilibrium being an all too frequent consequence of communication with what some call the ‘vital plane’, which is nothing other than the domain of subtle manifestation envisaged particularly in those modalities nearest to the corporeal order and so most easily accessible to the average man. The explanation is simple enough, for it is exclusively a matter of the development of certain individual possibilities, often of a rather inferior order; and if this development proceeds in an abnormal, that is, disordered and inharmonious way that precludes the development of higher possibilities, it is natural and even inevitable that such a result should follow, not to mention the reactions - in no way negligible and sometimes even terrible - of all types of forces with which the individual unthinkingly puts himself in contact.

We say ‘forces’ with no inclination to be more specific because the matter is of little importance to our present concerns; vague as it is, we prefer this word to ‘entities’, which, at least for those not sufficiently accustomed to certain symbolic ways of speaking, has the risk of too easily evoking more or less fantastical ‘personifications’. As we have often had occasion to explain, this ‘intermediary world’ is much more complex and extensive than the corporeal world; still, the study of both worlds comes within the purview of the ‘natural sciences’ in the truest sense of the term, and to see in the former anything more is, we repeat, to delude oneself in a most peculiar way.

There is absolutely nothing in this intermediary world that belongs to the ‘initiatic’ any more than to the ‘religious’ domain; indeed, we find herein many more obstacles than supports to reaching a genuinely transcendent knowledge, a knowledge completely different from that of the contingent sciences, a knowledge which contains no trace of any ‘phenomenalism’, depending only on pure intellectual intuition, which alone is pure spirituality.

After applying themselves for a considerable time to the search for extraordinary phenomena, or what passes for such, some people for various reasons eventually tire of it all or become disappointed by insignificant results that fall short of their hopes. It is worth noting that often these same people then

turn to mysticism,² for astonishing as it may seem at first glance, this latter still satisfies similar needs and aspirations, although under another form.

Certainly, we are far from denying that mysticism in itself may have a character much more elevated than magic; nonetheless, if we look more deeply, we soon realize that at least from a certain point of view the difference is not as great as one might imagine, for here again it is in fact only a matter of ‘phenomena’, visions, or the other tangible and sentimental manifestations that characterize the domain of individual possibilities alone.³

In mysticism, then, illusion and disequilibrium are far from being left behind, and although they may manifest themselves here in unaccustomed forms they are no less dangerous and are even aggravated in a sense by the passive attitude of the mystic who, as stated before, leaves the door open to every influence that may present itself, whereas the magician is granted at least a measure of protection by the active attitude he attempts to maintain with respect to these same influences, which certainly does not mean, however, that in the end he is not often overwhelmed by them.

Moreover, it is also true that the mystic is almost always too easily the dupe of his own imagination, the productions of which, without his suspecting it, become almost inextricably mixed with his genuine ‘experiences’. For this reason we must not exaggerate the importance of the ‘revelations’ of the mystics, or at least we should never accept them without verification.⁴ The interest of certain visions consists only in their many points of agreement with traditional information clearly unknown to the mystic concerned;⁵ but it would be a mistake, and even a reversal of normal relationships, to wish to find in this a ‘confirmation’ of this traditional information, which in no way requires it and which is on the contrary the only guarantee that the visions in question are something more than the mere product of individual imagination or fantasy.

- 1 Cf. Reign of Quantity, chap. 39
- 2 It also sometimes happens that others, after having truly entered into the initiatic way, and not just into the illusions of the pseudo-initiation about which we have been speaking, abandon that way for mysticism; the motives are then naturally quite different and mainly of a sentimental order, but whatever they may be we must see above all in such cases the consequence of some defect in initiatic qualifications, at least as concerns the aptitude to realize effective initiation; as a typical example one could cite Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin.
- 3 Naturally, this is not to say that the phenomena in question pertain solely to the psychological order, as certain moderns claim.
- 4 This attitude of prudent caution,

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necessitated by the natural tendency of mystics to 'divagation' in the proper sense of the word, is in any case the one that Catholicism invariably observes with respect to them.

- 5 The visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich can be cited here as an example. [See The King of the World, chap. 8, n12, ED]



Traditions

Continued from Page 5

philosophers, members of the Royal Society, explored knowledge and sought to expand it. Benjamin Franklin was an archetype -- scientist, publisher, writer, explorer, statesman, philosopher, and at the same time a man who enjoyed having a good time, he was just the type of man who was intrigued by a fraternity of men who could meet in private and talk about the wonders of the world and humanity.

What happened with this tradition of learning in Freemasonry. Today, are the great men of science and thought found among the members of Masonic lodges? No, and we generally no longer have stimulating discussions about educational topics at most of our meetings, do we?

What is likely to happen with this tradition in the future? Men who love to learn tend to associate with others who have similar feelings. Is it likely that those who would like to learn about the great philosophers of the world will want to sit and listen to minutes being read and bills being paid, and possibly hearing that ours is a great fraternity, or a great country, or see a program about our flag that is filled with misinformation?

And let be clear -- this is not an elitist point. Men of all backgrounds and in all occupations are interested in broadening their knowledge, and Masonic meetings could be a wonderful place to accomplish this. But are we doing it now? Will we start doing it? If not, learning is a tradition that will die out in our Lodges. To some extent it already has in many places. Should it be allowed to continue to disappear, or is there something we want to do about this?

Social Standing and Social Interactions

Another Masonic tradition of long standing is social standing, or social interactions. It seems this is what drew George Washington to Freemasonry, and it worked for him.

This tradition went further back than Washington. Shortly after the start of the premier Grand Lodge in 1717, Masonic leaders were able to attract the English nobility, even the Royal family, to join. Freemasonry became the mark of men of distinction, and thus something to be strived for.

This had both good and bad effects. It led to a degree of snobbery, and thus led to the Antimasonic

movement of the 1820s and 1830s that almost destroyed Freemasonry in the United States. The primary reason the American populace turned against Masons was that Freemasonry had come to represent the opposite of democracy. Masons were viewed as having too much control over politics and society, so average men and women worked hard to destroy this institution that they viewed as a threat to everything our country was supposed to stand for. Many Masons then and now cannot understand this attitude, but when an organization goes out of its way to talk about how the best people in society are its members, it should not be surprising that those who are excluded might become angry and fearful about its power.

But this attitude of society involvement had its good side. While some Freemasons were promoting the idea that they were a society of the upper classes, another group of Masons founded a new Grand Lodge with just the opposite philosophy. The Antients, as opposed to the Moderns in England, promoted the concept of bringing men of different backgrounds together. They used the words in Anderson's Constitutions to prove that they were the ones following the real traditions of Freemasonry, and to an extent they have won the battle over time. We proudly speak of how Masonry is the means of bringing about friendship among persons who would otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

Today, Masons proudly talk about universalism, tolerance, and Masons meeting on the level. This is a wonderful concept, but is it true? With some exceptions -- happily, our Grand Lodge among them -- do Freemasons really practice tolerance and equal feelings towards all, and have they in the past? Did Freemasonry, and does it today, treat African Americans the same as Caucasians, Jews and Moslems the same as Christians, women the same as men? Can we truly say there is no bigotry in Freemasonry? Has anyone here ever heard a racist or antisemitic "joke" from another Mason? Has anyone not heard such comments?

