

The Small Town Texas Mason E-magazine

December 2011



Anson Jones Lodge #1416 A. F. & A. M.



108 East Willowick Ave. - Friendswood, Texas

The Small Town Texas Mason's E-Magazine

The Small Town Texas Mason's E-Magazine is not affiliated with any state Grand Lodge or individual Blue Lodge.

It was created to enlighten, educate and entertain Masons and non-Masons alike and as title suggests, it does feature a small town Texas Masonic Lodge and a story of Texas Masonic history in each issue.

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*A Holiday Wish From The Small Town
Masons. May You Have A Very Merry
Christmas And A Very Happy New Year*

Anson Jones Lodge #1416 A. F. & A. M.

History of Anson Jones Lodge - DECADE I -

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth And the earth was without form and void, and God said "Let there be light and there was light". Genesis 1(1-3)

On November 3, 1965 thirteen Master Masons met in the Mayor's Chambers of the Friendswood City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to have an informal discussion regarding the possibility of forming a Masonic lodge in the City of Friendswood, Texas. Brother Richard Boyer kept informal records of the meeting. Brothers W.A. Brooke and D.F. Prince, P.M. League City #1053, jointly assisted in conducting the meeting. The procedures and outlines for forming the lodge were explained by these brethren. On that evening the foundations were laid and the beginning of the formation of Friendswood Lodge became a reality. The next meeting was held on November 11, 1965, with further discussions regarding the Lodge's formation. From this date until the summer of 1966,



FRONT (l to r) Mike Hamm, MC; Leon Shapiro PM, Secretary; Tom Boone, SW; Aaron Colunga, SS; John Stanfield, JD; Mike Dunklin, Tyler;
BACK (l to r) Robert Griffon, SD; Jerrick Juliette, Treasurer; Paul Brown PM, Chaplain; Brett Nichols, WM; Larry Wainscott, JW

meetings were held and correspondence began with the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas obtaining forms and receiving proper instructions regarding formation of the Lodge.

Election and Appointment of First Officers:

"And behold I propose to build a house unto the name Of the Lord my God" I Kings - VI (5) "And he set up the pillars on the porch of the temple: And he set up the right pillar and called the name Joachim And he set up the left pillar and called the name there of Boaz" I Kings VII (21)

On January 18, 1966, nominations for the future officers of Friendswood Lodge were held. Officers nominated were:

W.M. William A. Brooke	Secretary R.J. Boyer	J.D. N.H. Acuff
S.W. B.R. Baker	Chaplain C.R. Harper	S.S. H.D. Wagner
J.W. A.J Block, Jr.	Tiler R.D. Welch	J.S. E.H. Brundrett
Treasurer E.W. Brautigam	S.D. K.R. Toon	

After the numerous meetings, Friendswood Lodge was now more and more a reality. On January 28, 1966 R.W. Frank Middleton DDGM of the Masonic District No. 31A made a formal request to M.W. H.W. Fullingim Grand Master to set Friendswood Lodge to work in due and proper form. The Grand Master immediately replied with instruction on the immediate formation of a regular lodge under the jurisdiction of the MW Grand Lodge of Texas. Several months of anxious waiting were in store for the new lodge. Finally on June 14, 1966 M.W. Brother Fullingim advised the application for Friendswood Lodge U.D. was approved and the lodge would be set to work on July 29, 1966. Dispensation forms dated June 14, 1966, were received by Friendswood Lodge appointing Brothers W.A. Brooke and the first Worshipful Master, B.R. Baker, the first S.W. and N.H. Acuff as the first J.W. On July 29, 1966 a Master Masons lodge was opened in Pearland Lodge #1384, Pearland, Texas, for the purpose of setting to work Friendswood Lodge #1416. A reception was held for friends and relatives in the Friendswood H.S. Cafeteria with approximately 250 people attending. M.W.G.M. H.W. Fullingim gave Pearland Lodge permission for Friendswood Lodge to hold their meetings in the Pearland Lodge until a suitable location could be obtained by Friendswood Lodge.

Friendswood Lodge set to work with much determination. On November 1, 1966, Mr. G.V. Greathouse was initiated into the 1st degree of Masonry. Brother Greathouse was passed on March 21, 1967 and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on April 18, 1967, thereby becoming the first MM raised by Friendswood Lodge #1416. Unknown to those attending on April 18, 1967 Brother Greathouse would become the first Worshipful Master of Friendswood Lodge to have received all the Blue Lodge degrees in Friendswood. Upon di-

rect request of M.W. J.D. Tomme, Jr., Grand Master of Masons in Texas in 1966, R.W. J.W. Chandler, Deputy Grand Master, formally constituted Friendswood Lodge #1416 AF & AM on December 17, 1966. Approximately one year after the first informal meetings, Friendswood Lodge #1416 AF & AM was at work. Enjoying the initial success, the founding brethren would continue their efforts later resulting in acquiring property and their own lodge building.

Acquisition of the Original Lodge Building:

"And Solomon had three score and ten thousand that bore Burdens and four score thousand hewers in the mountainsthree thousand three hundred which ruled over the people that wrought the work." I Kings V (15 & 16)

After meeting for several months at Pearland Lodge, Friendswood Lodge attempted to obtain their own lodge building. Since the lodge was new and the membership small, this would be quite an undertaking. It was learned that the U.S. Government was taking bids on surplus buildings located at Ellington AFB near Friendswood. After careful consideration a bid was made "as is, where is" in the amount of \$550.90. On May 31, 1967 the U.S. Government informed the Lodge they were the successful bidder, Friendswood Lodge had a home.



After considerable negotiation with the U.S. Government and Messrs. Olshans, a local house moving firm, the building was moved from Ellington Field to its present location, 110 Willowick, Friendswood, Texas, on July 10, 1967. Once again the brethren were called upon to set forth their time, energy, and money for the refurbishing of the old building. A joint effort made by many of the original brethren resulted in the completion of the "temple". Brother Ellis W. Grisham, Sr., DDGM Masonic District 31-A, formally inspected the lodge building on behalf of the MW Grand Lodge of Texas on October 27, 1967. He advised the Grand Lodge immediately that the Lodge was properly constructed and masonically secure. He recommended that Friendswood Lodge be immediately granted dispensation. He ended his report stating the brethren of Friendswood Lodge accomplishments to date were remarkable in view of the short time they had been organized.

On November 7, 1967 the first meeting was held in the present lodge building. On April 15, 1968 M.W. J.W. Chandler, Grand Master of Masons in Texas, formally dedicated the Friendswood temple in accordance with ancient usages and customs and in full compliance with the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas.

The following Grand Lodge members or representatives were in attendance: J.W. Chandler as Grand Master T.E. Briggs as Deputy Grand Master A.C. Tircuit as Grand Sr. Warden E.N. Squyres as Grand Jr. Warden J.M. Davis as Grand Treasurer C.F. Spencer as Grand Secretary D.B. Little as Grand Chaplain W.A. Brooke as Grand Orator F.D. Middleton as Grand Marshall D.F. Prince as Grand Sr. Deacon M.L. Shaw as Grand Jr. Deacon E.W. Brautigam as Grand Sr. Steward B.R. Baker as Grand Jr. Steward W.W. Carter as Grand Pursuivant Virgil Griffin as Grand Tiler

The following gifts were donated to the Lodge before or just subsequent to the dedication of the Lodge: July 29, 1966, Bro R.E. McBride, PM Angleton Lodge #829 presented gavels for each of the officer's stations. These gavels were handmade by Bro McBride from the Masonic Oak. A Holy Bible for the altar, the bible was donated by Mrs. H. Gary Hollis in memory of H. Gary Hollis a member of Eastern Star Lodge #284, Groveton, Texas.

Walter M. Pierson Lodge #1339 presented the poem "Last Night I Knelt Where Hiram Knelt." The poem was framed in aluminum plating with an inscribed aluminum plaque.

January 17, 1967, Bro. C.F. Spencer, PM of Pearland Lodge #1384 donated the three burning tapers.

May 16, 1967, Bro. W.R. Whipkey of Friendswood Lodge #1416 fashioned from wood the Lodge's present Working Tools and the case. These tools and case are handmade and are the work of a master craftsman. They are exquisite and unique in this area.

October 3, 1967, 21 chairs for the Lodge were obtained.

October 17, 1967, Bro. J.R. Bencal, Jr. reported aprons for the Lodge were being made by Mrs. Jo Nita Bencal.

January 16, 1968, Bro. T.H. Roberts, WM of Alvin Lodge #762, presented the Square and Compasses for the Holy Bible. Bro. R.F. Bahler presented the aluminum receiving tools.

March 5, 1968, Bro. Ken Toon obtained the stove for the Lodge. Bro. J.R. May obtained two refrigerators. March 19, 1968, Mr. and Mrs. F.S. Kennebrew presented the Lodge with a set of Mackeys Encyclopedias.

In addition to the above just before and during the spring of 1967, Bro. C.R. Harper constructed the two entrance pillars, the officer's chairs and the altar. All of the furnishings are hand constructed or hand tooled. Friendswood Lodge has the distinction of being the only Lodge in the area with furnishings constructed by one of its own Lodge members. The construction of these furnishings was only one of several significant accomplishments by Bro. Harper. Bro Harper continued to pursue his Masonic career by subsequently becoming Friendswood Lodge's first Certificate Holder, Master of the Lodge for 1970-71 and District Deputy Grand Master for Masonic District 31A for 1974.

As Friendswood Lodge continued to grow it had almost doubled its membership by June of 1970. On February 9, 1971, Bro. C.R. Harper, presently Master of the Lodge, made formal application to the M.W. Grand Lodge of Texas to incur an indebtedness so the Lodge could purchase the land where the Lodge building is presently located. M.W. J.W. Steed, Grand Master, replied to the application on March 6, 1971, stating that after review of all documentation presented he would not recommend that the application for indebtedness be accepted. Once again the brethren were called upon to give of their time, energy, and money to maintain the Lodge.

In order for the purchase of the property to be made each brother of the Lodge was solicited and asked if they would pledge regular donations to support a plan to purchase the property. Upon recurring positive reactions from the brethren, Bro's G.V. Greathouse, M.L. Abbe, W.B. Patton, and C.R. Harper formed the Keystone Trust. The Keystone Trust was formed to receive funds from the pledges which would be applied to the note on the property which was signed by each member of the trust. Upon liquidation of the note, the Keystone Trust will transfer the property to the Lodge. At this writing the brethren have been solicited in an effort to relieve the four brothers from as much of their obligation as possible by promoting \$200.00 cash donations on behalf of the Keystone Trust.

The Masons in Friendswood, desired to form their own Masonic Lodge. They did. The Masons in Friendswood desired to purchase an old Air Force barracks building and form it into a Masonic Temple. They did. The Masons in Friendswood desire to own the property on which the Lodge now stands and someday build another edifice. When the next historian of Friendswood Lodge takes pen in hand to write Decade II, it is a certainty he will place after the sentence desire to do----They did.

"That cement which unites us into one sacred band or society of Friends and Brothers among whom no contention should ever exist except that noble contention or rather emulation of who can best work and best agree."

John H. Roberts, III Friendswood. TX June 1974

A True Friend And Brother

The other evening after a Festive Board, a newish Master Mason (raised within the last year) called me over and asked if I knew so-and-so. The two of them work together.

"He's a true friend and brother," I blurted out. And then I stopped and thought about it for a moment. I thought about why I had said it.

The brother is not one for honors. He's never been Master of a Lodge; he's never had any aspirations to be one. He probably spent at least six years as a Steward (and more as an "unofficial" Steward) preparing food for each Lodge meeting. And I don't mean sandwiches or a few cookies. I'm pretty sure he never asked the Lodge for a cent to reimburse him. He was sincerely happy to be of service to his brothers because they meant so much to him.

His Lodge was, unfortunately, victimized by a couple of internal rows over the course of several years. Through it all, he never took sides, never said a bad word about anyone in the Lodge. If only all Masons could say the same thing. Instead, he would express what a wonderful fraternity we had and how much joy it had given to him. And not by parroting ritual; he would explain in his own words what Freemasonry meant to him.

Isn't this the kind of man a Mason should be? How many of us can really say that we're thought of as "a true friend and brother"?



Texas Rangers Were Brothers

The Lone Ranger, Freemasonry, And Texas Ranger Ethics

By James A. Marples, VII^o, Life Member, Neaska College, M.S.R.I.C.F.

In this technological age of the 21st Century, it is difficult for young people to relate to the fewer communication and entertainment avenues of the early 20th Century. Back then, it was radio which provided news, programming and entertainment. Before television made it possible to convey images, radio-listeners had to create their own mental picture to blend-in and enhance the messages that they heard. Successful radio programs had to use correct language, as well as clear and vivid depictions to keep listeners spellbound. In 1933, a Detroit, Michigan man named George W. Trendle, created a radio program oadcast over radio station WXYZ. He wanted it to appeal to youth, yet be interesting and exciting for adults, too. The setting of the Old West in America provided an interesting theme in which to portray the hardships of the pioneers. Those hardships were deepened by burdens imposed by bad luck, bad choices, and bad men. With any big problem, people look for 'something' or 'someone' to help lift that burden and help make things right. As you might suppose, the hero would rescue the situation and happiness would prevail.



The program, which began on radio, was eventually ought to television. That is where my first recollections of it began. The character would exhibit genuine virtue, honor, valor, wisdom, compassion and respect for Law. The person in this leading role would be a true gentleman, who sets a good example of clean living and clean speech. He would walk uprightly and promote Justice without regard for personal gain. He would come to the rescue when needed, and he wouldn't be afraid to enlist the help of his faithful companion or a group of citizens to work in concert with him to ing order out of chaos. Restoring the community's peace and harmony was his overriding concern.



This character had a past history as a lawman - as a Texas Ranger. He was shot down in an ambush, along with five other Texas Rangers. As he lay near death, an American Indian named "Tonto" came across the scene and observed that one Ranger was still eathing, ought him water, and nursed him back to health. Around the Ranger's neck was a necklace bearing a symbol that Tonto had given a young white-boy years earlier. Tonto said, "You are kemo-sabe." (A Pottawatomie Indian word meaning "trusty scout" or "faithful friend.")

The Ranger, vaguely remembers his childhood nickname. He remembers Tonto and their memories of youth. The Ranger, John Reid, sees his other (a fellow Texas Ranger) Dan Reid among the five dead Rangers. Together, Tonto and the

Ranger dig six graves to make it appear to the outlaws that there were no survivors. As the sole survivor, Tonto makes the astute pronouncement to his friend: "You the Lone Ranger, now."

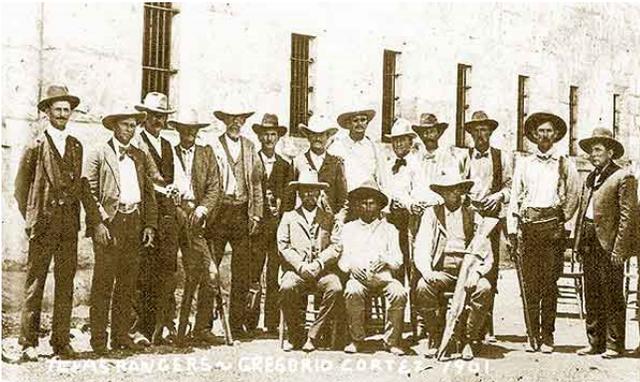
Before burying his fellow Texas Rangers, the surviving Ranger cut a strip of black faic from his other Dan's vest and fashioned it into a mask to put across his face and conceal his identity. As "The Lone Ranger," he vowed: First, to ing to Justice the members of the Cavendish Gang who did the dastardly deed. And, Second, to help ing Law and Order to the rugged American Frontier as well as a level of stability to its citizenry. The Lone Ranger had his trusty horse, Silver, and Tonto had his beautiful paint horse, Scout.

I can almost hear the sounds of the 'Cavalry Charge' finale of Gioacchino Rossini's William Tell Overture, and the booming baritone voice of the announcer, who said, "A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of

dust, and a hearty 'Heigh-Yo, Silver!!' The Lone Ranger. 'Heigh-Yo, Silver, away!!' With his faithful Indian companion Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early West. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear. The Lone Ranger rides again. "

Like many people, I would classify "The Lone Ranger" as a true American hero... a larger-than-life personality, worthy of emulation. Growing up, I knew several men who, if wrapped-up-together, would embody most of The Lone Ranger's admirable traits. Upon reaching adulthood and soon thereafter joining Masonry, I can see many of those desirable virtues inculcated in the various Masonic degrees.

