

# TRESTLEBOARD

## PHALANX LODGE NO. 31



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December 2014



James Lofton  
Master

Brothers....this year for me has been one of the most exciting, humbling, enriching, challenging and most of all FUN experiences of my life. I have loved serving our great lodge this year as Master, and I can't tell you how much I appreciated your trust and faith in me to lead. This has been an exciting year of degree work, fellowship and fundraising with quite a few new brothers raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, and three candidates currently on their path to Fellowcraft. This year has gone by very quickly, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. There was a degree that got snowed out, only to turn into an impromptu dinner for about 20 brothers on a very cold and snowy night in February, to a terrific Saturday morning in October spent with about a dozen brothers chopping and preparing BBQ for sale. We even saw the selection of one of our own, WB John Caudle to become our newest DDGM for the next three years. The support that has been given to me this year has been tremendous, and I couldn't have gotten through it without the help of many, but one specifically I would like to thank is our secretary WB Mike Hamrick. Mike plays an integral part in keeping the lodge on track and making sure that proverbial wheels of the lodge don't fall off! If you have the opportunity please take time to thank Mike for all he does. I leave you in the very capable hands of WB John Harder, and I look forward to all that we will accomplish in the coming year! Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as master of this lodge during 2014!

Fraternally,  
Jim Lofton - Master



Mike Hamrick, PM  
Secretary

Brothers,

As we near the end of yet another year, I want to first wish you all a very Happy Holiday season.

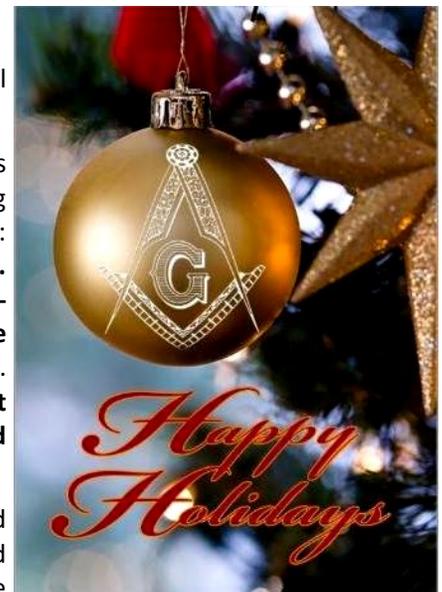
I do want to note the results of the November election of Officers for those of you who were not able to be present. The following were elected to their respective stations and places for 2015:

**Worshipful Brother John S. Harder - Master, Brother Chris W. Crump - Senior Warden, Worshipful Brother Rocky Boyle - Junior Warden, Worshipful Brother Neil Crossley - Treasurer, Worshipful Brother Mike Hamrick - Secretary and Worshipful Brothers John Harder and Ralph Linn - Trustees. Appointed Officers include: Bill Stout - Sr. Deacon, Michael Davis - Jr. Deacon, Robert Thomson - Sr. Steward, Steve Jones - Jr. Steward, WB Dave Morgan - Chaplain and WB Mack Wilson - Tyler.**

There are two more events scheduled before years end, the December 9th Stated Communication and the December 16th combined Service Awards Presentation and 2015 Officer Installation. We would love to see you at both of these. The Service Awards presentation and Officer's Installation are two of very few Masonic rituals which non-Masons can witness. Please feel free to invite family and friends as we honor our Brothers who have reached their milestone 25, 50 or 60th year, and as we install our 2015 Officers. Also for consideration, should you have a friend who you believe would benefit from, and be a benefit to, our fraternity, this ceremony might be one of our more impactful introductions to Masonry.

Lastly, 2015 dues payments are coming in...should you not yet have dropped that in the mail, please que it up among your next checks to be written.

Mike Hamrick, PM



# OPPORTUNITY

Brothers, as Junior Warden Chris Crump noted last month, the **Charlotte DeMolay** is collecting items for underserved children and youth in the area, and is working with **A Child's Place** to distribute these in December. There is a box for donations at the entry into our building. The following items are needed: tooth brushes, tooth paste, dental floss, deodorant, body wash, hair conditioner, small personal washcloths, uni-sex socks, band-aids, basic feminine products, small combs, small coloring books (no crayons or pencils), small reading books, financial donations are accepted.