Let's leave this subject for now, but we'll come back to it.

Esoteric

Another thread in the traditions of Freemasonry is esotericism, or mysticism, the occult, magic, alchemy, tarot, or any similar word to describe this. Some Masons are fascinated by this type of subject, and feel that anyone who does not get equally misty-eyed about it does not understand what Freemasonry is really about. They see Freemasonry as a system for the transmittal of secret knowledge, or as Albert Pike said it, the goal of Freemasonry is to give us possession of the universal principle by which we may master the universe.

There are two levels to this. One is typified by those who may talk about King Solomon meeting with Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abif in the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, not knowing

that no one was permitted to meet there, or by those who see all sorts of proof that the Knights Templar consciously decided to become the Freemasons of today, or that Roslyn Chapel in Scotland has proof of all sorts of things, including the discovery of America long before Columbus.

Arthur E. Waite wrote of Masonry as the mysticism of a first hand experience with God. W.L. Wilmshurst talked of an inner world where the ancient mysteries of our being are to be learned.

This may be an interesting tradition, and who knows, some of these theories may be correct, but the beauty of these theories, for those who support them, is that no one can prove them wrong, just as no one can prove them right. Either you get it or you don't.

There is another level to this tradition. There are some, and there have always been, who feel that reciting the words of the Masonic ritual is the most important thing that can be done, and that this is the key to the meaning of what Freemasonry is for. As Jeremy Ladd Cross, one of the originators and propagators of our ritual in the early 1800s said, he could not tell Masons anything other than the words of the ritual, and did not care to. He said he was just a great memorizer, and he could teach others to memorize the words.

Again, those who believe in this Masonic tradition may or may not be right, and no one can prove it either way. But does anyone in this room think that Freemasonry will prosper in the future if we encourage men to join by telling them that if they do, they can spend a great deal of time learning to memorize our ritual? Please do not misunderstand -- some of our members see this as a means to an end. They feel that men who learn these words and floor work perfectly, and practice it over and over, will in the process become better and help others become better. Perhaps, but let us look at some other traditions, too.

Political, or Involvement in Society

A fourth tradition can be described as political, but in the best sense of the word. Even today, we proudly say that Freemasonry has always supported democracy, freedom, and individual rights. You will often hear some Masons say the reason Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Franco, and Khomeini opposed Freemasonry is because they realized that our philosophy was opposed to all tyranny and that we would always fight for the rights of the people.

Is there evidence to support these statements? Did all Masons in the 1770s and 1780s support the American Revolution as the path to freedom? Did Masons in France support the French Revolution, even in its early, pre-terror years? Were there Masons among the slaveowners, as well as among those who opposed slavery? What did Masons in

Continued on Next Page

Germany do when Hitler came to power? Did they oppose his tyranny, or did they do all they could to try to prove their support of his policies?

Ironically, while most Freemasons talk proudly of our support of democracy and freedom, the same ones argue most strongly that Freemasonry must not be involved in politics in any form. This is not talking about whether anyone should vote for Gore or Bush, but even such things as whether we should support freedom of speech and thought. It is easy for anyone to say he supports freedom of speech, but what does that mean? Freedom to say what we like to hear, freedom to say what the majority are willing to tolerate, or freedom to say anything, even to express thoughts that almost everyone hates? And what about the freedom of each person to express dislike of American policies, or even America itself, or the freedom of each Mason to express opposition to a Grand Master? Do Masons support that, or do we make it a Masonic offense? Do most Masons really support the freedom of each person to be different from the majority?

The Grand Orient of France proudly says it is involved in society, urging its members to support individual rights and freedoms, and our branch of Masonry condemns them. Are we right, or is their tradition a valid Masonic one? And what would be best for the future of Freemasonry?

We do know that Freemasons were actively involved in the Dreyfus Affair in France in the 1890s, strongly supporting justice for a man unjustly convicted, even at the real risk of physical harm

because they stood up for that cause. And Freemasons were among those most hunted by the Vichy regime in France in World War II, and we can be proud of these Masons who fought for freedom under these harsh circumstances.

This idea of Masonry's role being to uplift society, and support democracy and freedom, is not such a radical concept. In the early 1900s it appears to have been a dominant concept in American Freemasonry. Mainstream Masonic writers spoke about Freemasonry working for the good of society, bringing men of all races, religions, and backgrounds together and promoting world peace.

Roscoe Pound in the early 1900s said Masonry's

goal is to insist on the universality of mankind and the transmission of a tradition of human solidarity. Joseph Fort Newton said Freemasonry is a form of public service and public mindedness, pointing out that we have a social duty to help our neighbors by work in our communities, to promote democracy by education for all, and to unite people in common service for mankind. H.L. Haywood said the great teachings of Freemasonry are equality - the right of all people to use our own minds and abilities, liberty - the unhindered exercise of our nature and mind, and democracy - the right of people to govern themselves even if they sometimes make mistakes. We should improve the human condition through education, and use Freemasonry to help the human family live happily together.

probably look to our organization primarily as a place to meet friends. This is fine, but I sometimes ask such Masons why, if this is the case, do we open and close our meetings with ritual, and have degree work. If our goal is simply to meet with friends, we should just open our meeting, talk about who is ill and needs help, plan picnics and such, and then have refreshment together. I am not trying to be negative about this, for I fully realize how important these activities are to Freemasonry. William E. Hammond spoke of Masonry producing character and culture through fellowship and mutual helpfulness.

And we must remember that this tradition of friendliness, among ourselves and toward others, leads directly to what Europeans see as the best thing about American Freemasonry -- our charity work. Masonic leaders often boast that we give more than \$2,000,000 each day to charity, and that we have blood drives, support lots of charities, and help to prevent drug abuse. But again, if this is what Freemasonry is all about, why do we have ritual and Masonic education? And if this is the basic importance of Freemasonry, why is there antagonism toward the Shrine, which supplies the vast bulk of the \$2,000,000 a day in Masonic charity about which we speak?

What does this tell us for the future of Freemasonry? Do we think lots of men will join Masonic lodges if we say this is a place where you can find new friends, good friends, and also work for charity? The answer may be "yes," but is this the primary purpose of Masonry, we

have to consider the fact that there are other organizations that appear to be better at this function than us.

Should we look to this as a valid Masonic tradition now, and in the future?