It is no co-incidence that Freemasonry helped influence the law enforcement agency, the Texas Rangers. It was o:. Stephen F. Austin, a Mason, who had the fervent wish to organize a group of hardy men to protect his new colony (which later became Texas). In 1823, o:. Austin referred to that group as Rangers, because of their duties compelling them to 'range' over the entire vast area.



This select group gave rise to what is called now "Texas Rangers." Furthermore, many notable early Texas Rangers were Masons, including Jack Hays, John B. Jones, (who later became the presiding officer of Royal Arch Masonry in Texas) L.H. McNelly, James Gillett, and George W. Baylor (among many others). One of the most dynamic Texas Rangers of the 20th Century was Manuel Trazazas Gonzauillas. His career as a Texas Ranger was notable for his patrolling of the East Texas Oil Fields, near Kilgore, Texas. He was known by the nickname "Lone Wolf Gonzauillas," and he was the only Texas Ranger then of Spanish descent. He was also a Mason. o. Gonzauillas was involved in the

control of gambling, boot-legging, bank robbery, riots, prostitution, narcotic trafficking, and general lawlessness from the Red River to the Rio Grande and from El Paso to the Sabine River during the 1920s and 1930s.

In September 2006, I was pleased to have Barry K. Caver, Captain of Texas Rangers - Company "E" tell me, "There was a time that most, if not all Texas Rangers, were Masons; however, I do not know their level of involvement."

The battle of "Good" winning over "Evil," and the struggle from 'adversity and despair' to 'triumph and joy' is a hallmark of real-life adventures that have been memorialized by both works of fiction and non-fiction. In pioneer days, horses were the principal means of transportation. Having a good horse often meant the difference between life and death for not only Texas Rangers, but for ordinary citizens as well.

Animals, as well as humans, sometimes experience adversity. The Lone Ranger and Tonto saved a big white horse from being gored to death by a buffalo. The Lone Ranger and Tonto nursed it back to health, and eventually set it free. The horse later followed them back to camp and The Lone Ranger adopted it. The horse became his trusty steed "Silver."

The Lone Ranger's bullets were made by a retired Texas Ranger in an old silver mine. The silver bullets were to remind the Ranger of how expensive it is to shoot at a man, and conversely, how valuable every person's life is. The Lone Ranger would always shoot to wound -never to kill.

As a Masonic Rosicrucian, I am reminded of the virtues of the element SILVER. It is not only a precious metal used in monetary exchanges as currency, it also has healing properties. I am reminded that pioneers moving west often put silver coins in their water barrels to keep them clean as a bactericide and algacide. Silver is also used today in pharmaceuticals.

The Lone Ranger put on the mask so he could not be identified. This served a twofold purpose: So he could not be easily recognized by the outlaws who sought to kill him initially. Secondly, any good deeds he would perform later would be done purely for the love of country and the pursuit of justice. Anonymity gives a person a stronger backbone of self-discipline if it is apparent the donor will receive nothing in return. Many Masonic Halls in olden days would have wooden boxes placed in aisles, lobbies, hallways or in rooms adjacent to the Lodge room for members to donate Alms and other money to be directed to the poor. Any selfish person will make a donation if they can brag and boast about it, but it takes a truly selfless person who really cares to contribute in private.

The Lone Ranger rode over a vast amount of territory, which included the Great Plains and several rivers, streams, distant mountains and the occasional canyon.

When I was growing up in Kansas, I was amazed to learn that parts of the current States of KANSAS, COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, and even a bit of WYOMING were once part of the Republic

of Texas. In that context, it is easy to envision a former Texas Ranger riding the diverse types of terrain which were then ONE REGION. And, Kansas has a Pottawatomie Indian Reservation. Sometimes works of fiction are based on more reality than a person might imagine. For The Lone Ranger and Tonto, friendships were solid and life-long. Masonry likewise inspires solid, lifelong friendships. Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz, the founder of the Rosicrucian Society had members go out in the world in pairs. He felt that by going out in the world two-by-two would provide more safety and security than a sole individual dealing with life's struggles alone. Furthermore, life's lessons are often better understood when you have someone by your side to help you see how it has affected them too. Courage doesn't develop instantly. Moral courage goes beyond personal courage or avery. Moral courage must be cultivated and reinforced. Freemasonry instills an honorable Code of Conduct. Many early Texas Rangers being Masons themselves adopted a code of ethics or integrity that lives on today. The white lambskin apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason.

The 5-pointed Star-within-a-wheel design is the badge of a Texas Ranger, and the badges are generally made from old Mexican five-peso silver coins. Early Rangers sometimes lacked an "official" badge for various reasons: insufficient salary, no real need to display it to Indians or Mexicans, or no need of displaying such a tempting target on one's chest. However, the Masonic influence on the 5-pointed Lone Star has been evident from the beginning. In 1844, George K. Teulon, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, addressing a gathering of Masons in Portland, Maine said, "Texas is emphatically a Masonic Country. Our national emblem, the 'Lone Star' was chosen from the emblems selected by Freemasonry, to illustrate the moral virtues--- it is a five-pointed star, and alludes to the five points of fellowship." Badges are nice to have, but we all must strive to aspire to the duties and qualifications that our 'badge' represents.



'Bro Canada Dry'

A Masonic did you know. From W Bro Dwight D Seals



In 1890, Canadian pharmacist and chemist, John J McLaughlin of Enniskillen, Ontario opened a carbonated water plant in Toronto. McLaughlin was the oldest son of Robert McLaughlin, founder of McLaughlin Carriage and McLaughlin Motor Car, which became General Motors of Canada in 1916.

In 1904, John McLaughlin created "Canada Dry Pale Ginger Ale". Three years later the drink was appointed to the royal household of the Governor General of Canada, and the label featuring a beaver atop a map of Canada was replaced with the present crown and shield.

When McLaughlin began shipping his product to New York in 1919, it became so popular that he opened a plant in Manhattan, shortly thereafter. After McLaughlin's death, the company was run briefly by Sam PD Saylor and Associates who bought the business from the McLaughlin family in 1923 and formed Canada Dry Ginger Ale, a public company. The "dry" in the brand's name refers to not

being sweet, as in a dry wine. When John McLaughlin first formulated "Canada Dry Pale Ginger Ale", his new soft drink was far less sweet than other ginger ales then available. As a result, he labeled it "dry".

Canada Dry's popularity as a mixer began during Prohibition, when its flavor helped mask the taste of homemade liquor. In the 1930s, Canada Dry expanded worldwide, and from the 1950s onward, the company introduced a large number of other products. Today, Canada Dry is owned by Dr Pepper Snapple Group, which was spun off from Cadbury Schweppes in 2008.

Brother John McLaughlin was a member of Cedar Lodge No. 270, Oshawa, Ontario.

May We Meet Upon The _ _ Act By The ! And Part Upon The _

W Bro Dwight D Seals
Camden Lodge #159
Camden, Ohio

Fraternals Orders — Order of Buffaloes

The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes

Conceptions and Misconceptions

In so far as surviving records can prove, the earliest known traceable date of a Lodge of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes is 1822 at the Harp Tavern, Great Russell Street near Drury Lane Theatre and was created by stage hands and theatre technicians who had been denied a long held privilege extended to them by the actors and artists of the day.

An Order known as the City of Lushington existed in the late 1700's to the 1800's which consisted almost exclusively of actors or variety artists and held its meetings, mostly for entertainment and social recreation in the Inns and Taverns close to the well populated theatres of the day. In order to be members of the Lushington's one was required to be either an actor or artist who actually earned their living 'treading the boards'. Selected guests of members were invited to attend these gatherings, and many stage hands obviously availed themselves of this privilege for a number of years. At some point in time not easily identified the Lushington's became a 'closed shop' presumably because meeting rooms in the Inn or Tavern were not big enough to accommodate everyone (member and visitor alike). Whatever the reason the Lushington's would only allow members to attend their meetings.

The meeting room was organized in the form of a City with four or more wards and so the Master or chief officer was referred to as Mayor, and the senior officers were Aldermen. Lesser officers carried the prefix 'City' in their title, for example City Taster, City Barber, City Physician. The City Taster had a most important roll in the evening's proceedings. It was his duty before the Lodge opened to ceremoniously taste the ale on sale at the Inn. If it was found to be 'wanting' the host or landlord was 'fined' two gallons of ale which was consumed by all in attendance at the meeting without payment. You can imagine that there would be few occasions when the ale was not found wanting.

Being prevented from attending meetings of the Lushington's after a number of years enjoyment of that privilege, the stage hands and theatre staff starting holding their own exclusive meetings that had 'nuffin to do wit them acter fellas'.

As the theatre staff moved around the country in pursuance of their profession, Lodges would have been founded in the various cities, towns and villages.

Pearce Egan, a well known London Theatre critic of the period attributes the founders as being Joseph Lisle, a well known eccentric and William Sinnett. In his book 'The History of Tom and Jerry' he cites one of the aims as being the promotion of an hitherto neglected ballad 'We'll chase the Buffalo'.

It is a matter of pure conjecture as to what remarks may have been made by patrons in the public rooms of the Tavern upon hearing the song being sung by members in the club or concert room. Certainly the ballad was sung with a considerable amount of enthusiasm at R.A.O.B Lodge meetings as recently as the mid 1950's by many of our more long serving members.

Why Antediluvian? The Order was founded in 1822, which certainly was not before the flood, and no satisfactory answer can be found in the records that have survived the ravages of time. We must remember that the bulk of our members at that time were involved in one of the theatre professions, and skilled orators would have written their own ceremonies, often designed to impress the unenlightened with the great antiquity of the Order. Similarities were deduced to the rights of bull worship at the time of the Pharaohs in ancient Egypt. The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and other nations of Christendom, Peter the Hermit and the Saracenic wars were also quoted.

The desires of mankind to relieve the poverty of ones fellow have been around since the earliest ages, and if that is not antediluvian, what is? Certainly the word has a better ring to it than 'ancient'. So! Antediluvian we became!

As in Masonry the Seditious and Riotous Assembly Acts of the late 1800's had a profound effect on Buffalo meetings, as it will have done on many clubs, societies and other bodies of the day.



Cover art, The Grand Lodge of England, The Way Forward, The Journey Begins.

In order to show to the authorities that the Buffaloes were not subversive to the interest of the state, the Order decided to describe itself as the Loyal Order of Buffaloes. It only needs a slip of the tongue for 'loyal' to become 'royal' and in a very short time Joe Public accepted that the Order was indeed Royal.

A Royal Charter has never been issued to the Buffaloes. Indeed, under the current regulations it is unlikely that one will. Over the years there have been a number of internal differences of opinion leading to break away formations operating under the same principles and still using the name of the Buffaloes. These groups or 'constitutions' are generally referred to as Banners. The Royal Warrants Act requires the applicant to be the one and only representative body.

The introduction of the Royal Warrant Act, in the early 1900s, required anyone using the 'Royal' prefix to register with the Lord Chancellor's Office and to stop using the title if permission to continue doing so was not granted. Since the Buffaloes had been using the title from the 1840s the Lord Chancellor agreed that no objection would be raised on the our continued use of the title on the grounds of long usage, provided no act by the Order arose which would disgrace its use.

In the early days, the first lodge to be opened in an area became known as the Mother Lodge, from which subsequent Lodges would be opened. Advice was frequently sought from the 'Mother' Lodge in the interpretation of rule or other matters, although it would continue to be a private or Minor Lodge in its own right. From these Mother Lodges the concept was developed for a body responsible for administration and organization, alone. Thus we acquired Governing Authorities which became District Grand Lodges and latter Provincial Grand Lodges.

In April 1866 the then known Lodges formulated a Grand Primo Lodge to control the movement, to set laws, to establish procedures and administration. This body later became known as the Grand Lodge of England.

The Order, today, is structured on similar Lodge to all Masonic Orders in that it is a three tiered system of Minor (Private) Lodges, Provincial Grand Lodges and Grand Lodge.

The R.A.O.B. has four degrees of membership = First Degree, known as a Kangaroo (don't ask why), Second Degree or Certified Primo, Third Degree or Knight Order of Merit and Fourth Degree or Roll of Honor.

The Second Degree is awarded as result of a mixture of time, attendance and an examination on the ability to take the chair of a Lodge while third and fourth degrees based on length of membership and a proven attendance record. Provincial and Grand Lodge honors are not the gift of the Chief Officer of the Province or Grand Lodge. To gain such honor the member must have represented his Lodge as delegate to P.G.L. or represented his Province as a delegate to Grand Lodge, and again after length of service and attendance qualifications, he must have been elected by popular vote to the Office.

In the early days of the R.A.O.B. it is clear that there must have been members who were also members of the various Masonic Orders since there is much in R.A.O.B. ritual and regalia which can be identified as being Masonic in origin as well as from other societies.

Today there are many who enjoy membership both as a Mason and as a Buffalo. Some holding quite senior and important positions of Office in both Orders

The R.A.O.B. is a Philanthropic and Charitable body, Lodges and Provinces are at liberty to undertake whatever activity they consider appropriate for the needs of the community in which they work and live.

Charitable funds exist at Lodge, Province and Grand Lodge levels to assist members of the Order and/or their dependents who are in necessitous circumstances.

Grand Lodge owns and operates two convalescent homes to provide rest and recuperation facilities for members, their wives or widows, recovering from illness or medical treatment

The costs of running these two properties, as well as the benevolent grants for our aged and necessitous members or widows, and the education grants for dependent children are all funded from the Grand Lodge portion of the membership fees, voluntary donations and the proceeds from the investment portfolio.

Much more can be said of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes as operated by the Grand Lodge of England, but the foregoing is considered sufficient at this stage to give some insight into our activities. In doing so we hope to create a better understanding of our Order.

Our basic desire - Is to defend the weak, to help the unfortunate and render assistance to those in difficulty or need'. These honorable principles have existed in man since the earliest ages and in this respect our Order may be regarded as "ancient - or Antediluvian."

The Bee And The Hive

[Bee] The bee and the hive have long been symbols of industry and regeneration, wisdom and obedience, with a place in Egyptian, Roman and Christian symbolism. The hive is often seen in Masonic illustrations of the 18th and 19th century and both Clovis and Napoleon adopted the bee as their symbol. Although "the bee was among the Egyptians the symbol of an obedient people, because, says Horapollo, 'of all insects, the bee alone had a king.', its use in Freemasonry was secondary to any number of other symbols based on the working tools of a stone mason.

[Beehive] "Looking at the regulated labor of these insects when congregated in their hive, it is not surprising that a beehive should have been deemed an appropriate emblem of systematized industry. Freemasonry has therefore adopted the beehive as a symbol of industry, a virtue taught in the instructions, which says that a Master Mason 'works that he may receive wages, the better to support himself and family, and contribute to the relief of a worthy, distressed brother, his widow and orphans...' The ark has already been shown to have been an emblem common to Freemasonry and the Ancient Mysteries, as a symbol of regeneration - of the second birth from death to life. Now, in the Mysteries, a hive was a type of the ark. 'Hence,' says Faber (Origin of Pagan Idolatry, volume ii, page 133), 'both the diluvium priestess and the regenerated souls were called bees; hence, bees were feigned to be produced from the carcass of a cow, which also symbolized the ark; and hence, as the great father was esteemed an infernal god, honey was much used both in funeral rites and in the Mysteries. This extract is from the article on the bee in Evans' Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture."

"Honey is used to illustrate moral teachings. A man is exhorted to eat honey and the honey comb (Pr 24/13), but warned against surfeit (Pr 25/16.27). It was a simile for moral sweetness (Ezk 3/3), and for the excellence of the law (Ps 19/10), of pleasant words (Pr 16/24), and of the lips (Ca 4/11), and as a figure of love (Ca 5/1). The LXX adds to Pr 6/8 'Go to the bee, and learn how diligent she is, and what a noble work she produces; whose labor kings and private men use for their health. She is desired and honored by all, and, though weak in strength, yet since she values wisdom she prevails.' This quote exists in the Arabic version, and is quoted by ancient writers."

That the newly converted Clovis would use a bee as his symbol is not surprising. It aligned him with the Christian Roman Empire without alienating those of his subjects who still maintained non-trinitarian or pagan sympathies.

