

TRESTLEBOARD

PHALANX LODGE NO. 31



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January 2015



John Harder, PM
Master

My Brothers,

We begin a new year, and with it we should all renew our interest, reflect on our journey thus far, and buff our pride in our fraternity. Read a book on Freemasonry, watch a video, and never stop learning. Not one of us is here by accident. We have made commitments to each other and to ourselves so, we should know with certainty WHO WE ARE as Freemasons. I urge you to take part in practices, in degree work, and to research our rich history. Labor of this type will afford you a wealth of Masonic knowledge, much like a study of apologetics of your faith - you will KNOW who you are and to what you are committed. I recently fielded online comments critical of our organization and in preparing my response, did some background work and gave a measured retort showing the criticism to be devoid of merit. The research allowed me to remove emotion from the exchange, added to my knowledge and afforded great satisfaction at being a member of this Grand Fraternity.

I am proud to know each of you and look forward to 2015 to see what we will experience this year.

Fraternally,
John Harder - Master



Degree Practice --- What a Drag!



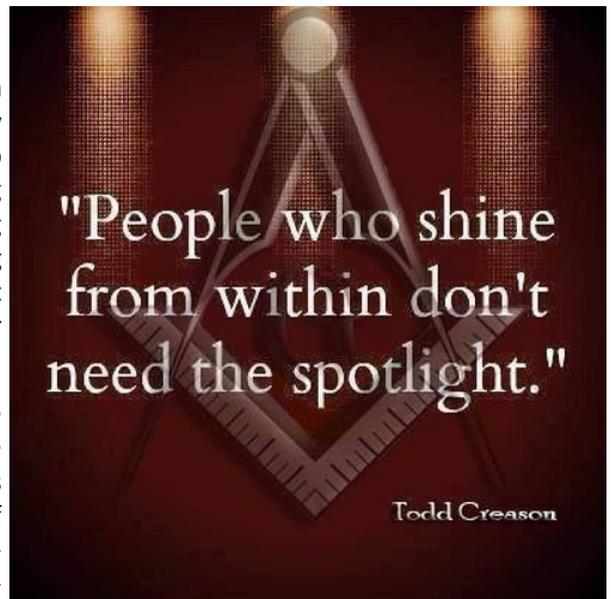
Rocky Boyle, PM
Junior Warden

Actually it should be **Degree Practice --- What a Great Opportunity!!!** Practice is an opportunity for all the participants conferring the degree to polish their skills in the degree before conferring the degree on a candidate or brother progressing through the degrees. While repeatedly **practicing** the ritual several times may seem burdensome, it is an opportunity to for those conferring the degree to increase their knowledge and appreciation of an integral part of Masonic the ritual.

It is not enough for a brother who will participate in conferring a degree say to themselves, "I know my part so I don't need attend or participate in practice." Practice involves an exchange of questions and answers between the brothers conferring the degree, and it helps immensely if both parties are there. Practice also provides the degree team the opportunity to rehearse and perfect the floor movements involved in conducting the candidate or, at times, the candidates. Practices are most effective when as many of the brothers conferring the degree are present to participate. Maybe if all or at least the majority of the degree team were present for a practice we wouldn't need a many practices.

A practice can also be an opportunity for a brother who is going through the degrees to see and hear the interchanges and any explanations of a degree that has already been conferred on him. I don't like practices much either, but if I can learn my part better or better yet help someone else learn their part by participating in the exchanging of ritual Q and A's, I feel it is my obligation to be there.

Rocky Boyle, PM, Junior Warden





Chris Crump
Senior Warden

Brothers, I love looking up information about masonry and ran across this poem I though I'd share:

THE FIVE POINTS SYMBOLISM

By BRO. N. A. McAULAY

From The Builder, Anamosa, Iowa, October, 1916)

Foot to foot that we may go, Where our help we can bestow:
Pointing out the better way, Lest our brothers go astray.
Thus our steps should always lead To the souls that are in need.

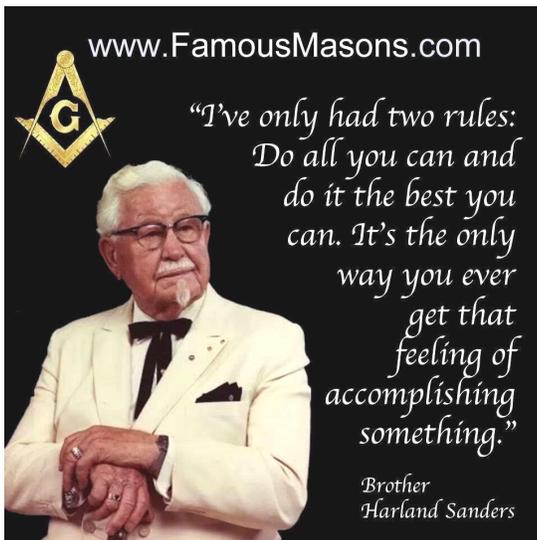
Knee to knee, that we may share Every brother's needs in prayer:
Giving all his wants a place, When we seek the throne of grace.
In our thoughts from day to day For each other we should pray.