Friendliness - Social and Charitable Activities

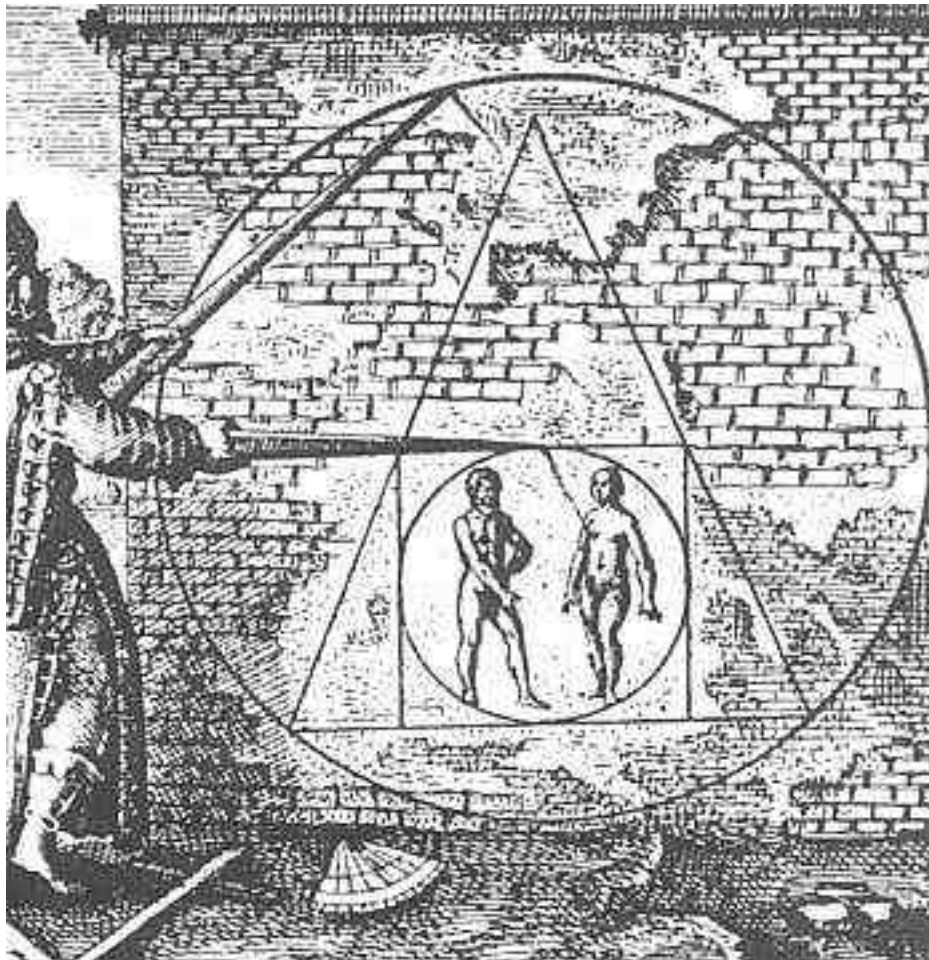
The fifth and final Masonic tradition to discuss can be called friendliness. It can be described as the idea that Masons help each other, especially brethren who are in need, and that we enjoy each others' company.

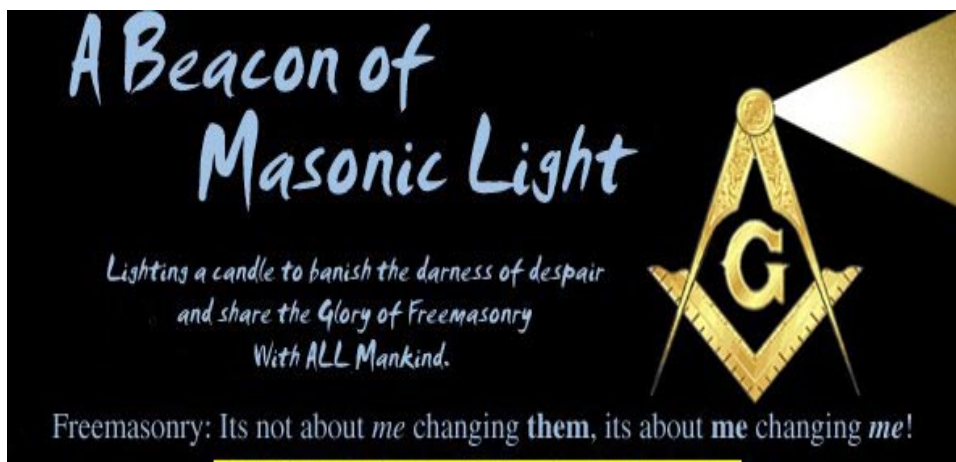
In one sense this describes Masonic groups such as the Shrine, but it also describes many, probably most lodges and Masons today. Most Masons

Conclusion

It would be easy to say that there is room for all five of these traditions in Masonry, and we should continue each of them to make the Craft a well rounded institution. That is true, to an extent, and none of us has the right to say authoritatively that someone who believes Masonry is about any one of these traditions is wrong, since there is no official definition of what Freemasonry is.

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New Blog Entry Daily by Theron Dunn:

<http://BeaconOfMasonicLight.blogspot.com>

But we can try to form a consensus among some of us about which traditions are most useful to Freemasonry now, and which teach us what we should be doing now and in the next few years if we want Freemasonry to become an important organization, or even to survive. One hundred years from now, what do we want people to remember about Freemasonry in the early 2000s? What do we think about our forebears of a hundred years ago, or even 50?

As much as I support such things as learning, improving Masons' image and standing in society, the meaning of words that many feel are poetic, and friendship and charity, I seriously wonder if these traditions would, if continued and emphasized, lead to success for Freemasonry. They are useful, and to some of our brethren they are exciting and even critical to their lives, but are they the things that we really think will cause people to become excited and beat down our doors to join us?

Rather than say all these traditions are equally important, I would like to suggest that there is one thing that Freemasonry is uniquely equipped to do, that it can do, and for which it would be viewed by the vast majority of the population as a leader, and important part of our world.

Throughout the history of Freemasonry, even when our brethren of the past did not always prove it by their actions, the tradition of tolerance has been a constant. Anderson in the 1700s said Freemasonry brings men together who would otherwise remain at a perpetual distance. Joseph Fort Newton and his generation of Masons in the 1900s said Freemasonry could promote world peace through human understanding.

Isn't this the fundamental problem throughout the world today, as it has been in the past? The United States has been plagued by racial injustice and problems with different groups living together since our earliest colonial days, and this is not unique to our country. The experience of people,

including Freemasons, in places such as Ireland, Cyprus, Africa, the Middle East, Cambodia, Germany, and even England and France, shows that humanity needs to learn how to deal with differences in race, color, religion, nationality, language, ethnic background, lifestyle, gender, and political differences if we are going to survive and progress as a human species.

Freemasonry could be, and could have been in the past, the only institution in the world that at all times in every way promotes tolerance and meeting on the level. We could be the leaders in seeking racial harmony, religious ecumenism, cooperation among men and women, civility between people who believe in different political philosophies, and friendliness among those who choose to live their lives differently from others. We could be better than the United Nations, Amnesty International, and interfaith organizations, all together, because we could be the prime organization supporting tolerance for all, everywhere, in all circumstances. This would be a unique role for Freemasonry.

But let us be honest with ourselves. If Freemasonry is going to be defined as the greatest institution for tolerance, it will not be easy. Intolerance must be ended in Freemasonry, immediately and without waiting for anyone to change, or die. It must be ended completely, and right away. We need to say this clearly in our Codes, and demonstrate it in all our actions in Lodges -- recognitions, balloting, and friendship with all people regardless of race, color, religion, gender, politics, choices in life, or anything else other than the content of their character.