Napoleon was initiated, passed and raised into an Army Philadelphie Lodge of the Ecossais Primitive Rite of Narbonne between 1795 and 1798. Considering Napoleon's interest in things Egyptian, his reason for adoption of the bee symbol can only be a subject of supposition. When Napoleon had embroidered bees sewn on his robes it was not as a claim of legitimacy directed at any of his contemporaries; certainly not the aristocracy whose roots were not Merovingian nor sympathies masonic. Certainly not the freemason revolutionaries of the USA who were then embracing republicanism.

The bee is a symbol of systematized industry, an obedient people and of rebirth. It is easier to accept that the Merovingians, freemasons and Napoleon found their way to the symbol by their own path than it is to create a convoluted and undocumented connection between them as some conspiracy theorists have tried.

"The bee hive is an emblem of industry, and recommends the practice of that virtue of all created beings, from the highest sereph in heaven, to the lowest reptile of the dust. It teaches us, that as we came into the world rational and intelligent beings, so we should ever be industrious ones; never sitting down contented while our fellow-creatures around us are in want, when it is in our power to relieve them, without inconvenience to ourselves.

When we take a survey of nature, we view man, in his infancy, more helpless and indigent than the brutal creation: he lies languishing for days, months, and years, totally incapable of providing sustenance for himself, of guarding against the attack of the wild beasts of the field, or sheltering himself from the inclemencies of the weather. It might have pleased the Great Creator of heaven and earth, to have made man independent of all other beings; but, as dependence is one of the strongest bonds of society, mankind were made dependent on each other for protection and security, as they thereby enjoy better opportunities of fulfilling the duties of reciprocal love and friendship. Thus was man formed for social and active life, the noblest part of the work of God; and he that will so demean himself, as not to be endeavoring to add to the common stock of knowledge and understanding, may be deemed a drone in the hive of nature, a useless member of society, and unworthy of our protection as masons.

THE FUTURE OF FREEMASONRY

From The Builder Magazine - May 1930

In the April 1930 number of the Masonic World, Bro. J. E. Morcombe, the editor, has an arresting article under the title "Freemasonry at the Crossroads." It is one that should have the widest publicity, for, in spite of the assertions by those who love to prophesy smooth things, there is a crisis in the affairs of the Craft.

The keynote of the article is given in the first paragraph, in which Bro. Morcombe quotes a Past Grand Master of California:

I expect that Masonry will continue to exist for a long period of time - forever, as the usual phrase goes. But I am not so sure that it will hold its present high place in the estimation of men ...

This recalls a dictum of Albert Pike, in reference to a state of affairs somewhat similar to that with which we are now faced, which existed some years after the Civil War. He said that "Masonry, by its nature intended to be exclusive, had become popular."

We all know the really extraordinary influx into the Fraternity that began just after the World War, and which reached its peak in 1921, in which year very nearly three hundred thousand men became members. The article in THE BUILDER just a year ago entitled "Where Are We Drifting?" may be recalled. In the second of the charts there given the curves of gains and losses indicated that in a year or two they would meet. This forecast has been fulfilled. In some Grand Lodges the year 1929 has actually shown a net loss of members, and others are at a standstill.

This condition is not peculiar to the Masonic Fraternity. It is known, and Bro. Morcombe in his article gives the figures, that other fraternal organizations are faced with the same conditions, and even more intensely. And not only fraternal societies, but clubs and churches are feeling the pinch of slackened interest and loss of members.

Statistics of membership give a somewhat superficial test of an institution's condition. Members there must be, obviously, but without knowing the quality little of value can be deduced from the quantity. Masonry has in the past attained a high reputation in the world, but this reputation was not in the least founded on the number of men who were Masons, but on their character. It was because in every community it was observed that many of the best men, the men most respected, the men most trusted, were of the Craft, that Masonry gained the reputation it has enjoyed. And reputation cannot long survive the conditions which give rise to it.

It is obvious, because it is common human nature, that as soon as any state or condition is highly esteemed in the community there will be a greatly increased desire to attain to it. In proportion as a society is highly esteemed, and membership in it is regarded as a distinction, so will the number increase of those who desire to join it for the benefits it will bring them personally. In other words, the more an institution prospers the greater the number of parasites who seek to attach themselves to it. The condition is inevitable, human nature being what it is.

It is those who give who make an institution, whether it is a society, a church, or a nation. It is those who take without giving who reduce it to weakness. The parasites can hardly be wholly eliminated, but when their number grows to be too great the organization, or organism, is weakened, becomes sickly, and may even die.

We in America have been bitten by the lust for size, for numbers, for wealth. Freemasonry has in every country and in every period reflected in its own way the external environment. Some things it yields to, others it opposes, but whichever it be, it would not so act but for the existing conditions. The things that are accepted as a matter of course in the environment inevitably outnumber those which are resisted. That we should be gratified by increase in our numbers is natural, and such increase is not in itself evil so long as the level of qualification is maintained. But to maintain the standard means that increase in numbers must be set on one side as an aim. It is not something to be sought for, but if it comes, it must come of itself.

It is an undoubted fact that it has become altogether too easy for men to enter our lodges. The standard has been lowered; and though in theory any brother may undertake the task of raising it through the ballot box, in reality he is helpless. In most lodges it would be impossible, even could he devote his whole time to it, for a brother personally to satisfy himself of the qualifications of every applicant. Besides even those who feel the situation most keenly are necessarily affected by the actual conditions. They inevitably feel that it is hard to reject a man who is no whit worse than many who are already in the lodge. The effect is cumulative, and increases in geometrical proportion. And while it may be true that candidates should not be accepted for negative reasons, because there appears nothing overt against their being received, but that there should be something

positive, something in their life and character that fits them for initiation, yet it is most difficult to act on this principle, for it has come to such a pass that most Masons actively resent the rejection of any petition they have presented to the lodge and regard it as a personal injury. For one brother, or even a group, to attempt to act in this way would mean in most cases a disruption of the harmony of the lodge. It is a choice of evils.

These obvious conditions, that all thinking brethren deplore, do not stand alone, they are all really symptoms, by-products of the way in which the Craft in America has developed, incidents of its evolution. It is this that makes it so difficult to find a remedy. Most expedients that are offered do not touch the deep-seated root of the evil. Perhaps there is now no cure but the operation of natural laws. If the represent tendencies continue the Fraternity will lose its prestige, many will drop out, fewer will seek to join, and finally, it may be, a fresh start can be made.

Yet we can hardly be satisfied to wait for this process, which may end in death rather than cure. We must strive as we can to improve matters. There are thousands of Masons who are Masons in fact as well as in name, and could they work unitedly much might be accomplished. Much more is being accomplished as a matter of fact than we know, even as Elijah learned there were men in Israel who had not bent the knee to Baal. The problem is gradually being realized, most Grand Lodges are now actively trying to do something to meet it. The first necessity is to realize that the body is sick, the next to diagnose the disease. After that there may be some hope of a cure if the right treatment can be found.

George Washington Masonic Apron Displayed

From the "Freemasons For Masons" Blogspot

Taken from the West Virginia State Journal, Masonic Lodge to Display Apron Owned by Washington, today:

Mt. Nebo Lodge No. 91, a Masonic lodge in Shepherdstown, will celebrate its bicentennial with a public open house on Dec. 11 where people can come view George Washington's Masonic apron.

The lodge, which is located at 121 E. German St., will be open to the public from noon to 3 p.m.

The apron will go on display at 1 p.m. and Laura B. Simo, associate curator at Mount Vernon Estate, Museum and Gardens in Virginia, will give a presentation about the apron's history.

Following that, the lodge's current Master, George Alwin, of Shepherdstown, will present a history of the Mt. Nebo Lodge, which was chartered in Shepherdstown on Dec. 11, 1811.

The apron it owns was given to Washington in 1784 by the Marquis de Lafayette, who was also a Mason, and worn regularly by Washington until his death in 1799.

After Martha Washington died in 1802, the apron was purchased from her estate for \$6 by Thomas Hammond, husband of George's niece, Mildred Washington. She was the daughter of George's brother Charles, who founded Charles Town, WV.

Hammond was a member of the Mt. Nebo Lodge, and he gave the apron to the lodge before he died in 1820.

Since then, the apron has been displayed in public only on rare occasions.

Its first public appearance was in 1844, at the 90th anniversary of the first Masonic meeting in what is now West Virginia, in Charles Town.

Subsequently, the apron was displayed at the laying of the cornerstone for the Smithsonian Institution in 1847 and the cornerstone ceremony for the Washington Monument in 1848.

Until recently, its last major public appearance was at the 100th anniversary of Washington's death at Mount Vernon in 1899.



DUNN'S ROCK MASONIC LODGE

Editor's Note; In the last issue we continued with another story about a Lodge with an unusual name, "Fish House". I liked the idea so much that I decided to continue it as an ongoing feature with Dunn's Rock" this month.

BY Cal Carpenter

Dunn's Rock Lodge, though not officially chartered until 1867, had its beginning several years earlier in the fraternity of men who became Masons on the battlefields of the Civil war. Passed down through the membership, this bit of lodge prehistory says that the idea of the lodge originated when Transylvania volunteers in the Confederate armies became Masons in military lodges of the North Carolina regiments, and began envisioning the local lodge they would found after the war. Following Appomattox, these Masons of the armies of Lee and Johnson, returned home in the dark days of the Reconstruction and immediately began laying their plans. They met in the open under the protecting ledge of Dunn's Rock, a huge rock outcrop overlooking the French Broad River valley. Because this was their first meeting place, and because Dunn's Rock was a historical landmark even then, it was chosen as the name of their lodge.

There were, no doubt, many discussions around battlefield campfires, but serious talk of the local lodge can be dated from, mid-1865 with the first returning home of these soldier Masons, and the meetings below the rock. These were not lodge meetings; they were simply meetings of Masons. But the outgrowth was the lodge that was officially chartered two years later and ever since has been Dunn's Rock Lodge No. 267, A.F. & A.M., Brevard.



CROSSROADS SETTLEMENT

Dunn's Rock Lodge first met as a lodge in 1866, operating under dispensation. Its charter was granted several months later on December 4, 1867. At this time, Brevard was only a crossroads settlement in the rugged mountain back county of western North Carolina. It consisted of a few rude buildings on a heavily wooded promontory crossed roughly north-south by the Asheville-Cherryfield Turnpike and a road leading southeast to Jones Gap and South Carolina. Even the county of Transylvania was new. It had been founded from parts of Henderson and Jackson Counties in 1861. Founding of Brevard, the county seat, had been delayed by the Civil War and it was not incorporated until 1868. Thus the lodge is one year older than Brevard and only six years younger than Transylvania County.



The first lodge building was under Dunn's Rock near the site now marked by a historical marker, erected by local Masons, in the southwest corner of the intersection of Island Ford Road and U.S. Highway 276, about two miles south of Brevard.

An interesting sidelight of the early lodge meetings held there after the charter was granted, is that these gatherings were often family socials as well as lodge meetings. According to handed down memories of early lodge officers and members, the wives and children accompanied the men and met below the rock. While the men sat in the lodge, they talked and played and fished in the French Broad River. Then, after the lodge meeting there were picnics where, no doubt, fresh fish and cornbread were prominent on the menu. This is, possibly, the origin of the traditional, public fish suppers that are still a major fund raising activity of the Brevard Lodge.

PROMINENT MEMBERS

The first Worshipful Master of Dunn's Rock was S.V. Pickens, an attorney of Hendersonville. A member of Mount Hermon Lodge, No.118, Asheville, Mr. Pickens had been asked to help organize the Brevard Lodge. He not only assisted prominently in the organization, but also demitted from Mount Hermon and moved his membership to Brevard, where he served two terms as Worshipful Master.

Thomas L. Gash was the first Senior Warden and second W.M. It is from his recollections, years later, that many historical sidelights of the early days have been preserved. Many other men whose names are prominent in the history of Brevard and Transylvania County were early members and officers of the lodge, but their inclusion must wait the publication of a more comprehensive lodge history.

YEARS OF GROWTH

During the years that followed the founding of Dunn's Rock Lodge, Brevard grew rapidly from the original few stores and houses into a thriving agricultural town. The lodge grew also, and meetings were moved from the cramped space in the old building under the rock to a hall in town.

Then the railroad came to Brevard, with the first train arriving in 1894, and a mild building boom following in 1899. In 1903 the railroad was extended through Rosman to Lake Toxaway where developers had built the Lake Toxaway Hotel on a newly made lake in the area that was soon to become nationally famous as a recreation area for the very rich and famous. Joseph S. Silversteen, a brother Mason and later a member of Dunn's Rock lodge, brought forestry products industry to Rosman, nine miles west of Brevard, and Transylvania County began the combination of residential recreational attractions and industry for which it is still widely known.

TO BUILD A TEMPLE

The first rental quarters in Brevard proved inadequate and the lodge moved, as it was to do several times in the fifty years that followed. Meeting where space could be found, the Masons saw the town and county continue to grow and the nation become a world power, weather World War I, and move into the 1920's. But toward the end of this period, with the membership grown from a handful to 152, the necessity became evident and a strong desire began to be expressed for a permanent home for the lodge.

In 1926, with the lodge 59 years old, a start toward a permanent home was made. At that time, the lodge was meeting in the space above what was Gaither's Restaurant on North Broad Street (which is now Bracken Mountain Bakery). Meeting there, the members made plans to launch a subscription drive "to build a temple or try to find a more suitable meeting space. Dr. U. Summey, then Worshipful Master, appointed a building committee of which were himself, Dr. S.F. Zachary and E.W. Stanbery.



Photo by Austin's

Old Front.....1952



Photo by Glen Edwin Mor

New Front.....1975

Progress was slow. Nevertheless, the next several months were spent in searching for a suitable property on which to build; and, at a meeting in 1927, the membership voted to acquire a lot on Jordan Street. The purchase price was \$1500.00.

While money was being raised for building, the lodge had a committee looking for a better meeting place to be occupied as temporary quarters. The search extended through the beginning and early part of the Great Depression of the 1930's and ended in 1933 when space in the Erwin and Ramseur building was leased. The lodge moved there and the first meeting was held July 14, 1933.

Few people could spare money in the hard times of the depression, so the plan for building had to be put off. But in 1938, with times beginning to improve, another effort was begun. The lodge membership, fired by the enthusiasm of a Brother A.H. Harris, a former Mayor of Brevard, approved and the, then, Worshipful Master Leon English, Jr. appointed a Ways and Means Committee strictly charged with the task of finding ways and means of financing and building a Masonic Temple. At the time, the lodge was considering a building that could be built for \$6000.00.

A fund raising effort was carried out over the next five years. But since the period saw such national uncertainty and finally the entry of the U.S. in World War II, progress was again slow. Nevertheless, building plans were prepared by Brothers A. Keith Pooser and R. F. Bennett, and were approved by the membership on December 9, 1943. In the meantime, a better location for the temple had been found and purchased

the present site on East Main Street. The first lot was sold.

CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

World War II ended and fund raising continued. And finally, in early 1950, the treasurer was able to report a sound enough financial position to began construction. Ground was broken in April and the first payroll check, lodge records show, was issued on May 5, 1950.

The first meeting, in the still far from finished temple, was held on June 26, 1951. The cost of building up to that time, was in excess of \$40,000.00.

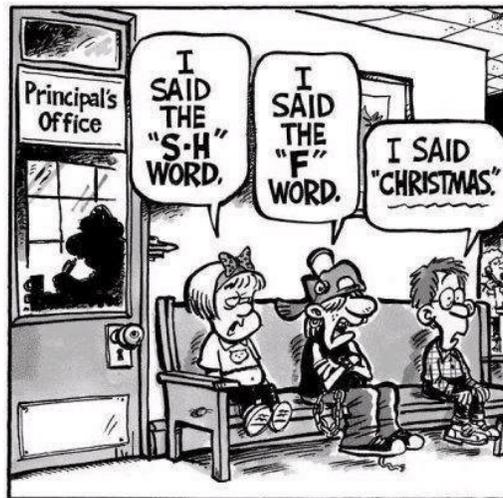
The next ninety years were spent in a continued effort to complete the temple while in use. Several fund raising drives were carried out with the last, before dedication, under the direction of the Transylvania Shrine Club, called the "Temple Completion Project. With funds raised through this and other drives, the dining room was finished and the heating system installed.