Breast to breast, to there conceal, What our lips must not reveal;
When a brother does confide, We must by his will abide.
Mason's secrets to us known, We must cherish as our own.

Hand to back, our love to show To the brother, bending low:
Underneath a load of care, Which we may and ought to share.
That the weak may always stand, Let us lend a helping hand.

Cheek to cheek, or mouth to ear, That our lips may whisper cheer,
To our brother in distress: Whom our words can aid and bless.
Warn him if he fails to see, Dangers that are known to thee.

Foot to foot, and knee to knee, Breast to breast, as brothers we:
Hand to back and mouth to ear, Then that mystic word we hear,
Which we otherwise conceal, But on these five points reveal



Upcoming Masonic Happenings

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

Tue. January 27 - Fellowcraft Degree
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Lodge Opens

Tue. February 11 - Stated Communication
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Lodge Opens

BIRTHDAYS

JANUARY

- 04 - D.F. Presley
- 06 - Frank B. McDowell
- 07 - Marvin Morrison
- 07 - Paul Raynor
- 08 - John A. Walker
- 10 - Joe Narciso
- 10 - Amir Farahany
- 12 - Curtiss Burnett
- 14 - George McCormick
- 14 - Guy T. Comer

- 15 - William E. Webb Jr
- 20 - James Zell
- 20 - James F. Huckabee
- 20 - Bill Clark
- 24 - Marc Strickland
- 25 - John T. Price
- 25 - Jeff Walters
- 26 - Philip Dunn
- 28 - Angus Mercer
- 29 - Robbie Robinson III
- 29 - Graydon Miller

- 29 - Joel Blady
 - 29 - Charles Lilly II
 - 31 - John Litschert
 - 31 - James Robinson
- #### FEBRUARY
- 02 - John S. Miller Jr.
 - 02 - Ken R. Morris Sr.
 - 02 - James H. Beard
 - 04 - Charles E. Henderson
 - 04 - Earl J. Campbell
 - 05 - Martin J. Travis

- 07 - Gene R. Melvin
- 09 - Peter M. Varney
- 10 - David L. Morgan
- 10 - Hasan Y. Latif
- 11 - Lewis E. Hunt
- 12 - Vance L. Morris
- 12 - C. Michael Mangum
- 13 - Philip F. Searcey
- 15 - George F. Jones Jr.
- 16 - Jesse A. Campbell
- 19 - William O. Manley

- 19 - William S. McCall
- 20 - J. Earl Beckham
- 22 - James D. Monteith
- 24 - Robert M. Lloyd
- 24 - Doug R. Whitaker
- 24 - Gennero Lorusso
- 24 - Alan T. Ames
- 24 - J. Steven Porter Jr.
- 27 - James E. Stephens



Mike Hamrick, PM
Secretary

Happy New Year Brothers,

I believe that we begin 2015 in very good shape. We closed the books on 2014 in the black, we have three Brothers on their journey through the degrees, currently as Entered Apprentices (with their Fellow Craft degree scheduled later this month) and one candidate awaiting his Entered Apprentice Degree, presumably sometime in February. We can be grateful to Worshipful Brother James Lofton for his leadership in 2014 and there seems to be a great sense of energy and enthusiasm with Worshipful Brother John Harder and the 2015 officers.

Please note that your 2015 dues were payable by January 1, 2015. We've received dues payments from 155 of our 280 members, with more coming in each day. I am mailing out dues cards within a day or two of receiving payment, so the date on your current dues card should indicate whether or not you are in good standing with the Lodge.

Brothers, we are very active and have any number of opportunities for you to connect with and get involved in the Lodge. I hope that you will consider attending and participating. As WB Harder said in his note this month..."You never stop learning", and one of the best ways for you to continue your Masonic journey, is to get involved.

Mike Hamrick, PM
Secretary



He was a Mason

By Wallace Edward Mohns

It happens nearly every day in the major newspapers of our cities. A prominent citizen's obituary appears with a substantial headline. The writer begins with the most recent details age, cause of death, current residence. There follow several paragraphs recounting the eminent man's life. He was president of his country club, he headed this or that charity drive, he was an executive of these corporations, he attended such and such a college and high school, he was on the board of trustees of his religious congregation, and so on, often for a substantial number of column inches. Finally, towards the end of the obituary, just before the funeral arrangements are specified and the survivors listed, we find the brief sentence, "He was a Mason."