This Masonic tradition or ideal -- tolerance, bringing all people together in unity, promoting equality of all, and supporting individual rights -- could be what Freemasons and all people in the year 2100 look back on when they think of Masons of 2000, and say that we Masons of our day made Freemasonry something to cheer about, something that made a tremendous difference in world history.

Wouldn't that be a great tradition?

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<http://bessel.org/webindex.htm>

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Catechism

Continued from Page 6

- I: How did you fair when you encountered him?
- R: I was struck hard but my integrity remained intact and I continued.

- I: What did you gain?
- R: Wisdom.

- I: Was your benefit worth your cost.
- R: Without a doubt.

- I: When were you tried more?
- R: By the demands of Moral Rectitude.

- I: How was this so rendered?
- R: By a Square and rightfully so.

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I: What does it teach a Mason?
 R: Moral Rectitude demands us to keep sacred our code of conduct, without and within.

I: How may a Mason corrupt this?
 R: We may be tempted to "rewrite the rules" when we are called to account for our actions or act in manners not attuned to our code.

I: When did this occur?
 R: In a Mason's Manhood.

I: What step was this?
 R: A Mason's second step.

I: Where was this symbolized?
 R: A Mason's FC Degree.

I: Where else?
 R: In a Mason's FC Step.

I: Is there more?
 R: Yes, in the second step leading to the station of the Worshipful Master in the East.

I: Where else is this symbolized?
 R: In the seasons of a Mason's life, it would be considered "Summer."

I: And last?
 R: By the last letter of the second Ruffian's name.

I: How did you fair when you encountered him?
 R: I was struck hard but my integrity remained intact and I continued.

I: What did you gain?
 R: Strength.

I: Was your benefit worth your cost.
 R: Without a doubt.

I: When were you tried further?
 R: By the demands of Impending Death.

I: How was this delivered?
 R: By a Setting Maul and properly placed.

I: What does it teach us?
 R: Completion demands that whatever we have put in motion will eventually not involve us and hence must have the integrity to sustain itself.

I: How may we corrupt this?
 R: We may be tempted to forestall detachment and hence create conditions that jeopardize that which we have put forth. We may also not assure that all we build has integrity to sustain far beyond our passing.

I: When did this occur?
 R: In a Mason's Age.

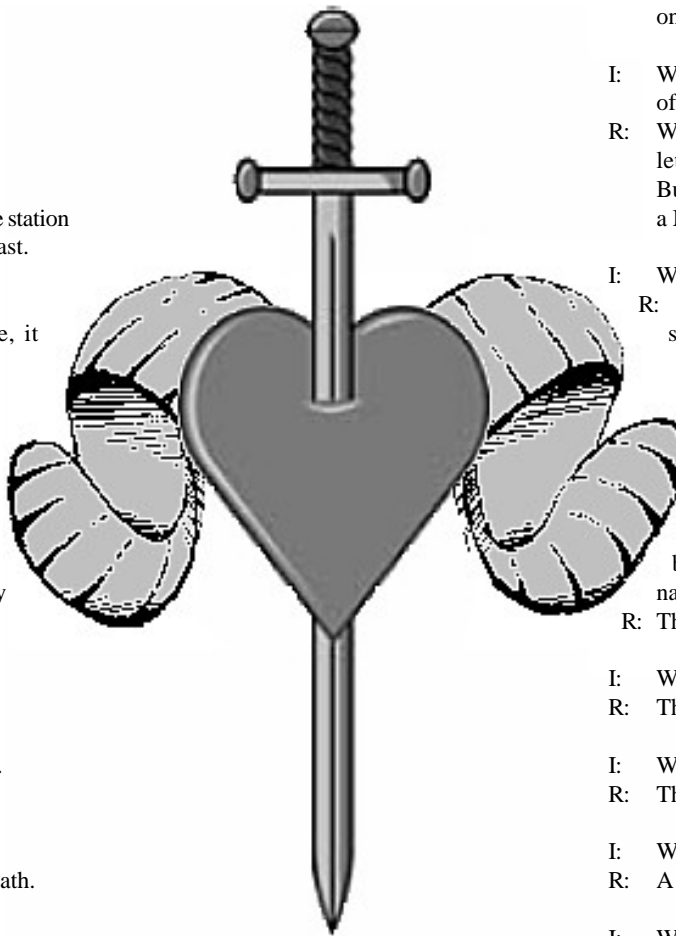
I: What step was this?
 R: A Mason's third step.

I: Where was this symbolized?
 R: A Mason's MM Degree.

I: Where else?
 R: In a Mason's MM Step.

I: Is there more?
 R: Yes, in the third and final step leading to the station of the Worshipful Master in the East.

I: Where else is this symbolized?
 R: In the seasons of a Mason's life, it would be considered "Autumn."



I: And last?
 R: By the last letter of the third Ruffian's name.

I: How did you fair when you encountered him?
 R: I fared not well, but my integrity remained intact.

I: What did you gain?
 R: Beauty.

I: Was your benefit worth your cost.
 R: Without a doubt.

I: What season is silently represented?
 R: In the seasons of a Mason's life, it would be considered "Winter."

I: Why is it silent?
 R: Man cannot utter a Word in the winter of his time.

I: What significance is silence?
 R: It gives up the remaining syllable of life and the last syllable in the fourth Ruffian's name.

I: What significance does the fourth Ruffian play in a Mason's life?
 R: This Ruffian will have an eternity to chip away at all that a Mason has brought forth once he has entered the winter of his life..

I: What is the significance of the last letters of the Ruffian's names?
 R: When put together they spell out the four letters of a four-syllable word used by Buddhist monks that reflects all aspects of a Mason's life.

I: What are the meanings of each of the four?
 R: The first letter symbolizes Youth; the second letter symbolizes Manhood; the third letter symbolizes age; and the last letter, the silent one, symbolizes that period of our life between Age and Youth where death governs our immortal soul.

I: What is the common thread between each of the four Ruffian's names?
 R: The first five letters of each name?

I: What is the significance of these letters?
 R: They spell out the name of a Brother.

I: What does his name mean?
 R: The Ram's Horn.

I: What was he?
 R: A Musician

I: Who was his father?
 R: Lamech, which means "Servant of God"

I: What is this servant famous for?
 R: A passage in the Bible referred to as "The Song of the Sword" for which he was the first man to use a Sword as an instrument against another.

I: Who forged this sword?
 R: His musician son's Brother.

I: Who was this Brother?
 R: The Brother that was the first known artificer of every cutting instrument of brass and iron.

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I: What purpose is the sword?
R: A working tool that a Mason will use in justice toward his own heart.

I: What is its use?
R: There are many.

I: What be the first use?
R: The first use may be to cut one's own throat, rendering one's self speechless in times when giving good voice to one's truth may corrupt one's integrity.