The temple was dedicated on August 12, 1960. The lodge was then 93 years old and the temple was the crowning achievement of 34 years of dedicated effort.

108 YEARS OF GROWTH

Through the 1960's, the membership continued to grow. In the early 1970's the decision was made to add a new front to the temple with Greek columns, an appearance more appropriate and more beautiful, and to install central air conditioning for the comfort of the members. The work was completed in 1975 at the cost of \$32,000.00,

Now Dunn's Rock Lodge is at home in one of the finest and most comfortable temples in the country. It is estimated that the building, if built today would cost \$750,000.00. With a membership of 208 members, the lodge can be proud of over a century of growth in both Masonry and its position in a progressive community, growth that began 108 years ago with a few soldier Masons meeting under Dunn's Rock.



There is a lodge located in the backwoods of a small southern town where the brethren are faithful Masons, but lack knowledge of receiving brothers from other jurisdictions.

During one of the meetings, the JD (Junior Deacon) informed the WM (Worshipful Master) that there was an alarm at the door, whereupon the WM replied "Attend the alarm and report your findings".

The JD opened the door and saw, to his amazement, a brother, impeccably dressed with an elaborate apron and jewels about his chest.

The Tyler, being somewhat slow to answer for the visiting brother, the visitor stated, "My name is John Smith, PM of my lodge, Past District Deputy of my district, Past Grand Master of my Grand Lodge, Past Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, York Rite Legion of Honor, Past Imperial Potentate of the Shrine of North America, who humbly requests an audience with the WM."

The JD, upon hearing these words from the visiting brother and the elaborate apron and jewels upon his chest, immediately closed the door, returned to his post and informed the WM: "Worshipful Master, The Grand Architect of the Universe is at the door!!!"

The Gift of Yourself - A Christmas Story

“It’s another waste of the Lodge funds that your forefathers built up over the years!”

Yes, the crotchety old Past Master was wagging his finger yet again at the room awash with light blue aprons and dark hair. It had almost become a tradition since a wave of younger men had joined several years earlier and revived a sparsely-populated and sad old Lodge on the verge of reluctantly handing the warrant back to Grand Lodge. Whenever a motion came onto the floor, you could be sure Alec Sampson—or “Worshipful Brother Grumpy”, as they called him—would be automatically opposed. Especially when it came to the Lodge treasury.



“You want to give yourselves free dinner and drinks on the Lodge’s dime using Christmas as an excuse,” he exclaimed, as he stated his lack of enthusiasm for the Junior Warden’s plan for a Christmas Party on Saturday night. “And besides, who’s going to be in the mood for Christmas? It’s going to rain that night,” was his parting shot as he sat down to raucous laughter of the Lodge, though he didn’t understand what they found amusing.

The Past Master ignored any further discussion as he sat and mumbled to no one in particular and stewed before the brethren voted in favor of the festive gathering.

“Now, remember,” the Worshipful Master gently reminded, “Make sure you bring a present that we can put under the tree. But nothing too expensive so it looks like we’re giving better gifts to some than others.”

“Hmmpf,” grunted Sampson to himself. “I’ve been on a pension for 20 years. I don’t have the money these young guys with their gas-guzzlers and big-screen TVs have. And they want me to buy something for them?” Then he ‘hmmpf’ed again.

After the meeting, one of Lodge’s new members, a keen Fellow Craft who had attended everything since his initiation several months earlier, innocently went up to the Past Master.

“So, Worshipful Brother Sampson, are you going to the party?” he quietly asked.

“Going?” he said, shocked. “Johnny, do you know why we stopped having them parties years ago? We used to spend all kinds of money on a hall, decorations, a band—we even had a church choir come in one year—and no one showed up. Oh, the brethren said ‘Yeah, don’t worry, I’ll come’ but then they’d make some excuse and stiff the Lodge. That was back in the ’70s. We’d be left with a big, empty room and bills to pay. If a few of us hadn’t donated money to the Lodge we would have been broke.

“The last one I went to was in 1959. One of the guys got liquored up beforehand—probably was at a Shriners do, or something like that—and fell into a huge cake Bro. Wallace’s wife baked. Ruined the whole night. Nope, I’ve had enough of Lodge Christmas Parties,” he added with an air of finality. With that, he went to get his coat and hat and headed for the door.

“Nice young fellow,” admitted Sampson to himself, as he drove away from the hall to his little home not far away, “He means well, and he does good work in the Lodge, but he has the dammedest ideas some times.” Saturday night came, and the grouchy Past Master got set to spend it as he always did: watching some old movies on the TV. So it was a shock after he turned on the set and settled down into his chair that his wife stood in an arched doorway and said:

“So, are you all set to go?”

“Go where, Martha?” he demanded. “A Western with Jimmy Stewart is about to come on.”

Just then, the doorbell rang. “You’ll see,” said the little grey-haired woman as she slowly made her way to the front door and found a young man clutching an open umbrella over his head. It was the Fellow Craft.

“Ohhhh, no!” exclaimed the Past Master, waving his finger in the air just like he did in Lodge all the time. “I see what this is. I’m not going!”

“Now, Alec,” Martha chided, “Johnny called today to see if we wanted a ride to the Christmas Party. I told him my feet still aren’t feeling right, so I can’t go. But you can. He came all the way into town from out in the valley 45 miles away to pick you up.”

“But I’m not dressed for it,” he insisted.

“That’s okay,” said the Fellow Craft, “The guys won’t mind.”

“And I don’t have a present like you guys voted I should have,” he sputtered.

“But you do, Worshipful Brother Sampson,” replied Johnny.

The grumpy Past Master was puzzled by that remark. But then he thought for a moment. Johnny was a

good young man and dedicated to the Lodge and, after all, had made an effort to come get him.

“Well, okay, I guess,” he reluctantly and sullenly agreed. “Besides, I know how ‘The Man From Laramie’ turns out anyhow.”

Martha handed him his rumpled coat and a fedora that had seen better days then cracked open the front door. Sampson peered into the damp and menacing sky. “See? I told you it was going to rain. None of you ever listen to me!”

Cheery music with sleigh bells filled the banquet room of the old hall. Brushing the tall ceiling was a healthy Douglas fir, glistening with tinsel, sitting watch in the corner over a mound of presents around its trunk. But the tree isn’t what shocked Sampson. It was the people. The 90-year-old room, big enough to fit 250 when the Hall was built and the Lodge was initiating dozens every year, was packed.

“Where did all these people come from?” Sampson demanded. “A lot of them are friends of the members,” the Fellow Craft replied. “They brought their wives and kids and other friends.”

“Well, the hall certainly looks nice,” said the Past Master, looking around.

“A bunch of us got together and decided to paint the downstairs,” Johnny answered, then pointed. “Dave over there donated the paint. Don brought the rollers and the brushes. We all chipped in to save the Lodge a bit of money.”

At that moment, a well-dressed man in his early 20s, came up to the pair. The Fellow Craft spoke.

“Rob, this is Worshipful Brother Alec Sampson. He was Master of the Lodge in 1957. He’s been a Mason a very long time.”

“That’s great,” smiled the young man. “I’ve read a lot about Freemasonry and it’s the kind of thing I’d like to join. It believes in helping your fellow man and helping the world. And my grandfather was a Mason. He died when I was little but he was great to me and my sister and he used to bring over cookies that grandma baked for us. I think he was a member of this Lodge.”

“Oh?” Sampson’s left eyebrow went up. “Do you know his name?”

“Sure,” laughed the young man. “It’s Alan Wallace.”

Sampson stood stunned as if Santa himself had just bounded down the chimney.

“Alan Wallace was my sponsor into the Lodge,” Sampson said in a low voice. And his wife Emily used to bake things for our functions all the time.”

The young man brightened some more. “Do you want to see her? I brought her,” he asked.

“What? She’s still alive?” Sampson asked, astounded.

“She was when I left her by the punch bowl three minutes ago,” he chuckled. And with that, the young man maneuvered the old Past Master through the crowded room of revelers over to a little table where a small woman sat primly, wearing a light blue dress and a neat hat that wasn’t too out of style. She looked wide-eyed at her guest for a second or two, then stood up.

“Well, if it isn’t Worshipful Brother Grumpy!” she grinned. “Merry Christmas, Alec. How have you been?”

“I’m doing fine, Emily. I haven’t seen you for years.”

“The Lodge hasn’t had one of these for years,” the widow observed. The young members of the Lodge are really wonderful. They put together a list of all us old-timers and started calling. They offered to bring us to the party and even buy us a little gift. It’s very thoughtful. They want to do something for us on Valentine’s Day, too. Alan would be so proud of them.”

The old Past Master realized now he had not been paying attention to all the discussion during the Lodge meeting about the party. The gifts were for the widows. Not the members.

“I asked one of the young ones if you were coming, but I was told you’re always busy doing something. That’s retirement, isn’t it? You become busier than when you were working.”

Sampson offered a sheepish smile.

“All of us used to have such fun at these years ago. Stanley Phillips and Ted Barnham and John Lee. Ah, they’re all gone now. And Dick Moody. Everyone thought he was drunk but he had a trick leg with a mind of its own sometimes. Remember the Christmas Party his leg gave out and he landed right in the middle of the cake I baked? Alan and I never laughed so hard!”

The widow laughed heartily at the memory. “Well, I’m going to get some more punch. One of the wives of one of the new members brought it. See you in a bit!” And, with that, Emily Wallace spryly made her way into the crowd.

It was then Sampson realized that all the bad feelings he had built up about some of the things the younger



members had planned were for naught. They were keeping an eye on the Lodge's small funds. And they were following the principles of the fraternity by extending a hand of friendship and assistance to widows and senior brethren. And he had made some wrong assumptions about that Christmas Party so many years ago that caused him to stop coming. His thoughts were interrupted.

"So was it nice to see Mrs. Wallace again?" It was the new Fellow Craft.

"You know, Johnny," he started slowly, "you brothers have done such a wonderful job here. I really have to apologize to you. The Worshipful Master asked everyone to bring a gift and I didn't bring anything."

"But, it's like I said before, you did bring one. Mrs. Wallace told me the one thing that makes her sad is just about all the people she knew in the Lodge when her husband joined are dead. She doesn't know anyone any more. Except you.

"Worshipful Brother Sampson, you brought a gift no one else could bring. You brought the gift of yourself."

"Well, I had a little help doing that," he chuckled. "And because of that, I've been given a Christmas gift, too."

Somerset Community Groups Can Use The Freemasons' Free Mini-bus

Bristol Evening Post

IN these days, when some care homes receive bad press, I must stress this is not the case with Petersfield Care Home in Portishead.

My mother Joyce Clarke passed away peacefully there on the 4th September, and the care and compassion that was provided by all carers and staff, not only to my mother, but to all our family, who visited frequently, during this very private time, I would like to express our family's gratitude to all, at Petersfield.

During this time, my sister indicated to one of the carers, that we would like to give a gift of money to the home for some use by them, and was told that a fund for use by the residents existed from similar such gifts. It was during this conversation she learnt that they had planned a day out for some of the residents, however found the costs of transportation to be more than the fund allowed. My sister relayed this comment to me, and making further enquiries about their wishes, which was to take a group of the residents on a visit to Cheddar before the weather closed in.

After a couple of phone calls. I am pleased to say this trip took place last Thursday during a very sunny day, as being a Freemason I knew that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Somerset, ran a mini-bus under the "Freemasonry in the Community" programme for such use and was available completely free of charge.

I drove on this very enjoyable trip, taking in the sights of Cheddar, a Garden Centre lunch stop, and finally onto Wells Cathedral, returning home via the Mendips in time for their evening meal. I was proud, as a mason, that we provide such a service to communities throughout Somerset, but also to be able to drive the bus on this occasion, as a small way of showing my thanks. They have already requested, and I have reserved the bus for a second trip in December, for a visit to a pantomime, or just to view the Christmas lights, and maybe the Christmas Market at Bath.

Like care homes, Freemasons do not always get the good press deserved, nor do we look for it, but the bus is available for such use within communities, and further details can be obtained on line via. somerset.masonic.bus@gmail.com

It is available to Somerset lodges to be used for the benefit of their local community. Under-privileged groups such as children's homes, hospices, church groups, scouts, guides, youth groups and care homes can be offered day trips and some respite from their usual routines when limited finances cannot allow them to hire such a vehicle. It is NOT available to groups wishing to drive themselves and should always be driven by a lodge member who will be responsible for collection and delivery.

Brian Clarke,

Member of John de Clivedon Lodge, and Eldon Lodge



Christianity and Freemasonry

Where Angels Fear To Tread:

Posted on September 10, 2011 by rogereolson
At <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/>

One of my biggest culture shocks in moving to the South has been seeing all the enormous Masonic lodges and discovering that many, if not most, older Baptist (and other) men are members. Where I come from originally (upper midwest), evangelical Christianity (including the majority of Baptists) and Freemasonry don't mix. They're like oil and water. In fact, some denominations divided over whether members could be Freemasons; the conservatives considered the drift toward allowing it a sign of liberal theology or worse (nominal Christianity).

A friend of mine was in line to succeed the retiring Fire Chief in his town of about 100,000. Some city council members came to him and told him he would be Fire Chief if he joined the Masonic Lodge. It was against his evangelical convictions, so he never became the city's Fire Chief.

As I was growing up in the thick of evangelicalism (my uncle was on the national board of the National Association of Evangelicals) somehow I just knew one could not be both evangelical and a Mason. None of my relatives were Masons; nobody in our church or denomination was a Mason.

The reasons given when I asked (probably in my late teens when I became aware of Masons through my high school friends who were joining DeMolay—the boys' branch of Freemasonry) were that 1) Christians should not belong to secret societies and should devote their free time to the church and its mission rather than to an organization that is not specifically Christian, and 2) Freemasonry's deep background, if not present reality, is inconsistent with evangelical Christianity.

I didn't really think that much about it for quite a few years. After all, there were no Masons in the evangelical circles I moved in (even after becoming a Baptist while attending an evangelical Baptist seminary). The issue really first came to concern me when we made our first move to the South for me to pursue my Ph.D. at a major Southern secular research university. I became youth pastor and Christian education director at a Presbyterian church and discovered that most of the older men of the congregation were Masons and were inviting the boys of the youth group to join DeMolay by suggesting they would get college scholarships. They started attending DeMolay meetings INSTEAD of youth group meetings. It was a struggle to hold on to them for the youth group and church. I gradually realized that some of the men of the congregation were more invested in their Masonic relationships and activities than in the church.

One elder of the church invited me to lunch to discuss this problem. I had made a little noise about it—mostly just by asking questions such as “Why are our men drawing our boys away from church to Masonry?” And I asked some questions about Masonic beliefs and practices—most of which never received answers. The elder, who was a 32nd degree Mason, took me to lunch and said (direct quote seared into my mind): “If there is a conflict between Masonry and the Bible I'll go with Masonry any day.”

Curious, I decided to do some reading about the history, dogma and rituals of Masonry. Of course, that's not easy. So I looked for a book by a current (not former) Mason that would explain its basic beliefs. What I found was *The Meaning of Masonry* by W. L. Wilmshurst, a Grand Master over a group of Masonic Lodges in Great Britain. Wilmshurst was clearly NOT talking about his own branch of Masonry (whether York Rite or Scottish Rite or whatever); he was talking about the deep roots of Masonry in general. According to Wilmshurst, an acknowledged authority on Masonic history and beliefs, Masonry necessarily has an esoteric side. As he described it I recognized it as modern Gnosticism.

What am I saying? That all Masons are Gnostics? No. Of course not. But, if Wilmshurst (and many knowledgeable critics of Masonry) is right, even in the 20th century Freemasonry is rooted in a basically esoteric quasi-religious belief system that is incompatible with orthodox Christianity. Do most Masons know that? I don't know. But why would anyone join a group without knowing as much as possible about its history and beliefs—especially if that group requires an oath of secrecy and loyalty?

A few years ago an influential fundamentalist Southern Baptist “anti-cult” watcher led a crusade against Freemasonry especially among Southern Baptists and evangelical Christians in general. He produced a book



and a video attempting to expose Freemasonry as incompatible with Christianity. He and some of his friends brought a resolution to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention that, if passed, would have asked Southern Baptists to avoid membership in Masonic Lodges. It would probably also have made it unlikely that Southern Baptist churches allow Masonic ceremonies in them and at Southern Baptist led funerals. (Masonic members who die are given a special ritual by their Masonic brothers. One explanation I was given by a Mason is that they do not believe in the resurrection of the body but only in the immortality of the soul.)