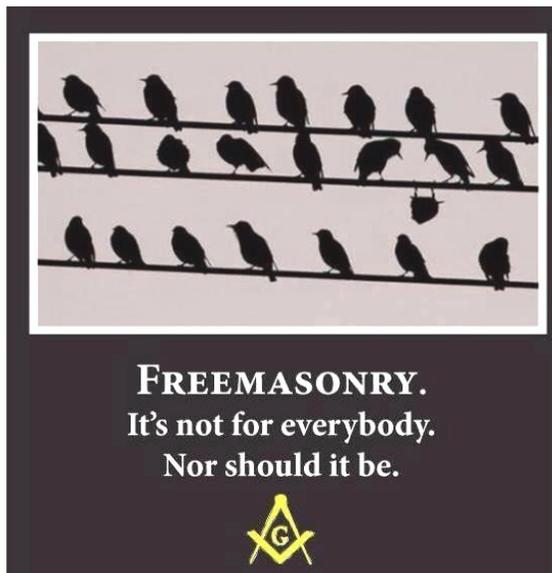


Brothers,

Greetings from the West ...

My Brothers, I am honored you chose me as Master of Phalanx #31 for 2015. Thank you for your confidence. I hope we will have a good year – speaking of that, a rather huge ‘atta-boy’ and ‘Thank You’ to WM Jim Lofton who weathered a busy year in the East and made it look easy. My brother, it’s time to coast a bit – but not too far away! Meantime, let me hear from each of you regarding your interests for next year. I have been considering inviting speakers for short talks/discussions on various subjects we experience in our lives, and would like to get your take on what you would like. Preparedness, health, finances, construction/operative masonry, whatever. Our lives and experiences are so varied we could fill a year just learning about US. It looks like we may have a challenging year ahead on several fronts, so give it some thought and we’ll form a plan. I look forward to seeing you at our December Stated on the 9th and at our awards and installation evening the 16th.

Fraternally,  
John Harder, PM



## Upcoming Masonic Happenings

**Tue, December 9** - Stated Communication  
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Lodge Opens

**Tue, Dec 16** - Service Awards Presentation, and  
2014 Officer's Installation  
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Programs Begin

**Tue. January 13** - Stated Communication  
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Lodge Opens

**January Tuesday TBD** - Fellowcraft Degree  
Stay tuned for details...

## BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER				
01 - Roy Atkins	12 - James A. Pollock Jr	28 - Brandon Lacy	07 - Paul Raynor	24 - Marc Strickland
01 - John Litschert II	13 - Gary P. Kleiber	29 - James D. Cain	08 - John A. Walker	25 - John T. Price
02 - Jack Goode	13 - Warren S. Bennick	29 - Robert Tosti	10 - Joe Narciso	25 - Jeff Walters
02 - Stephen Taylor	13 - Scott McCorkle	31 - Ralston Pound Jr	10 - Amir Farahany	26 - Philip Dunn
03 - Michel Badawi	15 - John A. Martin	31 - Horace Horne	12 - Curtiss Burnett	28 - Angus Mercer
05 - John Lamb Jr	17 - Gene C. Pitman	31 - William E. Graham Jr	14 - George McCormick	29 - Robbie Robinson III
05 - Charles R. Massey	20 - Ben Asseff	31 - Bill Robertson	14 - Guy T. Comer	29 - Graydon Miller
06 - Mark Rosen	21 - Bill Cowan	<b>JANUARY</b>		
11 - Jim Martin	24 - Paul Poley	04 - D.F. Presley	15 - William E. Webb Jr	29 - Joel Blady
11 - Mark Magyar	24 - James Lofton Jr	06 - Frank B. McDowell	20 - James Zell	29 - Charles Lilly II
	28 - Kent Schevlin	07 - Marvin Morrison	20 - James F. Huckabee	31 - John Litschert
			20 - Bill Clark	31 - James Robinson



Chris Crump  
Junior Warden

Brothers,

Our 2014 is almost over after having a great year . I would like to express my thanks for the honor of being elected Senior Warden for 2015. Along with Master-elect WB John Harder and Jr. Warden-elect WB Rocky Boyle, we will be working hard to see that 2015 is a great and productive year for the Phalanx Lodge as well as for the wonderful charitable organizations we sponsor, Masonic Home for Children at Oxford and Whitestone - a Masonic and Eastern Star Community. If you have any ideas or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us.

Fraternally,

Chris Crump , Senior Warden elect



### A Mason's Christmas

by Carl H. Claudy

"I don't believe in a Christmas celebration by the lodge. I don't think we ought to have one, or be asked to contribute to one or in any way engage in Christmas festivities." The Junior Mason spoke emphatically and with marked disapproval of the little ante-room group nearby, making happy plans for Yule-tide.

"That's very interesting," commented the Old Past Master. "I like to hear points of view unfamiliar to me. Would you mind telling me why?"

"Of course not. It's very simple. Masonry is not Christian. King Solomon, of course, wasn't a Christian, nor were either of the Hiram's. Masonry admits to her ranks any good man of faith; Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, Buddhist... it makes no difference, so he has a Faith.