I: What be the second?
R: It may be to remove one's own heart, leaving one heartless in one's activities and disconnected from one's true passions, which one's integrity should call one to ardently adhere to.

I: What be the third?
R: It may be to sever one's self in twain, leaving one un-whole and divided in one's thoughts, feelings and actions, thus jeopardizing the integrity of all that one builds.

I: What does it represent?
R: The Sword represents symbolically the cleaving of a Mason's thoughts, feelings and actions as the perceived expectancies and demands of his Brothers and his life are sensed and dealt with accordingly.

I: What question does the Sword symbolically ask a Mason?
R: Do you maintain your integrity in the face of perceived pressures, social or otherwise, holding sacred that which you obligated yourself to or fold to what you believe is expected of you by outside forces?

I: What does the Sword represent?
R: The Sword is symbolic for Cleaving – a word which represents simultaneously both unification and separation.

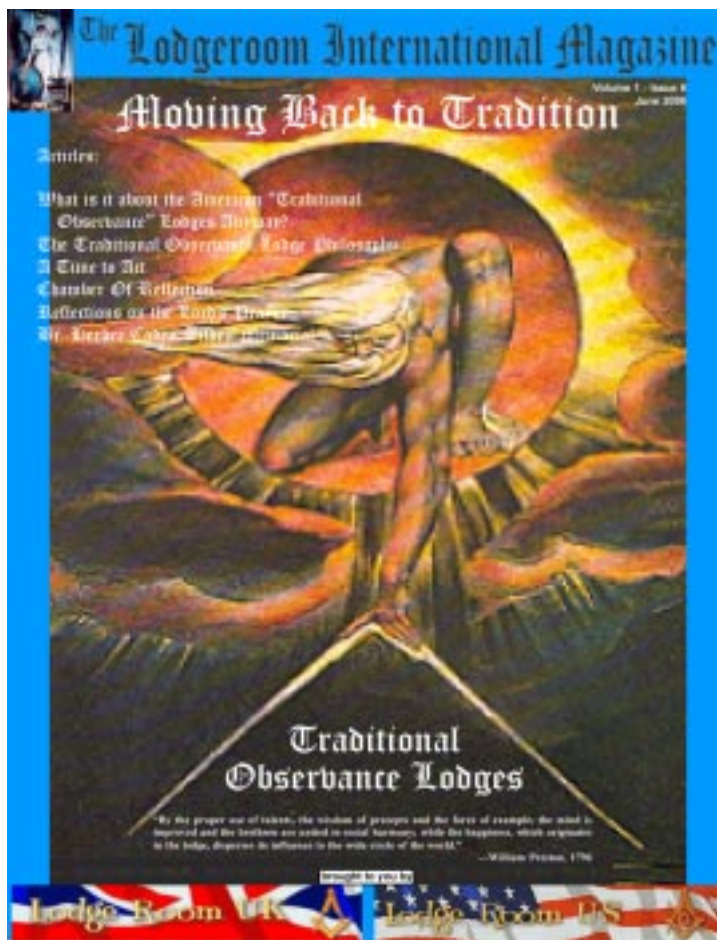
I: What does it remind us to do?
R: Keep unified our thoughts, feelings and actions in all things.

I: What else?
R: Keep separate our thoughts, feelings and actions from all that might influence us to violate our given word.

I: What end does the Sword giveth?
R: As with all tools, the sword giveth us only means; the Master Mason determine the end.

I: How do I know all this to be as such?
R: Are I not a Master Mason?

I: I know you to be as such.
R: Then you have the Word of a Master Mason that this be all true.



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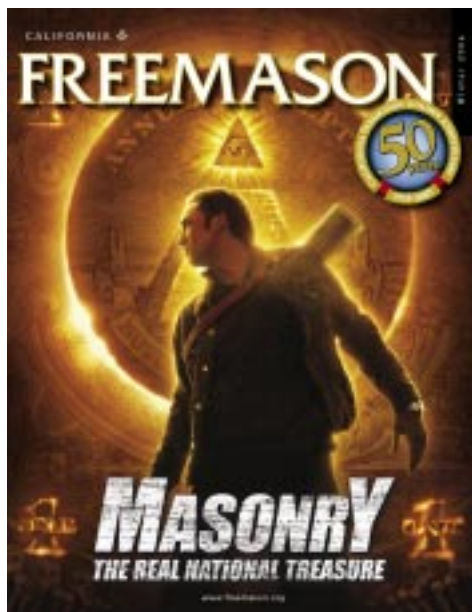
Man of the Year
Solomon Wallace
The Honorable Solomon Wallace

Phylaxis Magazine

Phylaxis magazine is published quarterly by the Phylaxis society. The First Quarter issue covers diverse issues, including the Man of the Year.

In this issue, we feature an article about two Texas Masons, one of whom marries a woman of color, and the other who struggled for purity of the blood of the white race. We have an excellent review of the recognition process in Ontario, Canada.

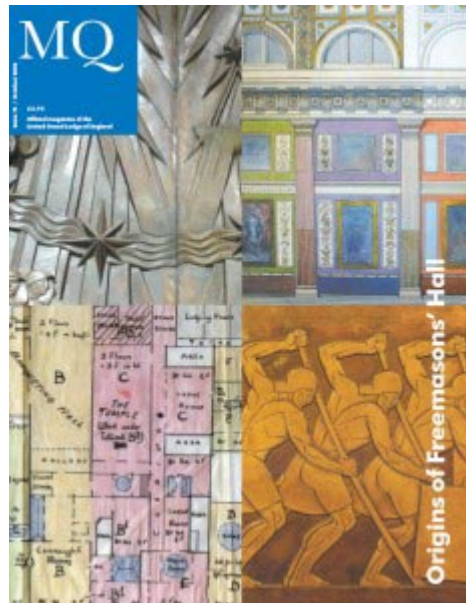
We have a heated debate about the actual date the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was established, and the new president of the Phylaxis Society urges Prince Hall Masons to correct the errors in their history perpetuated by those who may not have our interests at heart.



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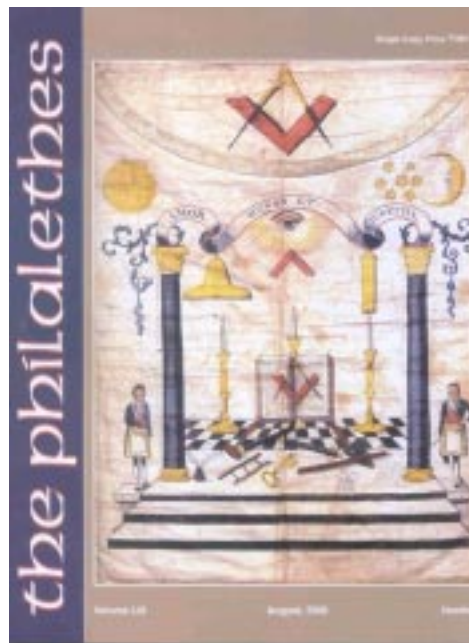


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THE PHILAETHES

The International Masonic Research Society

The name of the Society is pronounced fill a [as in a-bate] lay thess with the accent on the third syllable - lay. It is derived from two Greek words, philos and alethes. It means lover of truth. The Philaethes Society was founded on October 1, 1928, by a group of Masonic Students. It was designed for Freemasons desirous of seeking and spreading Masonic light. In 1946 The Philaethes Magazine was established to publish articles by and for its members. And to this day publishes 6 times a year. The sole purpose of this Research Society is to act as a clearing house for Masonic knowledge. It exchanges ideas, researches problems confronting Freemasonry, and passes them along to the Masonic world.