The resolution was soundly defeated.

I came to the South again 12 years ago and right away noticed the presence of enormous Masonic Lodges in this relatively small city with over 100 Baptist churches. I discovered that many, if not most, older Baptist men have at one time or another been inducted into Masonry. I have been told that all but the most recent presidents of the university where I teach were Masons. I haven't asked, but I'm sure many of the older men in the congregation to which I belong are Masons. It's part of the fabric of Southern culture including Southern Baptist culture.

Now, let me make clear I am not "against Masonry." I know too little about it to be against it. Rather, I'm perplexed. First, I was raised to believe that the church is one's extended family, the family of God, and that one's energy should be devoted to its ministry and mission first and foremost. Second, I was raised to believe that membership in secret societies is not compatible with biblical Christianity. It would be like an early Christian belonging also to a mystery religion; it wasn't encouraged (to say the least). Third, I was raised to believe that Masonic Lodges were competitors with the churches even if many Masons also belonged to churches.

Whether all that is true, I'm not sure. But I continue to be perplexed about it. How many Masons know that the first modern Masonic Lodges grew out of Rosicrucianism (an esoteric sect on the fringes of Christianity)? How many know about the esoteric meanings of Masonic rituals? How many are aware that, historically, Freemasonry denies the resurrection of the body and emphasizes the immortality of the soul instead? Why would a Christian devote a hearty portion of his free time and energy to a secret society when that time and energy could be devoted to the work of Christ through the church?

These are questions I struggle with. I'd love to hear real answers that carry some authority and weight from a knowledgeable Mason. In the meantime I continue to suffer a bit of culture shock every time I drive by one of the several large Masonic Lodges in this region and realize that most of the members are probably Baptists.

All in the Family

By :Tim Bryce, PM, MPS HTU timb001@phmainstreet.com UTH Palm Harbor, Florida, USA "A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"

Have you ever gone to a family reunion? Typically, you find the patriarch and matriarch overseeing the activities, the middle age offspring actually doing all of the work, a lot of kids running around and getting into harmless trouble; then there's eccentric "Uncle Joe" and "Aunt Mildred" who live in their own world and bend your ear about the old days. The real nut cases, who we normally like to keep locked up in the closet, either stay away or make themselves presentable and are on their best behavior. Families represent a quirky blend of idiosyncrasies which, to the outsider, appears strange and a little like bedlam. But family members have all adapted to the environment and if you look beyond the madness there is actually a remarkable sense of harmony to the group, warts and all. I think this is because each member of the family is acutely aware of the strengths and weaknesses of everyone in the group and deals with them accordingly. And when push comes to shove, the members put their differences aside and do what is best for the family overall.

I tend to see a Masonic Lodge as a family. It has its share of characters and personalities and, No, not everyone gets along, but it is a family nonetheless, complete with a patriarch (the Worshipful Master), and "Uncle Joes" (Past Masters). The "offspring" are of course the Entered Apprentices and Fellow Craft with their unbridled enthusiasm. Like families, not all Lodges behave the same. Some are very combative and thrive on fighting. Occasionally one of the members gets battered and either the police are called (Grand Lodge) or the family member files for divorce and remarries (transfers to another Lodge). But the fact remains, we are all looking for that family where we can accept the mannerisms of the rest of the members and call home. The only real difference between a family and a Lodge is blood lines. As the old saying goes, "You can choose your friends, but you cannot choose your family."

The Great Architect Of The Universe

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Great Architect of the Universe (also Grand Architect of the Universe or Supreme Architect of the Universe) is a conception of God discussed by many Christian theologians and apologists. As a designation it is used within Freemasonry to neutrally represent whatever Supreme Being to which each member individually holds in adherence. It is also a Rosicrucian conception of God, as expressed by Max Heindel. The concept of the Demiurge as a grand architect or a great architect also occurs in gnosticism and other religious and philosophical systems.

"Now imagine me standing in lodge with my head bowed in prayer between Brother Mohammed Bokhary and Brother Arjun Melwani. To neither of them is the Great Architect of the Universe perceived as the Holy Trinity. To Brother Bokhary He has been revealed as Allah; to Brother Melwani He is probably perceived as Vishnu. Since I believe that there is only one God, I am confronted with three possibilities:

Christianity

The concept of God as the (Great) Architect of the Universe has been employed many times in Christianity. An illustration of God as the architect of the universe can be found in a Bible from the Middle Ages[1] and the comparison of God to an architect has been used by Christian apologists and teachers.

Saint Thomas Aquinas said in the Summa: "God, Who is the first principle of all things, may be compared to things created as the architect is to things designed (ut artifex ad artificiata)."[2] Commentators have pointed out that the assertion that the Grand Architect of the Universe is the Christian God "is not evident on the basis of 'natural theology' alone but requires an additional 'leap of faith' based on the revelation of the Bible".[3]

John Calvin, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536), repeatedly calls the Christian God "the Architect of the Universe", also referring to his works as "Architecture of the Universe", and in his commentary on Psalm 19 refers to the Christian God as the "Great Architect" or "Architect of the Universe".

Freemasonry

"Now imagine me standing in lodge with my head bowed in prayer between Brother Mohammed Bokhary and Brother Arjun Melwani. To neither of them is the Great Architect of the Universe perceived as the Holy Trinity. To Brother Bokhary He has been revealed as Allah; to Brother Melwani He is probably perceived as Vishnu. Since I believe that there is only one God, I am confronted with three possibilities:



"Now imagine me standing in lodge with my head bowed in prayer between Brother Mohammed Bokhary and Brother Arjun Melwani. To neither of them is the Great Architect of the Universe perceived as the Holy Trinity. To Brother Bokhary He has been revealed as Allah; to Brother Melwani He is probably perceived as Vishnu. Since I believe that there is only one God, I am confronted with three possibilities:

They are praying to the devil whilst I am praying to God;

They are praying to nothing, as their Gods do not exist;

They are praying to the same God as I, yet their understanding of His nature is partly incomplete (as indeed is mine — 1 Cor 13:12)

It is without hesitation that I accept the third possibility.

Hermeticism

The Great Architect may also be a metaphor alluding to the godhead potentiality of every individual. "(God)... That invisible power which all know does exist, but understood by many different names, such as God, Spirit, Supreme Being, Intelligence, Mind, Energy, Nature and so forth." In the Hermetic Tradition, each and every person has the potential to become God, this idea or concept of God is perceived as internal rather than external. The Great Architect is also an allusion to the observer created universe. We create our own reality; hence we are the architect. Another way would be to say that the mind is the builder.

Rosicrucianism

In Heindel's exposition, the Great Architect of the Universe is the Supreme Being, who proceeds from The Absolute, at the dawn of manifestation. For a detailed discussion, see The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception.

Gnosticism

The concept of the Great Architect of the Universe occurs in gnosticism. The Devil Demiurge is The Great Architect of the Universe, the God of Old Testament in opposition to Christ and Sophia messengers of Gnosis of the True God. Ebionites like Nasoræanism, for example, the Pira Rabba is the source, origin, and container of all things, which is filled by the Mânâ Rabbâ, the Great Spirit, from which emanates the First Life. The First Life prays for companionship and progeny, whereupon the Second Life, the Ultra Mkayyema or World-constituting Æon, the Architect of the Universe, comes into being. From this architect come a number of æons, who erect the universe under the foremanship of the Mandâ d'Hayye or gnôsis zoês, the Personified Knowledge of Life.

Others

James Hopwood Jeans, in his book *The Mysterious Universe*, also employs the concept of a Great Architect of the Universe, saying at one point "Lapsing back again into the crudely anthropomorphic language we have already used, we may say that we have already considered with disfavor the possibility of the universe having been planned by a biologist or an engineer; from the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician." To that Jinarajadasa adds his observation that the Great Architect is "also a Grand Geometrician. For in some manner or other, whether obvious or hidden, there seems to be a geometric basis to every object in the universe."

The concept of the Demiurge as a benevolent great architect or grand architect of matter occurs in the writings of Plato, including in the *Timæus*.

The concept of a Great Architect of the Universe also occurs in Martinism. Martinist doctrine is that the Great Architect must not be worshipped. Martinists hold that whilst it is possible to "invoke" Him, it is not to adore Him

Ed Baxter's Second Degree

Editor's Note; This old country boy from Texas still can't get used to the idea of openly naming an EA or FC.

From Lodge Devotion 723 - Collingwood, Australia

For Devotion at the Duke of Richmond –

Lodge Devotion was recently assisted by the Duke of Richmond lodge in passing Ed Baxter to the Second Degree.

Due to interstate work commitments, Ed was unable to attend his scheduled passing at Devotion. To ensure Ed's Masonic Progression was not delayed until 2012, our WM requested that a lodge be found and the degree "outsourced".

From Mt Waverley Masonic Center, the offer of fraternal assistance was quickly forthcoming and Ed was put on their notice paper and passed on the 4th Tuesday in October. The D.O.R. did a sterling job of the degree work and welcomed Devotion Members with warmth.

Many thanks to the WM WBro Ian Anderson and his team !



Fellowcraft Ed (left) with his proposer Damien Hudson, Devotions IPM

Masons Give US Flags To Six SMCISD Schools

Members of the San Marcos Masonic Lodge No. 342 met student delegates from six San Marcos CISD elementary schools to offer federal flags that had flown over the U.S. Capitol building.

Students from Bowie, Crockett, De Zavala, Hernandez, Mendez, and Travis Elementary schools received the flags during a Nov. 8 ceremony at Travis Elementary, where Assistant Principal Brooke Neal served as master of ceremonies. The Travis 5th Grade Honors Choir, under the direction of substitute choir director Viki Hicks, sang two patriotic tunes in honor of Veterans Day.

"The members of the San Marcos Lodge are grateful that we can make a gift of these flags to you as a sign of our commitment to public education in Texas," said Masonic Lodge member Dr. Robert Northcutt to the students.



BSA100 – Boy Scouts of America, 100 Years of Being Prepared.

Posted on September 12, 2010 by masonictraveler

Part III Of III – Organization

Having looked at the past 100 years of the Boy Scouts, it is important to spend some time on their organization so as to put into perspective how it operates and perhaps take a lesson for how a member centric organization functions with a national leadership while still retaining its local focus. The value of having a national organization is easy to see when you look beyond the titles and examine the work being performed in service to the organization. Rather than platitudes and titles, an engine of progress and motion is working behind the scenes to grow, nurture, and build the overall brand, something that Freemasonry does not have in a way comparable to that of the BSA.



An initial aspect of interest with the Boy Scouts as a body is that the national organization structure removes the diversity of individual states from practicing Scouting in their own manner and sets a national standard by which the entire body adheres to. Further it delegates down from the top to the increasingly more local organizations the management and practice down to the Troop level through committees and charter councils. At the lowest rungs the troop becomes, like the lodge, the local corporate unit, still broken into patrols which function within the troop. This seems to have allowed for the troops to retain a diversity of its local community from which the members reside.

An interesting aspect of juxtapose is to look at the Scout Troop to a system, more familiar to readers, of the Masonic lodge. Troops are made up of members from the local community, staffed by their parents and guardians, and chartered by an organization (church, civic group, business, etc) to operate. The group meets in weekly meetings for the purpose of training, planning, rank progression, with a variety of activities taking place at any given time. The meeting has leadership that directs it (similar to a Worshipful Master) with junior officers (like the Wardens) who assist where and when necessary. The meetings have a distinct purpose however, and like a corporate business meeting, it breaks out into teams to accomplish its various tasks, something unlike a Masonic Lodge meeting.

Scouting Stamp

The U.S. Postal Service recognized the Boy Scouts of America on July 27, 2010 at the National Jamboree with the release of the Scouting stamp, recognizing 100 years of Scouting in America.



To appreciate the local operation, we should look at how the Scouts operate from a national level that makes its way to the troops.

First Masonry, as most readers will know, is based on a lodge system with each local lodge reporting loosely to a regional management (or District Inspector) but directly through its charter reports to a state level governance, called the Grand Lodge. In North American Masonry, the reporting structure stops there as directives, edicts, publications, and announcements come from it. The Grand Lodge also functions as the state point of contact for marketing, brand protection, and broader national communication. In a direct line, the individual Mason reports to a lodge, and the lodge to a Grand Lodge. In this line of succession there is some blurred lines of responsibility as to public interaction and marketing go (if any exist at all), and practice is set by the Grand Lodge based loosely on its custom which varies in nuance from state to state in dress, recognition between bodies, landmarks of the institution, and custom. At a high level lodges have similar practice, but custom and dress has a great degree of variance from local lodges between states, because of a lack of standardization. Observational, this has created silo's of Freemasonry rather than a unified national body as with the Boy Scouts. Perhaps in its founding this was an organizational hazard and part of its planned incorporation to cultivate a unified message and purpose.

Structurally, the Boy Scout's are localized at every level so as to meet the needs of its constituency. Diagrammatically, the troop reports to a unit committee, which reports to the Chartered Organization which then reports to a District, and then a Local Council. The Local council in return reports up to an Area Committee, which then report to a Regional who in turn reports to a National Council.

By reporting level this looks like:

National Council, BSA

This level is the overall leadership in the Executive Board and sets the general direction of the of the work of the Scouts. This Board is entirely volunteer except for the National Commissioner, International Commissioner, and the Chief Scout Executive. The Council develops programs; sets and maintains quality standards in training, leadership selection, uniforming, registration records, literature development, and advancement requirements. It does not directly administer to the troops, packs, venturing crews, etc, rather it delegates downward.

Regional Council (Committee and Board)

The country is broken into Regions for better management and governed by a Regional Committee and Council. The Council exercises the authority and responsibility of the Regional Committee whenever the Regional Committee is not in session but both function to implement national BSA policy and programs. Additionally it plans events and activities for its specific region and to train members of the various standing committees. All members at this level are also volunteers.

The Regional Board conducts the affairs of Scouting in the region on a day to day basis in conformity with regional committee and board policy

Area Council

Regions are further broken into areas where the Area council functions similarly to the Regional in setting, managing, and implementing local activities.

Local Council

Local councils are usually not-for-profit private corporations registered within the State in which they are headquartered, they administer any program they wish in the BSA portfolio through an annually issued charter to administer the BSA programs in their area. To hold the charter the Council adheres to certain program, financial and accounting standards. Local councils are privately funded and are not financially linked to the National Council or local units. Funding comes from donations, corporate sponsors, and special events. The local council is led by volunteers, with administration performed by a staff of professional Scouters. The Council President is the top volunteer; the Scout Executive is the top professional. In many ways this appears as essentially a franchise from the national body.

Local Councils promote the Scouting programs, register units and personnel, provide facilities and leadership for year-round outdoor programs and summer camps, and insure the general principals of scouting are adhered to. Additionally they insure the integrity of the merit badge system, ensures badges-and insignia are protected, and provide training to the Local Units and community groups using the Scouting program. Most importantly the Local Council sets the standards in Scout policies (locally).

Local Councils report to Regional Councils on finances, scouting membership, numbers of scouts attending camps and on their review of charter renewal applications for the Troops and Packs.

District

The District is an optional add-on to mobilize resources in the growth and success of Scouting units in the area. Traditionally they are composed of volunteers, and provide training, and programs for Scouts.

Chartered Organization

This is the sponsoring body that owns and runs a particular Scout Troop (granted as a franchise of sorts) to operate a Boy Scout unit. Typically the chartered organization has goals similar to the Scouting organization such as a school, church, civic organization, business, etc. The chartering organization provides a meeting place for the Scouts, selects a Scoutmaster, approves unit leadership and provides a representative to liaise with the Troop.

Unit committee

The Unit committee is three composed of three or more qualified adults selected by the chartered organization who's responsibility is to deliver quality unit programs, manage unit administration, and utilizes programs to accomplish the Troops goals and development.

Individual Unit – Troop

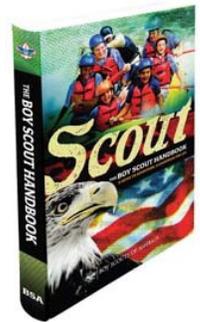
The Unit is composed of the Scouts themselves, which are broken into patrols which have their own structure of operation including Scribes, Quartermasters, Librarians, Chaplin, Guides, Historians, Assistant Patrol Leaders, and instructors, as well as many others. This is the essential functioning component of the Scouts and the most fundamental expression of the Boy Scouts purpose.