Curious, isn't it? Although the remaining details of his career were copiously enumerated, his Masonic activities are summarized in one sentence. Perhaps he was Master of his Lodge, serving "in line" for as long as eight years to reach that station. It could be that he gave his time instead as presiding officer in one of the several York or Scottish Rite bodies. Maybe he took a number of parts in the many degrees of the two Rites.

Or perhaps he was one of those who had less skill in memorization but took other responsibilities: for costumes or dining services or Masonic blood programs, even receiving an honorary distinction from the Scottish Rite for many years of such faithful "behind-the-scenes" service. Possibly he was active with one or more youth groups under Masonic sponsorship, giving up his football game-watching on weekends with the other guys to raise funds at car washes or driving cars full of teenagers to annual meetings in distant parts of the state.

He might have been a superior fund-raiser for the Shriners' children's hospitals, or even represented the Lodge in local civic activities, such as parades for patriotic holidays. Yet none of these is mentioned by the newspaper writer, who was given as much space as seemed necessary to outline other aspects of the career of a distinguished man.

Of course, we might suppose that it is the editor's decision that Masonic activities are not of interest to the general public, being that they are the doings of a secretive and selective body. It is not obvious how that position might be reconciled with mention of the man's country-club presidency, which is probably pleased to have an exclusive membership, or his church activities, relevant only to members of the same denomination, or even his rise to prominence in a business corporation, whose internal doings are often cloaked in secrecy as deep as that of any Masonic body.

When Masons constitute more than one percent of the adult male population, and almost certainly a larger percentage of

those who actually read something besides the sports pages in the newspaper, the reasoning behind such an editor's position may be strained.

It is more likely that lack of knowledge about the role that Masonry plays in our society contributes to the brief treatment Masonic activities received in the obituary. Other than the Shriners' Hospitals, few Masonic charities receive any kind of regular mention in the press. And even those Hospitals are still thought of by much of the public as being for crippled children, often overlooking their more recent important role in the treatment of and research into serious burn injuries. Scottish Rite aphasia work, Royal Arch Research Assistance, Masonic cancer hospitals—all find the most infrequent acknowledgement of their contributions to society. The same is true of Masonic service projects, even on a local scale. Did Masons help organize the local Independence Day celebration or aid in cleaning up some poorly-maintained parkland in your town? How would anyone know, if you don't tell them?

When writing a monthly Lodge bulletin is a burden, there is even less likelihood that a newspaper press release is going to be prepared by the secretary, junior warden, or whomever. Perhaps the obituary writer never even had the information about the man's Masonic career because his family didn't know it was important, or his Lodge failed to provide the details.

We should not be surprised that a man's Masonic career is little noted in the memorial of his passing. This is nothing new in Masonic history, after all. According to our traditions, it was at the very founding of our order that a great Masonic architect was rudely interred without proper recognition of his contributions to the Fraternity. In later history, it was often to be that Masons would suffer punishment or even martyrdom for their membership in and contributions to the Craft and to the principles of freedom. Against such a background, mere indifference could even be considered to be an improvement.

Yet how much better off might our world be if the contributions of Masons and Masonry were more widely recognized and encouraged? How many more young men might be set on the course of self-improvement through Masonic membership if the examples of great men as Masons were better known? For the past two centuries of American history, a nearly-constant one-third of the leaders of our country, beginning with the signers of the Declaration of Independence and including all three branches of the government, have been Masons. This is a far higher proportion than in the population as a whole.

Did Masonry provide these men with the inspiration and training to achieve leadership roles in the country? Did Masonic principles guide their thinking when tough decisions had to be made? For presidents such as George Washington and Harry Truman, the answers can only be "yes." Of others—those in Congress and the judiciary—we know much less. These are stories that must be told to the rest of the world, not just among ourselves. "He was a Mason" appearing in an obituary is too little evidence to inspire the uninitiated to seek Masonic light.

However, there is one sense in which we may take pride in the way such an obituary is written. When "He was a Mason" appears at the end of the article, it serves as what the accountants call "the bottom line," a phrase that refers to the number indicating whether an enterprise has showed a profit or a loss. To those who measure things by numbers, everything above the bottom line is simply a detail, one element of many that go to make up the big picture as represented by the final total. Seen in this light, the many contributions the deceased man made to society are parts of a totality. They do not stand alone, independent and unrelated to one another. Each gift this man made to his family, his fellows, and his country were components of that whole summarized in the final words, "He was a Mason."

Masonic honors and titles are of limited value anyway. They mean much among brothers and companions, somewhat less among family and friends, and little indeed to the non-Masonic world. But if each of us resolves to live according to the principles we embraced when we became members of this ancient and honorable institution, we should be pleased to reflect that there is no higher honor to come to us when our lives are complete than that they should be summed up by that simple but profound phrase, "**He was a Mason.**"


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