Its membership consists of Members and 40 Fellows who are Master Masons in good standing in a Regular Masonic Lodge anywhere in the world. Today the Society has members within 185 Regular Grand Lodges. More information about the Society can be found at <http://freemasonry.org>

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Tim Bryce On...

By W^r. Tim Bryce, PM, MFS

timb001@phmainstreet.com

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

"A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"

A Masonic Christmas Tale

"Tis the season for a tale...and a lesson."

Past Master Vicar trudged through the snow on his way to Lodge. It was December now and Christmas was just around the corner. The first snow flurries had come early in 1950; trick or treaters were the first to taste snowflakes. November saw a few subsequent snow flurries, but it wasn't until the day after Thanksgiving that the first heavy snow fell.

This was followed by two more weeks of snow which clogged the streets and made driving difficult. So much so, Vicar decided to walk to Lodge instead of risking a drive through the icy streets and snow. He lived but a mile from the Lodge and the cold night air invigorated him. As Secretary of the Lodge for the last 17 years, he always arrived early to review paperwork prior to the meeting. But because of the snow, he came a little earlier to make sure the furnace was heating the Lodge properly. After he arrived, he hung his hat and coat in the cloak room and removed his rubber boots. He turned on the lights in the recreation hall and went down to the basement and shoveled some coal into the furnace. Vicar then went up to the kitchen where he started to brew a pot of coffee.

Even though the Harmony Lodge building was now one of the oldest structures in this modest Midwest community, the Craft made several enhancements over the years to help keep it current with the times. But the trademark of the Lodge was an old cast iron potbellied stove in the corner of the recreational hall which originated from the Lodge's first building back in the 1880's. Although it looked like a historical piece, the Lodge had dutifully maintained it and the stove worked remarkably well, particularly on cold winter nights, such as tonight. Vicar opened the grate on the stove and put in some ash and cherry which produced a comforting aroma in the room.

The Secretary's office was quite small. Actually, it was nothing more than a renovated closet which housed a small desk and file cabinets. Vicar rarely sat in the office as he found it confining. Instead, he would spread out his folders and do his paperwork on a table in the adjoining Rec Hall. He didn't mind the cramped quarters as this was still a small Lodge which could accommodate a maximum of 75 Brothers in the Rec Hall and the Lodge Room. Actually, the Lodge seemed cozy to Vicar as he poured himself a cup of coffee and waded through his paperwork.

He began by looking over the agenda for the Stated Communications to be held that evening. Scheduled was a 50 year service award for an old adversary, Forrest Stempl, a cranky old Brother who Vicar frequently butted heads with over the years. Vicar thought back to his

younger days when he first became a Mason in 1924. At the time, Stempl had already been a Master and was generally considered a pillar of the Lodge. Vicar joined the Masons as he saw it had a positive influence on his father and grandfather. As a young Mason, he enjoyed Lodge life and reveled in the camaraderie. His enthusiasm was contagious and he signed many petitions for new members to join the Lodge. This did not go unnoticed by the Lodge officers of the day who saw Vicar as ambitious and influential. Consequently, he was appointed Senior Steward, thus beginning his rotation through the chairs. By 1929, Vicar sat in the East as Master, which was a bit premature due to the Lodge's Senior Warden who befell an accident and died, thereby catapulting Vicar through the chairs. Nonetheless, Vicar was prepared for the office and fulfilled his duties admirably.

Vicar was the office manager in the local hardware store/lumber yard and had a good sense of organization and the technology of the day. He was also an educated man who was lucky to have earned a scholarship and graduate with a business degree from the state university. He and his family lived well, but not opulently. Many of the officers he preceded, including Stempl, were not educated and worked as factory workers. This had no ill-effect on Vicar, other than a few Brothers, such as Stempl, were somewhat intimidated by Vicar for his education and station in life.

The hallmark of Vicar's year in the East was his ability to put the younger members of the Lodge to work, who helped clean up and modernize the Lodge. In October of 1929, the stock market crashed, forcing a lot of people out of work, including several Brothers. This also greatly affected Vicar's business, but he somehow found the wherewithal to establish a fund to help distressed Brothers as well as other members of the community. This fund slowly grew and eventually helped dozens of people over the next several years. But while Vicar's programs endeared him to the Craft and the community, his success was viewed jealously by Stempl as he saw his own authority in the Lodge challenged. Because of this, he tried to undermine Vicar in every new change he tried to introduce. The two were at loggerheads on more than one occasion. If Vicar said "White," Stempl would say "Black." He went out of his way to complicate Vicar's life just out of spite. Nonetheless, Vicar persevered and eventually Stempl was discredited and his role in the Lodge diminished. Eventually, he began to visit other nearby Lodges and infrequently attended his mother Lodge.

By the time the United States entered World War II, Vicar was already established as Lodge Secretary. However, he was too old for military service as were a

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lot of the members of the Craft. The younger members though readily enlisted thereby causing attendance at Lodge meetings to plummet. Nonetheless, the Masons kept the Lodge lights burning. Even though he couldn't serve in the military, Vicar helped organize Lodge programs to sell War Bonds, collect rubber, provide special meals for troops passing through his community, and offered assistance to families who lost sons during the war. To this end, Vicar carefully kept track of the finances for these charity programs in a separate cash book. Although Stempl didn't actively participate in such programs, he didn't object to them either. However, he kept a watchful eye on Vicar who was coordinating the programs.

When Stempl learned Vicar was maintaining the charity project finances in a cash book separate from the Lodge's own cash book, he seized on the opportunity and accused Vicar of unMasonic conduct by misappropriating funds for his own personal use. This led to Masonic charges being brought against Vicar in Lodge in an attempt to besmirch Vicar's character. Even though Stempl had no actual proof of any wrongdoing, he suspected Vicar of taking money for his own personal gain. This became very controversial among the members of the Lodge. On the one hand, Vicar was well liked and respected, and on the other, Stempl was still respected as a Past Master. The Lodge was confused as to which side to believe. As for Vicar, he was angered by Stempl's accusations and visibly shaken by the charges. Word spread around the district and state of the infraction and Vicar's Masonic record became tarnished.

Subsequently, Lodge members were summoned to listen to the charges. It was the most attended meeting of the year which included Lodge members, visitors, and the District Deputy Grand Master who witnessed the proceedings. One by one, the charges were read of Vicar's alleged improprieties. Vicar sat quietly but seethed as he suffered through this embarrassment. Finally, Vicar was allowed to speak and refute the charges. He produced the cash book and carefully explained how money was taken in and disbursed. He had even gone so far as to produce bank statements, receipts, and because this was being managed separate from Lodge finances, produced an audit report from an independent CPA who found the finances in good form and order.