At the Troop level, then, is the foundation of the Scouts life, like the Lodge for the Mason. The Troop is a fluid body of new and returning members which functions to facilitate the Scout experience. Meetings consist of training on the basis of First aid to the types of lashings to affix two or more poles together. A function of the Scout meeting is the individual progress of the Scouts. Unlike Masonry, the Boy Scouts have a variety of testable points by which the candidate progresses. These points, spread between merit badges, knot tying, projects, teaching, and memorization. These processes serve to bring the Scout into a tight relationship with the corporate body, progressing through a series of ranks demarcated with each subsequent achievement. Its in these progressions that a highly valuable lesson is taught to the member, lessons retained for the rest of their life. For example the Scout learns the fundamentals of first aid, how to tie a knot to secure materials in place, conservation, leadership, and even how to plan a complex and multi thousand dollar project. All of this takes place weekly at the recurring troop meeting.

Adapted from the U.S. Scout Service Project.

As you can see, the organization is deep in that there is a tremendous infrastructure to protect its purpose and product. One of the most notable elements in recent history is the close and careful cultivation of the Boy Scout Brand which is one of its strongest corporate properties and essentially the product itself which is licensed or franchised to the Chartering body.

This level of brand development/protection is outside the capacity of Masonry at present and likely the cause of its



slip in public awareness (especially when contrasted in the work of the Shrine which has a highly cultivated presence and brand). The model of the Scouts organization is something that Masonry can take a lesson from in several ways. First to disassociate the idea of the Lodge as the focal point for the group activity which allows the attention instead to be focused on activities, projects, and community engagement rather than utility bills and infrastructure management. The importance of the body of work performed outshines the landed importance on the place in which the work takes place. This is not to suggest a franchising, but the experimentation of an un-landed lodge (like a traveling lodge) that can focus on its community involvement by literally being in the community.

Also, having a National Organization, unlike the Masonic Grand Lodge system, allows for a specific set of standardized processes that can be made universal so that each operating lodge has a basis of operation integrity especially when coupled with a leadership structure which allows the adoption of locally flavored practice and preferences with permutations built into the foundational rules local users. In essence, the infrastructure allows for the BSA Troops to operate without worry as to what they are in operation of, they have a National Standard of material and an activity chain of National command supporting and growing the organization. We can see this in the basic principal of the Boy Scout Handbook where essentially the codex of Scouting resides.

Responsibility still ultimately falls on the local body, but with an arsenal of tools, training, a strong stable brand, and a national level of marketing the work of the local can more specifically focus on the work of building Boy Scouts.

In conceiving the organization, it's easy to say that it is a complex model of operation. Boy Scout Troops are thriving across the country (and world) and continue to offer programs for young people. A Wikipedia article on recent Boy Scout Controversies places numbers just over 2.7 million members (in all Scouting groups) as of 2009, with a similar downward trend that Freemasonry is experiencing (roughly a 22% average per decade loss).

Without a doubt there are many lessons to take away from the Boy Scouts, from their history, their operation, and their organization. Unlike most century old institutions, looking at what has taken shape in the last 100 years to coalesce into what it is today, an outsider can be encouraged to imagine what the Boy Scouts of America will become in its next century. Strong leadership from early visionaries and a strong organizational foundation has allowed for the progression of a clear vision of purpose to promote "patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred values", all of which the Boy Scouts have cultivated. They are truly an American institution and an asset to the spirit of young people everywhere. Being Prepared is every bit the noble endeavor it seems and on so many levels the very basis of shaping young men for the ideal of civic engagement to become good men.

All in all, the Boy Scouts have had a stellar century and this centennial celebration is a milestone in American culture and a monumental achievement for American youth, to which the only thing to say is congratulations on a terrific organization. It is absolutely one that Freemasonry should take note from in both its operation and its outlook. The Scouts sprang up in the minds of those who saw the need for action in the face of a rapidly changing nation, foreshadowing the national call to instill values in children, and it still blazes a trail to educate, motivate, and activate the imagination and active civic expression in fast maturing boys. Despite recent controversies, the Boy Scouts is still a member run organization operating in a manner to uphold its principals which perhaps puts it at odds with the present day zeitgeist of multiple perspectives and ever shifting outlooks. But, just as it adapted to a changing world in 1910, so too have the Scouts emerged to embrace the 21st century at its 2010 centennial.

If you want to support your local Scouting body, I encourage you to visit the Boy Scouts of America web site. Or, with your donation, help support scouting through their fund raising which supports their camps, equipment, and uniforms.

Or, if you have a young man looking to improve himself, I recommend joining the Scouts today.



A man walked into the produce section of his local supermarket and asked to buy a half head of lettuce.

The boy working in that department told him that they only sold whole heads of lettuce. The man was insistent that the boy ask his manager about the matter.

Walking into the back room, the boy said to the manager, "Some moron wants to buy a half head of lettuce."

As he finished his sentence, he turned to find the man standing right behind him, so he added, "And this gentleman kindly offered to buy the other half."

The manager approved the deal and the man went on his way.

Later the manager said to the boy, "I was impressed with the way you got yourself out of that situation earlier. We like people who think on their feet here. Where are you from, son?"

Texas sir," the boy replied.

"Well, why did you leave Texas?" the manager asked. The boy said, "Sir, there's nothing but hookers and football players there."

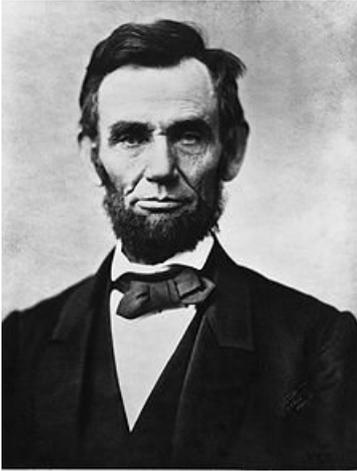
Really?" said the manager "My wife is from Texas."

"Get outta here!" the boy said. "Who'd she play for?"

Abe Lincoln's Axe

By Jim Tresner

From The Oklahoma Mason April-May, 1995



The story is told of a historian, recording folk history in Illinois in the 1970's. Several people in the countryside had told him of a farm family which possessed the axe Abraham Lincoln had used when splitting logs for a living as a young man.

The historian finally found the farm, and found the farmer in the yard splitting wood for the living room fireplace. He asked him about the story.

"Yes," said the farmer, "it's true. Abe Lincoln lived around here as a young man, and he worked for a while splitting wood for my great-great-grandfather. Happened he'd bought a new axe from a peddler the day before Abe Lincoln came to work here, and he gave it to Lincoln to use. We've kept it ever since."

"That's a real historical treasure," said the historian. "It really ought to be in a museum. Would you mind going into the house and bringing it out so I could see it?"

"Oh we know it's important," said the farmer. "I take it to the school from time to time and tell the kids about it and Lincoln. Seems to sorta make him real for them. But I don't have to go into the house, I've got it here."

He handed the horrified historian the axe he had been using.

"You mean you're still USING it?!"

"Sure thing. An axe is meant to be used."

The historian looked it over carefully. "I must say your family has certainly taken good care of it."

"Sure, we know we're protecting history. Why we've replaced the handle twice and the head once."

In many ways, Masonry is like Abe Lincoln's axe. All of us tend to assume that Masonry has always been the way it was when we joined. And we become fiercely protective of it in that form. But, in fact, we've done more than replace the handle twice and the head once.

For example, the Eulogy to Mother was added to the stairway lecture in Oklahoma sometime between 1924 and 1930. Almost no other state uses it.

When Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory merged to form the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma, major changes in the ritual (both esoteric and exoteric) were made for at least 6 years as the two rituals were combined.

When Brothers George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Paul Revere (and the other Masons of their era and for decades to come) joined the Fraternity, they did not demonstrate proficiency by memorizing categorical lectures. Instead, the same evening they received a degree they sat around a table with the other Brethren of the Lodge. The Brethren asked each other questions and answered them for the instruction of the new Brother. They asked him questions, and helped him with the answers. The discussion continued until they were confident that he understood the lessons of the Degree. They then taught him the signs and tokens, and he was proficient. In many cases, he took the next Degree the next night. The system of demonstrating proficiency by memorizing categorical lectures is less than about twice as old as the average Mason in Oklahoma--not too long a span in the 1,000 year history of the Fraternity.



The custom of allowing 28 days to pass between Degrees came about for no other reason than the fact that most lodges only met every 28 days, on the nights of the full moon. There was no mystery behind that. Very few horses come equipped with head-lights, and only on nights of a full moon could people see well enough to leave their homes in the country and come into town for a meeting safely. The names of the 3 ruffians have changed at least 3 times since the Master Mason Degree was created around 1727.

More importantly, the nature and purpose of the Fraternity has changed radically over time. It certain-

ly is no longer a protective trade association, nor a political force amounting almost to a political party, but it has been those over its long history.

So yes, Masonry changes. It changes fairly frequently and sometimes dramatically. Far from being a bastion of conservative resistance to change, through most of its history it has been a major change agent--fostering revolutions in political life (the American revolution, for example) and social life. It created the tax-supported public school system. It created homes for the elderly and orphanages, and then worked for the sort of social legislation to make those wide-spread. It sought economic development for states and communities. Until the late 1940's and 50's, it was one of the most potent forces for change in America.

And Masonry is like Abe Lincoln's axe in another way. For, although the handle and head had been replaced, that axe was still the one used by Abe Lincoln in truth if not in fact. The farmer used it to teach. He told children about it and about Abe Lincoln. He helped make the past real to them, so that they could learn the great values of honesty and hard work which Lincoln typified.

It's the same with Masonry. In spite of the many changes which have already happened and the changes which are bound to happen in the future--for Masonry, like any living thing, must change and grow or die--it is still the same. It's essence—the lessons it teaches, the difference it makes in the lives of men, that great moment of transformation which is the goal of Masonry, when a man becomes something new and better than he was when he came in the door as a candidate--that essence cannot and will not be lost, as long as Brothers meet in the true Masonic spirit, to work and learn and study and improve themselves and the world.

That's Masonry. And like Abe Lincoln's axe, it was meant to be used, not to rust away in a museum case. That use keeps it bright and sharp and Masonic, no matter how often the handle and head need to be replaced.

A New Beginning: Holloway Lodge No. 7

From The Texas Prince Hall Freemason - Winter 2011

Story and Photos by: W.M. Charles Lilley

DOWNSVILLE, Texas – In a small town on the outskirts of Waco, a place where hay fields and dairy cows dominate the landscape is where you'll find Downsville. A place named after landowner Williams Woods Downs, who used slaves to work the land during the 1850's.

On one of the town's major streets, 3rd Street, stands a small weather-worn building with its missing windows and doors; its landscape consisting of poison ivy vines and trees, which obscure its appearance. People would pass it by if they didn't know what to look for.

The building has stood as a testament to the Masonic work of former slaves, sharecroppers, business owners, clergy and many others since or before 1928. Grand Master J.W. McKinney issued its inhabitants a Charter some 110 years ago. There is no doubt that this Lodge played an important role in the establishment of Prince Hall Masonry in the Waco and the surrounding area.



This year Grand Master Wilbert M. Curtis placed on the trestle board a plan to bring Holloway Lodge No. 7 back to its rightful place as a productive Masonic entity. Under his instructions, District Deputy Grand Master Rufus Phelps III selected volunteers from Lodges throughout District 14 to assist Holloway Lodge No. 7 with —A New Beginning. Leading by example, D.D.G.M. Phelps, along with Brothers Derek McCullough, Lorenzo Taylor, Brandon Edwards, Jarrett Haynes, Bernables Quinones, Past Master Christopher Riley and I demitted from our Lodges and became members of Holloway Lodge No. 7, joining P.M. Floyd Norwood, Brothers Willie James Smiley, Edward Hodges and Bennie Hargrove who all were already faithful members. This starts —A New Beginning for a Lodge that although weather beaten and worn still stands as a place that promotes the cause of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

LAUS DEO

Submitted By Brother Mike Thomas

Do you know what it means?

One detail that is never mentioned is that in Washington D.C. is there can never be a building of greater height than the Washington Monument.

With all the uproar about removing the ten commandments, etc., this is worth a moment or two of your time.. I was not aware of this amazing historical information.

On the aluminum cap, atop the Washington Monument in Washington , D.C. , are displayed two words:

Laus Deo.

No one can see these words. In fact, most visitors to the monument are totally unaware they are even there and for that matter, probably couldn't care less.

Once you know Laus Deo 's history , you will want to share this with everyone you know. These words have been there for many years; they are 555 feet, 5.125 inches high, perched atop the monument, facing skyward to the Father of our nation, overlooking the 69 square miles which comprise the District of Columbia, capital of the United States of America.

Laus Deo ! Two seemingly insignificant, unnoticed words. Out of sight and, one might think, out of mind, but very meaningfully placed at the highest point over what is the most powerful city in the most successful nation in the world.

So, what do those two words, in Latin, composed of just four syllables and only seven letters, possibly mean? Very simply, they say 'Praise be to God!'

Though construction of this giant obelisk began in 1848, when James Polk was President of the United States , it was not until 1888 that the monument was inaugurated and opened to the public. It took twenty-five years to finally cap the memorial with a tribute to the Father of our nation,

Laus Deo

'Praise be to God!'

From atop this magnificent granite and marble structure, visitors may take in the beautiful panoramic view of the city with its division into four major segments. From that vantage point, one can also easily see the original plan of the designer, Pierre Charles l'Enfant a perfect cross imposed upon the landscape, with the White House to the north. The Jefferson Memorial is to the south, the Capitol to the east and the Lincoln Memorial to the west.

A cross you ask? Why a cross? What about separation of church and state? Yes, a cross; separation of church and state was not, is not, in the Constitution. So, read on. How interesting and, no doubt, intended to carry a profound meaning for those who bother to notice.

When the cornerstone of the Washington Monument was laid on July 4th, 1848 deposited within it were many items including the Holy Bible presented by the Bible Society. Praise be to God! Such was the discipline, the moral direction, and the spiritual mood given by the founder and first President of our unique democracy 'One Nation, Under God.'

I am awed by George Washington 's prayer for America Have you ever read it? Well, now is your unique opportunity, so read on!

“Almighty God; We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”



Who Was Kilroy?

(Editors Note; OK, it isn't about Masonry, but it is for old Masons.)

Submitted By Mike Thomas

For the WWII generation, this will bring back memories. For you younger folks, it's a bit of trivia that is a part of our American history. Anyone born in the teens, twenties, and mid-thirties, is familiar with Kilroy. We didn't know why, but we had lapel pins with his nose hanging over the label and the top of his face above his nose with his hands hanging over the label. No one knew why he was so well known, but we all joined in!

So who the heck was Kilroy?

In 1946 the American Transit Association, through its radio program, "Speak to America," sponsored a nationwide contest to find the real Kilroy, offering a prize of a real trolley car to the person who could prove himself to be the genuine article. Almost 40 men stepped forward to make that claim, but only James Kilroy from Halifax, Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.

Kilroy was a 46-year old shipyard worker during the war who worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to go around and check on the number of rivets completed. Riveters were on piecework and got paid by the rivet. He would count a block of rivets and put a check mark in semi-waxed lumber chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When Kilroy went off duty, the riveters would erase the mark. Later on, an off-shift inspector would come through and count the rivets a second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters.

One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about all the wages being paid to riveters, and asked him to investigate. It was then he realized what had been going on. The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can and brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the waxy chalk. He continued to put his checkmark on each job he inspected, but added KILROY WAS HERE in king-sized letters next to the check, and eventually added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence and that became part of the Kilroy message.

Once he did that, the riveters stopped trying to wipe away his marks.

Ordinarily the rivets and chalk marks would have been covered up with paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy Yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them. As a result, Kilroy's inspection "trademark" was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced.

His message apparently rang a bell with the servicemen, because they picked it up and spread it all over Europe and the South Pacific. Before war's end, "Kilroy" had been here, there, and everywhere on the long hauls to Berlin and Tokyo.

To the troops outbound in those ships, however, he was a complete mystery; all they knew for sure was that someone named Kilroy had "been there first." As a joke, U.S. servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived.

Kilroy became the U.S. super-GI who had always "already been" wherever GIs went. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable (it is said to be atop Mt. Everest, the Statue of Liberty, the underside of l'Arc De Triomphe, and even scrawled in the dust on the moon).