Then, as a lodge, we celebrate a holiday belonging to one faith. Now I personally am a Christian, and of course I celebrate Christmas. But my brother across the way is a Jew, who does not recognize Christianity. To ask him to spend his proportion of lodge funds in celebrating the birth of a Leader in Whom he does not believe would be exactly like asking me to celebrate, with my proportion of lodge money, the birth of Confucius. Of course, I have only one vote and the majority rules, but when it comes to personal contributions to a Masonic Christmas celebration, my hands will never come out of my pockets.' He shoved them deeper in as he spoke to emphasize his intention not to spend.

"Hmm!" answered the Old Past Master. "So you think your Jewish brother across the way doesn't recognize Christianity? Don't you mean he doesn't recognize Christ as the Son of God? Wait a minute... Oh, Brother Samuels." The Old Past Master called across the ante-room. "Here a minute, will you?" The Jewish brother rose and came forward. "I just wanted to ask you if you are in favor or against the lodge Christmas celebration?" asked the Old Past Master.

"Me? I am in favor of it, of course, both for the lodge appropriation and the individual contribution."

"Thank you," nodded the Old Past Master. Then as the Jewish brother went back to his seat, he turned to the Junior Mason. "You see, my son, our Jewish friend is not narrow. He does not believe in Christ as the Redeemer, but he recognizes that he lives in a country largely Christian, and belongs to a lodge largely Christian. To him the Christmas celebration is not one of His birthday, but of the spirit of joyousness and love which we mean when we sing, at Christmas time 'Peace on earth, good will towards men!' If you argue that 'peace' is only a Christian word, he might even quote to you the words of One who said 'I bring you not Peace, but a Sword.'

"Now let me explain something to you. The Jew has just as much right to refuse to recognize Christ as the Son of God, as you have to refuse to consider Mohammed the Prophet the followers of Allah say he is. But as an educated man, you must know that Mohammed was a good man, a devout leader, a wise teacher. As an educated man, you admit

that the religion founded by Buddha has much in it that is good, and you admit that Confucius was a wise and just leader. Were you in the land where the birthdays of any of these were celebrated, would you refuse your part in the people's joy in their Leader, simply because you followed another? I trust not. Well, neither do our Jewish brethren or our Mohammedan brethren, desire to be left out of our celebration. They may not believe in the Divinity of Him we, as Christians, follow, but if they are good men and good Masons... they are perfectly willing to admit that the religion we follow is as good for us as theirs is for them, and to join with us in celebrating the day which is to us the glad day of all the year.

"Believe me, boy, Christmas doesn't mean Christ's birthday to many a man who calls himself Christian. It is not because of joy that He was born that many a good man celebrates Christmas. It is because his neighbor celebrates it, because it is a time of joy for little ones, because it is a day when he can express his thanks to his God that he is allowed to have a wife and family and children and friends and a lodge, because of that very 'peace on earth' spirit which is no more the property of the Gentile than the Jew, the Chinese or the Mohammedan. "It is such a spirit that Masons join, all, in celebrating Christmas. It is on the Masonic side of the tree we dance, not the Christian side. When this lodge erects its Christmas tree in the basement and throws it open to the little ones of the poor of this town, you will find children of all kinds there; black, white, yellow, and brown, Jew and Gentile, Christian and Mohammedan.

And you will find a Jew at the door, and among the biggest subscriptions will be those from some Jewish brethren, and there is a Jew who rents cars for a living who will supply us a dozen free to take baskets to those who cannot come. And when the Jewish Orphan Asylum has its fair, in the Spring, you will find many a Christian Mason attending to spend his money and help along the cause dear to his Jewish brethren, never remembering that they are of a different faith.

That, my son, is Masonry." "For Charity is neither Christian nor Jewish, nor Chinese nor Buddhist. And celebrations which create joy in little hearts and feed the hungry and make the poor think that Masons do not forget the lessons in lodge, are not Christian alone, though they be held at Christmas, and are not for Christians alone, though the celebration be in His honor.

Recall the ritual: 'By the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, the high and low, the rich and poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other'. "It is with this thought that we, as Masons, celebrate Christmas, to bring joy to our brethren and their little ones, and truly observe the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, whether we be Jew or Gentile, Mohammedan or Buddhist." The Old Past Master ceased and stood musing, his old eyes looking back along a long line of lodge Christmas trees about which eager little faces danced. Then he turned to the Junior Mason. "Well," he said smiling, "Do you understand?"

"I thank you for my Christmas present," came the answer. "Please tell me to which brother I should make my Christmas contribution?"



*Freemasonry has endured not because of its antiquity, its influence, or its social standing, but because there have been so many who have lived it. The effectiveness of Masonic teachings will always be the measure by which the outside world judges Freemasonry; the proof of Freemasonry is in our deeds and it is in our deeds that Freemasonry is made known to non-Masons. The only way that the Craft can be judged is by its product. The prestige of Freemasonry lies squarely on the shoulders of each of us.*

*Bro. G. Wilbur Best*



### 2014 OFFICERS

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