Following Vicar's refutation of the charges, the floor was open for discussion. After hearing both the charges and Vicar refute them, one Brother asked why the Lodge had not done an independent investigation prior to the charges being made. The Master pointed out that charges can be leveled by another Mason at any time. This did not sit well with the Craft who overwhelmingly exonerated Vicar of any wrongdoing. After the meeting closed, Stempl exited the Lodge quickly. He may have lost in terms of having Vicar found guilty, but he knew he had forever



Tim Bryce On...

By W. Tim Bryce, PM, MFS

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"A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"

left a blemish on Vicar's Masonic record. Consequently, Vicar was never again asked to serve on any district or state Masonic committees. Stempl took great joy in knowing this would be the outcome.

Vicar sat back at the table in the Rec Hall, lit his pipe, and put the agenda away. He didn't relish the thought of seeing Stempl again that evening after all of these years. After awhile, the Junior Warden and the Stewards arrived at the Lodge to prepare the meal for the evening. Vicar helped set the tables and then prepared the Lodge room for the meeting. Other Lodge Brothers slowly entered, put their hats and coats away, and sat down for the Lodge supper. Vicar enjoyed their company but kept an eye on the door anticipating Stempl's arrival. He hadn't seen Stempl for the last several years. Vicar had heard his health was declining and didn't attend Masonic functions anymore.

Dinner came and went and slowly the Craft filed into the Lodge room for the meeting. Just minutes before starting, the front door swung open and in came Stempl in a wheelchair pushed by his nephew who was also a Mason. The nephew dutifully wheeled his uncle into the Lodge room and set Stempl on the sidelines.

The Master and the officers marched in procession into the room and opened the Lodge. Following the normal reading of the minutes and treasurer's report, the Master ordered the Senior Deacon to present W. Forrest Stempl east of the altar for the presentation of his 50 year pin and certificate. The Senior Deacon did as he was instructed and wheeled Stempl to the east. This was the first time Vicar could get a good look at Stempl, who was now a shadow of his old self. His clothes hung on his shrinking body and he appeared sullen.

Although the Worshipful Master was a young man, he was well aware of the friction between Vicar and Stempl from years ago and hoped there would be no disruption in the harmony of the meeting. He then went about making his presentation of the Masonic 50 year award, complete with Grand Honors. As the Master affixed the gold pin on Stempl's lapel, he noticed a tear forming in Stempl's eye. As is customary, he then asked Stempl if he had anything he wanted to say to the Craft to commemorate the moment.

"Yes, there is," Stempl said, "but first could you have Bro. Vicar join us here?"

Surprised, the Worshipful Master looked over at Vicar who was also startled by the request. He didn't know what Stempl was up to this time and was reluctant to come forward. But Stempl looked over at Vicar and said, "Please." The Master then directed the Senior Deacon to present Vicar to the east. Vicar was still unsure where this was going.

Once joined in the east, Stempl began by saying to the Craft, "I'm a very proud and private man. I have always relished my years in the fraternity and have always considered myself a proponent of it. Many of you may have noticed that I have been away from Lodge for a long time, so much so, that none of you younger Masons will probably remember me, but at one time I was very active in this Lodge. Although my health has been in decline for the last few years, this was not the reason. I worked a long time and recently retired, but it was not my job that kept me away either. Nor was it my wife or family. I haven't forgotten the words either, they are as fresh in my mind now as they were 50 years ago. No, the problem was simply me; I was ashamed to show my face in Lodge again."

Vicar and the Master glanced at each other surprised.

"There is an old saying my Brothers that 'we get too soon old and too late smart,'" Stempl continued, "As for me, it took me a little longer than other people. Years ago I committed a huge injustice against the Secretary here," as he pointed to Vicar. "I thought if I could discredit him I would be able to get the Lodge to listen to me instead of him. But even after I pressed Masonic charges against him, I found the Lodge Brothers respected and supported Bro. Vicar more than me. I had a hard time understanding this at first, as I was a much more senior member of the fraternity than he was. It was then that I realized it was I who was guilty of unMasonic conduct by allowing myself to fall prey to simple jealousy. My envy of Bro. Vicar was so great that I concocted a plot to assassinate his character. But as you can see, he is still here and I was not. I finally realized I had hurt a Brother, hurt my Lodge, and hurt the fraternity I love so much. Brothers, it was shame that kept me away. But then I received a letter from the Secretary here, and let me read it to you."

Stempl pulled a letter from inside his coat pocket and read it aloud, "Dear Bro. Stempl, On behalf of the officers and Brothers of Harmony Lodge I extend you fraternal greetings and am pleased to inform you that we have received your 50 year pin and certificate from the Grand Lodge and we would like to present it to you at our next Stated Communications. On a personal note, I know we have had our differences over the years but I would be pleased if you would attend Lodge to receive your award. Brother, I wish you well and hope to see you soon. Sincerely and Fraternaly, W.:Samuel Vicar, PM, Secretary."

"This last line from Bro. Vicar was more than I could handle. After everything I had done to him, he still called me Brother."

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Stempl then wheeled himself closer to Vicar, took his hand, and looked up at him, "My Brother, can you ever find it in your heart to forgive an old fool? I am truly sorry for all of the problems I caused you over the years, how can I have been so foolish?" and he buried his face in Vicar's hand and wept.

None was more surprised by the outburst of emotion than Vicar as he cradled Stempl's head. Vicar looked down and him and quietly said, "My Brother, I do not know why we were so different, but we were. Maybe its because we come from different backgrounds or perhaps we simply had two different interpretations of what Freemasonry is all about. Understand this, I never bore you any ill-will, not years ago, not now. Of course I forgive you, you are my Brother."

Stempl regained his composure but didn't release his grip on Vicar's hand. Using his other hand, he reached over and took the 50 year pin from his lapel and put it in Vicar's hand. He then said, "My Brother, please do me the honor of accepting this pin as a sign of our new bond of friendship. And please wear it as a symbol that there should never be any contention in our Lodge, that we must always find ways to work together and that a rift such as ours should never again exist."

Although Vicar was at first reluctant to accept the pin, he saw the wisdom in Stempl's words and allowed Stempl to pin it on him. The Craft gave the two a standing ovation and there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

Stempl passed away two years later and Vicar was permitted to lead the Masonic service at his funeral. He proudly wore Stempl's 50 year pin to Lodge meetings for many years which reminded the Craft to respect each other. In 1974, Vicar finally received his own 50 year pin. He then had Stempl's pin framed and added a small bronze plaque underneath it which read, "From W. Forrest Stempl, PM to W.:Samuel Vicar, PM - Brothers, let us never forget how to best work and best agree. Let us always seek Harmony. 1950."

Although Bro. Vicar past away in 1985, the plaque still hangs in the Lodge room as an important reminder to the Brethren. Since then, the story of the rift and reconciliation between the two Past Masters is retold each year at the Lodge's annual Christmas meeting so that every member be mindful of the cost of contention, as should we all.