As the war went on, the legend grew. Underwater demolition teams routinely sneaked ashore on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to map the terrain for coming invasions by U.S. troops (and thus, presumably, were the first GIs there). On one occasion, however, they reported seeing enemy troops painting over the Kilroy logo!

In 1945, an outhouse was built for the exclusive use of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at the Potsdam conference. Its' first occupant was Stalin, who emerged and asked his aide (in Russian), "Who is Kilroy?"

To help prove his authenticity in 1946, James Kilroy brought along officials from the shipyard and some of the riveters. He won the trolley car, which he gave to his nine children as a Christmas gift and set it up as a playhouse in the Kilroy front yard in Halifax, Massachusetts.

So, now you know!



When Father Rode The Goat

From the book, "The Lodge Goat. Goat Rides, Butts and Goat Hairs" (1902)

The house is full of arnica,
And mystery profound
We dare not to run about
Or make the slightest sound;

We leave the big piano shut
And do not strike a note;
The doctor's been here seven times
Since father rode the goat.

He joined the Lodge a week ago-
Got in at four A. M.,
And sixteen brethren brought him home,
Though he says he brought them.

His wrist was sprained and one big rip
Had rent his Sunday coat-
There must have been a lively time
When father rode the goat.

He's resting on the couch to-day
And practicing his signs -
The hailing sign, working grip,
And other monkey shines,

He mutters passwords 'neath his breath,
And other things he'll quote*
They surely" had an evening's work
When father rode the goat-

He has a gorgeous uniform,
All gold and red and blue,
A hat with plumes and yellow braid,
And golden badges, too.

A sword of finest tempered steel;
Hilt set with precious stones.
He says this paraphernalia
All came from Pettibone's.

This goat he leads what "Teddy" calls,
A very strenuous life.
Makes trouble for such candidates
As tackle him in strife.

But somehow, when he mention it,
Pa wears a look so grim,
We wonder if he rode the goat
Or if the goat rode him"



Latest Freemason Conspiracy: Recruiting Younger Bros

Ancient Order Resorts to Facebook, Coed Paintball and Ghost Stories

By BARRY NEWMAN

ST. PAUL, Minn.—No self-respecting secret society can get by without a Facebook fan page anymore.

That's transparently true of the Freemasons, renowned for their medieval blood oaths, their often-alleged plot to create a New World Order, their locked-door conclaves of U.S. presidents and power brokers and their boring pancake breakfasts.

A menagerie of 19th-century civic and social brotherhoods, and their attendant sisterhoods, lives on around the globe: the Elks, the Moose, the Lions, the Odd Fellows. Freemasonry is the oldest of all, still the biggest, and—in the public mind—about as penetrable as the mythic crypt beneath the ninth vault of Solomon's Temple.

Secrecy gives Masonry its mystique. Yet the Masons have lately realized that they'd be lost in oblivion if it weren't for the Web.

"I looked for pictures," Matt Gallagher was saying of his Internet search for a Masonic lodge worth joining. "I really wanted to avoid a bunch of 80-year-olds."

It was Thursday evening, almost time for fellowship night at the "very young" lodge he finally did join: Braden No. 168, housed on a shady street in a columned temple the Masons built in 1910.

Mr. Gallagher is 32 years old and between jobs. He was initiated by Braden in 2009, rose to Master Mason and now is lodge education officer.

It's a post that didn't exist for 290 years after Masonry came out of its historical shadows, in 1717, as a London club for enlightened gentlemen. Mr. Gallagher's Masonic tag, if his digital function had one, might be Worshipful Webmaster.

"I started a blog, Facebook, Flickr," he said, descending a narrow stairway to a faded meeting room with its old pool tables and portrait of brother George Washington. "I want video essays on our site," he added. "People need to know what they're getting into."

Once, a petitioner for Masonic membership didn't know what he was getting into until he had a hood over his head, a rope around his neck and was swearing never to reveal the secret handshake. The handshake is still secret, but now there are so many hints and giveaways about Masonry's hocus-pocus on the Web, television and in the movies that lodges tell petitioners not to peek or they'll spoil the fun.

The order's main manual used to be "Duncan's Ritual," published in 1866. Today it's "Freemasons for Dummies" by Christopher Hodapp, published in 2005. "We've got an explosion of openness," said Mr. Hodapp. "And it started—face it—in a panic over membership."

A generation of joiners, home from war, boosted Masonic rolls in America to four million by 1959.

But in the 1960s, hippies were turned off by establishment mysticism.

When the sons of hippies asked about Masonry's secrets, their boomer dads didn't have a clue. By the mid-2000s, fewer than two million members remained.

Faced with a choice between going extinct and going public, the Masons went public. The order has no central authority, but Grand Lodges in several states put up billboards, ran TV commercials and staged mass rituals, initiating hundreds of men at a time.

Mr. Hodapp calls all that "a travesty." Many initiates never showed up. Many that did, he wrote in an internal paper, found "a desperate group of aging members" and "endless meetings about bill-paying, bad food, and who is going to iron the degree uniforms."

But some of those young apprentices stayed on. Though total membership is down to 1.4 million, losses to death and dullness have eased to 30,000 a year from 80,000. The hook may have less to do with Masonry itself than with pop culture's fascination with it.

Masonic myths often play the lead on the History Channel, in movies like "National Treasure" and in Dan Brown's best sellers, especially his Masonry-laced 2009 novel "The Lost Symbol."

"That book—it was a real catalyst for us," Reed Endersbe said one day at his red-stone temple in Minneapolis. He is 40, program director at a rock station and master of Lodge No. 19, where "a lot of us like that bond



Reed Endersbe and Zulu at a Minneapolis officer installation last year.

with the movers and shakers of the globe."

His lodge has 60 active members, 300 in all, and is adding more, most between 21 and 35. Nobody invites them; they just hit the Web site's "contact us" button. Each pays \$450 for a ceremonial degree (tux required), dues of \$300 a year, plus extra for coed paintball fights, cigar-rolling shows and Scotch tastings.

"The sacred order of the Scotch knights," cracked No. 19's 26-year-old senior warden, Adam Martin, as he and some brothers walked to a pizza place down the street. Mr. Endersbe pushed up a sleeve to exhibit his own devotion to Scotch knights: a Templar Cross tattoo.

The warrior monks of the Knights Templar probably didn't hide as stoneworkers after the pope excommunicated them in 1307; Mr. Endersbe has fun thinking they did.

Then again, his lodge does get petitions from "head cases," as he puts it, eager to enlist in the Masonic-Satanic conspiracy that's so well detailed now on the Web.

"They usually take out a \$1 bill," he says, "and connect the letters in the all-seeing eye to spell 'A Mason.'"

Conspiracists will argue that only the inner-inner circles know what the order is truly up to. But when Matt Gallagher joined Braden Lodge, over in St. Paul, he did it for three reasons:

"I wanted to become a better person, I like retro stuff, and I'm a big believer in guys hanging out and talking with other guys."

Down in Braden's meeting room on fellowship night, a dozen guys had pushed three tables together and were passing a coffee pot. Seven were under 36. They were trying something new: a philosophical discourse. The theme was, "Where do morals come from?"

"If your best friend commits treason, do you turn him in?" someone asked. A discussion followed. Someone else asked: "If Hitler walks in front of your car, do you hit the gas?" More discussion.

Brian Silverain, a laid-off teacher with a tie-dye shop, asked Mr. Gallagher at one point: "Do you like who you are?" Mr. Gallagher replied: "I don't know who I am, and I don't like that."

Cellphones started to ring after two hours—wives wondering where husbands were. "Well, I guess we kicked that morality dog around enough," said Harvie Holmes, who is 52 and sells insurance.

The crowd thinned. After midnight, talk turned to ghosts, then moved on to lutefisk recipes. Potato chips were retrieved from the kitchen. At 1:15, three of the guys were still left in the temple of their ancient and mystic order, still hanging out, still talking.

The Junior Texas Rangers

Sign them up to be a Junior Texas Ranger

Available through the Former Texas Rangers Foundation, membership is open to all kids under the age of 16. Help us build the new Texas Rangers Heritage Center in Fredericksburg, which will contain a permanent display about the relationship between Texas Masons and the Texas Rangers!



For a one-time membership fee of \$10, your Junior Ranger gets his very own Junior Texas Rangers Badge and membership certificate.

Go to <http://www.formertexasrangers.org/juniorform.html> for your application for Membership in the Junior Texas Rangers for Buckaroos 16 years and younger

Membership Fee Only \$10.00

Masonic Musings From Hong Kong

(W. Bro Commodore Shridharan Shekhar)
(PM 2004 – 5 Lodge Srinivasagopala No 190)

I have just returned from a short sojourn in Hong Kong.

While much is known about this city state, its British heritage and status as a ‘Crown colony’, and its return to the People’s Republic of China, after the end of a ninety nine year “lease agreement”, I was totally ignorant of the fact that Freemasonry is fairly widely practiced in Honk Kong.

It was therefore with great alacrity that I accepted an invitation from the “Custodian” of Zetland Hall, which is described as the ‘magnificent home of Hong Kong’s Freemasons’ to participate in a regular meeting of Lodge Cosmopolitan No 428 on the roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. During the course of my interaction I was pleasantly surprised by the connections between Freemasonry in China, the seafaring community at large and the Imperial Chinese Navy in particular!

Zetland Hall, named after the 2nd Marquis of Zetland, Grand Master of the English Freemasons in the mid 19th century, is owned by the Freemasons of Hong Kong and administered by a board of 24 trustees, one from each of the Craft Lodges in Hong Kong. This superb building was built in 1865, destroyed by military action in 1945 and rebuilt in 1950. Administration of the facility is carried out by a full time General Manager, who incidentally is currently of Indian origin, an Operations Manager, an Executive Chef and 10 other full time staff.



The central places of activity of Zetland Hall are the ‘Red’ and ‘Blue’ rooms where Masonic rituals and meetings are conducted. Both these rooms are tastefully appointed in true Masonic tradition including a superb lighting system lending itself to adjustments for third degree working, featuring a spectacularly lit full sky light.



Zetland Hall also features a Museum containing many items of Masonic interest,

a library with over 1000 books on Freemasonry and related topics, two committee rooms, a banqueting hall for over 150 people with a superb dance floor, a fully licensed bar, changing room with showers etc, and an outlet for the purchase of Masonic regalia of all kinds. The complete premises are air conditioned.

The attached restaurant, which is open to non Masons as well, offers an excellent menu of Chinese, European and Asian specialities both at lunch times and in the evenings.

Freemasonry is believed to have come first to the East through the rapidly expanding sea borne empires of Britain and France, which had large numbers of masons amongst their administrators and in their armies. However, it was with a ship of the Swedish East India Company that Freemasonry first reached China.

The Masons on board had a document giving them permissions to hold meetings whenever they entered a port, and they did so in Guangzhou (Canton) in late 1759. A few years later a permanent English Lodge was started there.

As China began to open up to foreigners, Lodges were formed in Shanghai, Ningbo and Tienjin, and eventually in most parts of China, especially in the inland cities of Nanjing, Beijing, Harbin and Chengdu. These Lodges operated under charters granted in many countries, with most being from England, Scotland, Massachusetts and later the Philippines.

Because of restrictions imposed by the Imperial Government, it was almost impossible for a Chinese to become a Freemason during the Qing dynasty, although in 1873, the leader of a Chinese educational mission in Massachusetts did so, as did others in France and Australia. The first known Chinese to become a Mason in China was a Lieutenant in the Imperial Chinese Navy, who was initiated into an English Lodge in Guangzhou in 1889. However, by the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war, many Lodges in China had a majority of Chinese members, especially those meeting under the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

Two lodges were established in Hong Kong soon after the British acquired the Territory. The older one was the Royal Sussex Lodge named after the Duke of Sussex, who was then the Grand Master in London. This Lodge later moved to Guangzhou, and then on to Shanghai, but returned to Hong Kong in 1952. The se-

cond Lodge, Zetland Lodge named after the Marquis of Zetland, however claims seniority as it has remained in Hong Kong since its formation.

During the Second World War, thanks to the strong affiliation between the Nazis and the Japanese, the latter persecuted Freemasons in the occupied areas of China. Lodges however continued to meet. Several of the Hong Kong Lodges met informally and under very dangerous conditions in Prisoner of War camps. One meeting in Stanley Prison, even maintained a Minutes Book.

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China, though all Lodges continued to meet, those which met in the American Masonic Temple in Shanghai, including the Grand Lodge of China closed down in 1952. The English District Grand Master of Northern China offered to close down the Lodge if a request to that effect was received from the Central People's Government, affirming that regular Freemasons always gave obedience to the lawful government of whichever country they were in. No such request was received, and British Lodges meeting at the Masonic Hall in Beijing Road West in Shanghai continued to meet without difficulty. The last Lodge meeting there was in 1962, when it transferred to Hong Kong, not because of any conflict with the authorities but since a majority of its members had by then left China.



The Zetland Hall Dining Hall

The meeting on Thursday 18 August 2011 at Zetland Hall, was a "Research Lodge" – not unlike our "Lodge of Instruction" - conducted by Lodge Cosmopolitan No 428 on the roll of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. While I was the only visitor from India, others represented Lodges from Germany, Australia and British Columbia. The Worshipful Junior Warden, confirmed my credentials in an ante chamber, in true Masonic manner, by asking me to advance in all three degrees, and having been proved, was temporarily provided with a Master's Apron of the English Constitution.

The Lodge was opened and remained in the First degree. Brother Paul Whitmore, the Chaplain of the Lodge presented a paper entitled "Operative to Speculative masonry.... and back" supported by a very informative Power Point presentation. Brother Whitmore traced the beginnings of the Masonic movement and traced its evolution to the present days, and explained the correlations between the functions and titles of the early (operative) masons with those of the modern day (speculative) brethren. A very lively Question and Answer session followed.

I was privileged to make two anecdotal observations which were well received by the Brethren.

I related the apocryphal story of the Chola King who while traveling incognito in ancient Tanjore, found three masons hard at work outside the precincts of the yet to be completed Great Temple. On being asked what they were doing by the King, the first replied that he was breaking stones, the second that he was earning a livelihood and the third that he was building a temple. I expounded on this theme and expressed a view, that progression in life was not sequential but part of a continuum, wherein at the same time, we were all, as Brethren, not only engaged in a profession (breaking stones), and ensuring a decent standard of living (earning a livelihood), but also seeking a higher purpose and meaning to life (building a temple).

I then went on to expound in a similar apocryphal manner, wherein the King enters the temple precincts, and is intrigued to see two identical figurines. On enquiry from the Mason, the King learns that one of these was meant to be installed high up on the cupola (gopuram) of the temple. He had however detected a minute fault in the first one, and had therefore sculpted another perfect replica. The King was perplexed. He asked the mason, "As explained, this figurine would be installed very high on the cupola. Whoever would know that there is a flaw in it? Why did you waste your precious time and talent, not to mention the resources, in making a perfect replica?" To which the mason replied, "I know!!" I drew a parallel from this to the dramatization in the Mark ritual of the refusal by the Overseers to accept a product which not only did not measure up to a specification, but also to the evidence that such a specification had been met.

The conclusions which I wished the participants of the Research Lodge to draw from these two observations were that Masonry enables its Brethren to understand that while life itself was a perpetual search for a purpose, the wherewithal for this search was an insistence on excellence.

I was gratified that my contribution was well appreciated by the learned Brethren present, some of whom confided that they were very grateful for what they called an "Indian" perspective to acknowledged Masonic beliefs.

Latest Freemason Conspiracy: Recruiting Younger Bros

Ancient Order Resorts to Facebook, Coed Paintball and Ghost Stories
From The Rural Lodge Newsletter
By BARRY NEWMAN

ST. PAUL, Minn.—No self-respecting secret society can get by without a Facebook fan page anymore.

That's transparently true of the Freemasons, renowned for their medieval blood oaths, their often-alleged plot to create a New World Order, their locked-door conclaves of U.S. presidents and power brokers and their boring pancake breakfasts.

A menagerie of 19th-century civic and social brotherhoods, and their attendant sisterhoods, lives on around the globe: the Elks, the Moose, the Lions, the Odd Fellows. Freemasonry is the oldest of all, still the biggest, and—in the public mind—about as penetrable as the mythic crypt beneath the ninth vault of Solomon's Temple.