Keep the Faith!

This story is fictitious. As such, the names of the characters and institutions in this story are also fictitious. Any resemblance to any person or entity either living or dead is purely coincidental.

Blood Drive

Continued from Page 7

have big mouths and use them. So let local agents know about your drives and encourage them to talk them up."

Robert believes that getting people into the drive is only part of the battle. Once they're there, it's important to make the experience a positive one.

"We try to get them in and out within 45 minutes," he says. "And make it a nice atmosphere – cheery and welcoming. If it's dreary, they won't come back. Have food there for them; we try to offer something a little special, like meatball subs, chicken sandwiches, fresh fruit, "high end" snacks. And get local stores to donate things – that gets them involved and invested in it, helps them give something back to the community. Plus, they'll be more likely to encourage their own employees to go donate then.

"We'll have movies at a blood drive, reading material, things to keep kids who come with their parents entertained. And we have volunteers there to stay and talk with people, to visit with them and make them feel welcome and appreciated."

Interacting with people has another benefit for the Masons, beyond making the donors want to come back for the next drive. "We do blood drives because the Masons are interested in serving our communities," Robert says, "but these are also excellent opportunities for people to get to know us and to see our Lodges. It introduces us to people in the community, who may like what they see and may one day decide to join the Masons themselves."

Robert, who as a teen-ager belonged to the Mason's "junior" organization, the DeMolays, joined the Masons when he was 21. He began organizing blood drives for his Lodge in 2005, after they indicated they might be dropping them.

"I stood up and made a very impassioned speech about how important these drives were," he says. "I told them that I knew a girl with this blood disease, thalassemia, and explained what that meant and what she has to go through and why blood drives are so important to people like her. And then I told them that this girl was my wife, Lisa – and when they heard that, it reinvigorated them and made them feel connected and committed."

Lisa does her part in the drives as well, making handwritten thank you notes for the donors. She also goes to some of the drives, to help set up, put out information about thalassemia and talk to people there about the disorder and her life experience with it.

"At the annual Grand Lodge meeting, we ran a raffle one year to help defer the cost of the blood program," Lisa says, "and when I told them about

why it's so important to me personally, we had people just pushing money on us, saying 'We don't even want a ticket, just use this for the blood drives.'"

Robert's passion and commitment have been instrumental in motivating the New Jersey Masons to make such enormous strides with their blood collection program. "I believe that one person really can change things – it's like the butterfly effect, where a butterfly flapping his wings in one part of the world can create a small breeze that eventually becomes part of a storm in another part of the world."

Any person can be the butterfly that starts that breeze going. CAF encourages everyone reading this to "make your own breeze." Donate if you can. And whether you can donate or not, get a blood drive started.

And if you can't start it yourself – call the Masons. "If your local Masonic Lodge is not holding a blood drive," Robert says, "call them up and ask them why not. Tell them that another Mason told you to call and let them know that your community needs one. Empower them to be leaders in this area. It benefits them and at the same time benefits the whole community."

(For a list of US Masonic Grand Lodges, www.msana.com/linksus.asp)

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(On behalf of GM)

Masonic Plans

August 21, 2007

Dear Brothers;

I just got some great news from one of our CHIPS coordinators. Wor. Brother Wendell Graham has just returned from a 'worker bee' conference with all the latest in the computer updates for the program. As you may know, the CHIPS committee now has two types of equipment for their use: one uses video cassettes and the other uses laptop

computers and creates CDs. It's becoming clear that the committee needs to move away from the video cassettes fairly soon and making sure that Maine is keeping up with the latest in technology is important. The Charitable Foundation is supporting the CHIPS program with dedicated funds for that purpose and as you might imagine, a laptop is much more expensive than a video camera. You probably received a request for financial support from the Charitable Foundation recently and one of the reasons for that request was to be sure that we can continue to support this very important project.

During the next couple of weeks your Grand Lodge Officer Leadership team will be involved several important meetings. We will be holding another meeting with those committees concerned with Masonic Education. The first meeting with that group dealt with their goals for the remainder of the Masonic year and this next meeting will focus on sharing what each group has been doing since the last summit in August as well as plans for the future. Later on in the month we will be meeting with your District Deputy Grand Masters. I think that it is important that entire leadership team gets together from time to time to share experiences and make sure that we are all on the 'same page'. The 15th of December marks a most pleasurable time for all of us. The Grand Lodge has been invited to lay the cornerstone and dedicate a new Masonic Hall for the Brethren of Lygonia Lodge in Ellsworth. Exciting times to say the least!

Just as a thought, if you don't want to get caught up in holiday shopping frenzy but would like ideas for the Master Mason on your list, you could do not better than to visit the Grand Lodge website and follow the links to the Maine Masonic College. There you will find a listing of suggested book titles that should be in all our libraries. Using that list, I did the on line thing and bought myself several. Continuing our individual search for light is getting easier and easier thanks to the efforts of the Regents of the Maine Masonic College and others. That search for 'light' is certainly part of our dedication to self-improvement and social betterment. (Direct link here.)

As I write this, Lady Norma is patiently waiting for me to finish so that we can travel down to see our Grandchildren and the rest of our family for the Thanksgiving holiday. I certainly am looking forward to this time and I hope you are also. Being part of the Masonic fraternity and sharing in something larger than myself while enjoying fellowship, friendship and an enlightened spirit is certainly something to be thankful for. I would like to quote a short message from the Masonic Service Association of North America that I recently received: "It is the responsibility of today's Freemasons to continue those ideals forged during the Enlightenment; the dignity of Man and the liberty of the individual, the right of all persons to worship as they choose, the formation of democratic governments, and the importance of public education."



ROCK BOTTOM
You'll know it when you get there.



BUNNIES
and as delicious as they



EPIC FAILURE
When you fail, you'll know it when you get there.



UNIQUE

JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE UNIQUE, DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE USEFUL.



OVERCONFIDENCE

This is going to end in disaster, and you have no one to blame but yourself.



TEAMWORK

Share Victory. Share Defeat.



Freemasonry: Its not about me changing them, Its about me changing me.

Merry Christmas, my brothers, from all of us, to all of you.

*May the blessing of heaven rest upon us all,
may brotherly love prevail, and every
moral and social virtue, cement us!*



Top row, Left to Right: Adam Kendall, Avv.Franceschetti.bottone, Bill McElligott, Byron E.R. Hams, Cora Burke, David T. Lang, Galen Dean
Second Row, Left to Right: Gary Bond, Gary Leazer, George Brooks, Giovanni Lombardo, Jarrod Morales, Jason Whitehorn, Paul Bessel
Third Row, Left to Right: John Hirt, Peter Dowling, Peter Taylor, Richard Moser, Theron Dunn, tim Bryce, Vincent Barnes
Fourth Row, Left to Right: Br. Walkes, Wayne Major, Chris Hodap, Cliff Porter, John Williams, John Pratt, Lance Ten Eyck

Freemasonry: Its not about me changing *them*, Its about me changing *me*.