Secrecy gives Masonry its mystique. Yet the Masons have lately realized that they'd be lost in oblivion if it weren't for the Web.

"I looked for pictures," Matt Gallagher was saying of his Internet search for a Masonic lodge worth joining. "I really wanted to avoid a bunch of 80-year-olds."

It was Thursday evening, almost time for fellowship night at the "very young" lodge he finally did join: Braden No. 168, housed on a shady street in a columned temple the Masons built in 1910.

Mr. Gallagher is 32 years old and between jobs. He was initiated by Braden in 2009, rose to Master Mason and now is lodge education officer.

It's a post that didn't exist for 290 years after Masonry came out of its historical shadows, in 1717, as a London club for enlightened gentlemen. Mr. Gallagher's Masonic tag, if his digital function had one, might be Worshipful Webmaster.

"I started a blog, Facebook, Flickr," he said, descending a narrow stairway to a faded meeting room with its old pool tables and portrait of brother George Washington. "I want video essays on our site," he added. "People need to know what they're getting into."

Once, a petitioner for Masonic membership didn't know what he was getting into until he had a hood over his head, a rope around his neck and was swearing never to reveal the secret handshake. The handshake is still secret, but now there are so many hints and giveaways about Masonry's hocus-pocus on the Web, television and in the movies that lodges tell petitioners not to peek or they'll spoil the fun.

The order's main manual used to be "Duncan's Ritual," published in 1866. Today it's "Freemasons for Dummies" by Christopher Hodapp, published in 2005. "We've got an explosion of openness," said Mr. Hodapp. "And it started—face it—in a panic over membership."

A generation of joiners, home from war, boosted Masonic rolls in America to four million by 1959.

But in the 1960s, hippies were turned off by establishment mysticism.

When the sons of hippies asked about Masonry's secrets, their boomer dads didn't have a clue. By the mid-2000s, fewer than two million members remained.

Faced with a choice between going extinct and going public, the Masons went public. The order has no central authority, but Grand Lodges in several states put up billboards, ran TV commercials and staged mass rituals, initiating hundreds of men at a time.

Mr. Hodapp calls all that "a travesty." Many initiates never showed up. Many that did, he wrote in an internal paper, found "a desperate group of aging members" and "endless meetings about bill-paying, bad food, and who is going to iron the degree uniforms."

But some of those young apprentices stayed on. Though total membership is down to 1.4 million, losses to death and dullness have eased to 30,000 a year from 80,000. The hook may have less to do with Masonry itself than with pop culture's fascination with it.

Masonic myths often play the lead on the History Channel, in movies like "National Treasure" and in Dan Brown's best sellers, especially his Masonry-laced 2009 novel "The Lost Symbol."

"That book—it was a real catalyst for us," Reed Endersbe said one day at his red-stone temple in Minneapolis. He is 40, program director at a rock station and master of Lodge No. 19, where "a lot of us like that bond with the movers and shakers of the globe."



Reed Endersbe and Zulu at a Minneapolis officer installation last year.

His lodge has 60 active members, 300 in all, and is adding more, most between 21 and 35. Nobody invites them; they just hit the Web site's "contact us" button. Each pays \$450 for a ceremonial degree (tux required), dues of \$300 a year, plus extra for coed paintball fights, cigar-rolling shows and Scotch tastings.

"The sacred order of the Scotch nights," cracked No. 19's 26-year-old senior warden, Adam Martin, as he and some brothers walked to a pizza place down the street. Mr. Endersbe pushed up a sleeve to exhibit his own devotion to Scotch knights: a Templar Cross tattoo.

The warrior monks of the Knights Templar probably didn't hide as stoneworkers after the pope excommunicated them in 1307; Mr. Endersbe has fun thinking they did.

Then again, his lodge does get petitions from "head cases," as he puts it, eager to enlist in the Masonic-Satanic conspiracy that's so well detailed now on the Web.

"They usually take out a \$1 bill," he says, "and connect the letters in the all-seeing eye to spell 'A Mason.'"

Conspiracists will argue that only the inner-inner circles know what the order is truly up to. But when Matt Gallagher joined Braden Lodge, over in St. Paul, he did it for three reasons:

"I wanted to become a better person, I like retro stuff, and I'm a big believer in guys hanging out and talking with other guys."

Down in Braden's meeting room on fellowship night, a dozen guys had pushed three tables together and were passing a coffee pot. Seven were under 36. They were trying something new: a philosophical discourse. The theme was, "Where do morals come from?"

"If your best friend commits treason, do you turn him in?" someone asked. A discussion followed. Someone else asked: "If Hitler walks in front of your car, do you hit the gas?" More discussion.

Brian Silverain, a laid-off teacher with a tie-dye shop, asked Mr. Gallagher at one point: "Do you like who you are?" Mr. Gallagher replied: "I don't know who I am, and I don't like that."

Cellphones started to ring after two hours—wives wondering where husbands were. "Well, I guess we kicked that morality dog around enough," said Harvie Holmes, who is 52 and sells insurance.

The crowd thinned. After midnight, talk turned to ghosts, then moved on to lutefisk recipes. Potato chips were retrieved from the kitchen. At 1:15, three of the guys were still left in the temple of their ancient and mystic order, still hanging out, still talking.



Old Folks

A little silver-haired lady calls her neighbor and says, "Please come over here and help me. I have a killer jigsaw puzzle, and I can't figure out how to get started."

Her neighbor asks, "What is it supposed to be when it's finished?"

The little silver haired lady says, "According to the picture on the box, it's a rooster."

Her neighbor decides to go over and help with the puzzle.

She lets him in and shows him where she has the puzzle spread all over the table.

He studies the pieces for a moment, then looks at the box, then turns to her and says, "First of all, no matter what we do, we're not going to be able to assemble these pieces into anything resembling a rooster."

He takes her hand and says, "Secondly, I want you to relax. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and then," he said with a deep sigh "Let's put all the Corn Flakes back in the box."



Secret Society's Code Cracked

By Alan Boyle

Researchers have used state-of-the-art machine translation software — and some old-fashioned hunches — to crack the code used by a secret society in Germany three centuries ago. The results shed light on the tricks of the cryptographic process as well as on the bizarre history of such societies, which were all the rage in the 18th century.

It turns out that the 105-page, 75,000-character manuscript, known as the Copiale Cipher, provided a detailed description for setting up initiation ceremonies — including the techniques used to throw a scare into the initiates. It also revealed the methods that members used to identify each other in the outside world, and delved into the comparisons and rivalries surrounding Masonic-like rites in different countries.

"This opens up a window for people who study the history of ideas and the history of secret societies," Kevin Knight, a computer scientist at the University of Southern California's Information Sciences Institute, said in a news release issued today. "Historians believe that secret societies have had a role in revolutions, but all that is yet to be worked out, and a big part of the reason is because so many documents are enciphered."

Knight and his colleagues are now turning their attention to other, better-known cryptographic puzzles — such as the brain-teasing Kryptos sculpture on the CIA's grounds, the cipher used by the Zodiac Killer in 1969, and the totally baffling 15th-century Voynich Manuscript. But veteran code-breakers say those puzzles will be far tougher to solve. "Generally, that type of decryption has already been tried on those ciphers," said Elonka Dunin, whose website keeps tab on the world's top cryptological puzzles.

Knight said the work could eventually lead to better translation tools for non-Latin languages such as Pashto, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, "which have been a big challenge for machines."

How the code was cracked

Tracking down the handwritten Copiale manuscript (which gets its name from one of the two readable words on the pages) was the first challenge facing Knight and two colleagues from Sweden's Uppsala University, Beata Megyesi and Christiane Schaefer. The book, bound in green and gold paper, turned up in the East Berlin Academy after the Cold War and is now in a private collection.

The researchers transcribed a machine-readable version of the coded text and put it through computerized statistical analysis. The software looked for patterns in the different combinations of coded characters, including Roman and Greek letters as well as abstract symbols.

At first, Knight and his colleagues focused on the Roman and Greek characters and tried to match them up with words from 80 different languages. "It took quite a long time, and resulted in complete failure," Knight said.

Then they played a hunch: Maybe those characters were actually meaningless "nulls," and the true code was contained in the abstract symbols. When they ran the symbols through statistical analysis, they came up with a German text titled "Ceremonie der Aufnahme" ... "Ceremonies of Initiation." Soon they had pages and pages of deciphered lore.

What the manuscript says

The text, apparently written in the 1760-1780 time frame, is "obviously related to an 18th-century secret society, namely the 'oculist order,'" the researchers say. The volume is inscribed "Phillipp 1866," perhaps suggesting that it passed into the hands of an owner named Phillip in that year.

The manuscript, available in several formats from Uppsala University's website, describes the procedure for initiating new members of the society. At one point, candidates are asked to read the writing on a blank piece of paper. When they can't, they're told to put on eyeglasses, and then they undergo an "operation" that involves plucking a hair from the eyebrow. After the operation, the blank paper is replaced by a document laying out "the entire teaching for the apprentices."

Later, "the left part of the chest and the right knee get uncovered, the eyes are being tied, and all sorts of words of comfort are spoken, which raise even more fear." The candidates are told, "Prepare yourself to die" — but that's just a scare tactic. No injuries are inflicted in the course of the ceremony.

The Copiale Cipher, used in an 18th-century book on secret society practices, used Roman and Greek characters as well as abstract symbols. The Roman and Greek characters proved to mere place-holders.

Another section of the book describes how members can recognize each other. When one member asks how "Hans" is, the other should respond by mentioning a name that begins with the second letter of the first name — for example, "He's with Anton."



Other passages discuss how much members at various levels of the secret society should know about the codes and customs. The manuscript notes that secret societies were established in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, "but because they practiced more evil than good, they have been destroyed." In Germany, societies in different cities are associated with different hand signs: a forefinger on the mouth for Berlin; the middle finger on the right eye and a thumb on the ear for Frankfurt; a forefinger on the chin for Marburg.

Some passages even take on political issues, referring to a three-headed monster as symbolizing "rule and governance which, by means of power and perfidy, deprive man of his natural freedom and enjoyment of the timely things and [that which] we human beings need." Such passages could help historians trace the influence of secret societies on the political movements of the time, which were notable for their focus on natural rights. The natural-rights concept set the stage for the American Revolution as well as the French Revolution.

What next?

Knight wants to use his machine-translation software on the Kryptos, Zodiac Killer and Voynich ciphers, but the cryptographers who have been working on those puzzles for years suspect that machines alone can't crack the code. Nick Pelling, an expert on the Voynich Manuscript and other ciphers, pointed out that human intuition played a big role in figuring out the Copiale Cipher.

"The story they outline in the paper is a classic hunch-based cipher-cracking sequence," Pelling told me. "They guessed one way, and then it turned out to be the other way. These are great hunches, and they tell a great story about how they followed these hunches and got to the end of the line."

He doubted that the work done on the Copiale Cipher could be adapted easily for the Voynich Manuscript. "It's pretty clear that it's a different type of cipher from the Copiale Cipher," he said. In fact, he suspects the manuscript, whose content is completely unknown, may be a combination of ciphers and idiosyncratic abbreviations that would be devilishly hard to untangle.

Dunin, who is the co-leader of a group trying to crack the Kryptos code, was similarly pessimistic about the researchers' chances for success. "They're welcome to try, but many machines have already been pointed at Kryptos," she told me.

Klaus Schmeh, a German crypto expert, said that even though the Copiale Cipher has been around for 250 years or so, it hadn't gotten much attention in the past. "In my view, this cipher wasn't known at all to the public," Schmeh said. He saluted the researchers for their work, but echoed Pelling's view that the effort fit the standard pattern for breaking secret codes.

"It's pretty much the way cryptography is done," he said. "It was certainly not an easy puzzle, but I'm sure that other cryptographers would have solved it."

Update for 6:55 p.m. ET: Knight responded via email to a few follow-up questions I sent him:

Cosmic Log: The Daily Mail suggests that the cipher was solved using the Google Translate software, but I'm assuming that it was a more specialized program.

Knight: The Daily Mail made a mistake. Anyway, we used a bunch of software derived from our own statistical language translation algorithms. We apply those original algorithms to the translation of Chinese and Arabic into English.

Q: Was the Copiale Cipher a straight substitution cipher, or was it something more complex?

A: It was a substitution cipher, but not a simple one-for-one type. The cipher alphabet has many more than 26 letters. So there are many ways to encode "E," for example. Also, sometimes whole sequences of plaintext letters, for example "SCH," are encoded with a single cipher letter. Lastly, there are some "logograms," cipher letters that stand for whole words, such as the name of the secret society.

Q: How could this method be applied to Voynich, Kryptos and other ciphers? Are there any wider applications for military code-making and code-breaking? Are there particular types of ciphers that the machine translation software is best suited for?

A: When you think about language translation, you can think about substituting a word in one language (like "boy" in English) with a word in another language (like "nanhaizi" in Chinese). But sometimes whole phrases are substituted for whole phrases. Also, there is reordering -- "transposition," in cryptographic jargon. We pretend Chinese is a code for English -- a substitution/transposition cipher. So there is a deep connection between translation and classical cryptography. Of course, modern militaries use new cipher systems based on number theory now, so a lot of the classical work is not relevant anymore to them. But it's super-relevant to us working on more accurate language translation algorithms.

Q: It sounds as if humans still played a key role...

A: Yes, it was a human/machine collaboration. The machine has incredible patience, but it only looks for what you tell it. We could tell it to decipher against 80 possible plaintext languages (Latin, English, German, etc.), and it had a slight preference for German, but it didn't know, for example, that a single cipher letter could stand for a sequence of three plaintext letters ("SCH"), because we didn't tell it that could happen. But as a human, you are very flexible and can spot what is happening.

The Working Tools Magazine



Brother Cory Sigler has been creating “The Working Tools” Masonic magazine since January 2006 with a 2 year gap between the Feb 2009 and Feb 2011 issues. He explained the gap in the February 2011 issue when he resumed publication with the following;

“Well hello there, long time no talk.

Yes I know I’ve been away for awhile but it was for a good reason. First it was so I could finish up my year as Worshipful Master. I needed to take some time off to give my Lodge 110% of my time and energy it takes to do the duties in the East.

Secondly, I was just so burned out I need a mental vacation. It takes a lot of work to put this thing together. Believe it or not hours upon hours are needed to find the right info and then to design it all.

Lastly, last summer when I was going to start back up I had to have my appendix out and that threw me back a while.

The good news is that I feel re-energized and I’m ready to roll! I terribly missed communicating with everyone and often thought about starting back up again. I needed the spark to come back and I think it’s the right time.

I appreciated all the emails from the Brethren asking if I was still alive and where I ran off to.

A lot has happened lately so let’s get back to the show.

As always, if you see something of interest send it my way and I’ll be sure to include it.

Until next time...

S&F

Cory Sigler PM

Hawthorne Fortitude #200“

With my luck I didn’t discover “The Working Tools” until it came back online in February 2011. If I had, I may have modeled my magazine more like it. But, I guess the diversity is a good thing. I have since however, downloaded all of the previous issues and am slowly reading them through. I know that some people don’t read back issues, but I have learned that the stories in the first issues are just as informative and entertaining as those in the newest issue if you haven’t already seen them.

One of the things I liked best about Brother Cory’s magazine was his reason for starting it. Once again I would like to quote from his magazine, but this time from the first issue (January 1006).

“Letter from the Editor

Never in my life did I ever think these words “Letter from the Editor” would be coming out of my mouth and it was referred to me, so what caused me to sit down and put this together?

As a newly raised Mason in search of more enlightenment I’ve searched the internet and book stores high and low for something a young guy in his 30’s could comprehend and learn from. A lot of times I end up either reading the same old stuff or scratch my head wondering what I just attempted to read.

They say that if you put 100 Mason’s in a room only 10 has heard of Albert Pikes book “Moral & Dogma” and out of those only 1 has actually read it. If you ever picked up the book and tried reading it you would know why. Being in search of enlightenment shouldn’t require a PHD in Philosophy or having the ability to finish the New York Times crossword puzzle every Sunday.

It’s my plan to make this the “Readers Digest” of Masonry. You’ll find fun interesting articles and facts that you will want to read and learn from. I want you to share this with as many brothers as you can and let me know what you think of what I have put together.

S&F

Cory Sigler “



The Working Tools Magazine, current and past issues can be found at www.twtmag.com