

TRESTLEBOARD

PHALANX LODGE NO. 31



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March 2015



John Harder, PM
Master

My Brothers,

What, March already? Wow, the year is flying as we slipped the brunt of heavy winter weather blanketing much of the eastern seaboard. Our degree work has been fast and furious with a team of Fellow Craft heading toward a Master Mason degree in the offing, and a brand new Entered Apprentice just starting to peek into the light. Candidates and their coach have worked hard, and degree team members have been fantastic and flexible with their schedules – Thank You!

We need to be ready for several events in the near term: our March Stated, the Spring School of Instruction (mid-month), the Grand Master's official visit (end of the month), a Master Mason degree that will be on us before we know it, and those of you who would like to join Scottish Rite this spring let us know if you need an application. The Scottish Rite Spring Reunion is April 24th & 25th.

We practice each Tuesday evening – and I would like to see more of us there. Have you wanted to take part in a degree, but don't know where to start? Join us for a Tuesday evening practice and learn a part! We are very happy to have you with us – especially as we ready ourselves for a 3rd Degree for three brothers.

Pay close attention to the Secretary's message to pin down those event dates, and we'll see you in lodge!

Fraternally,
John Harder - Master



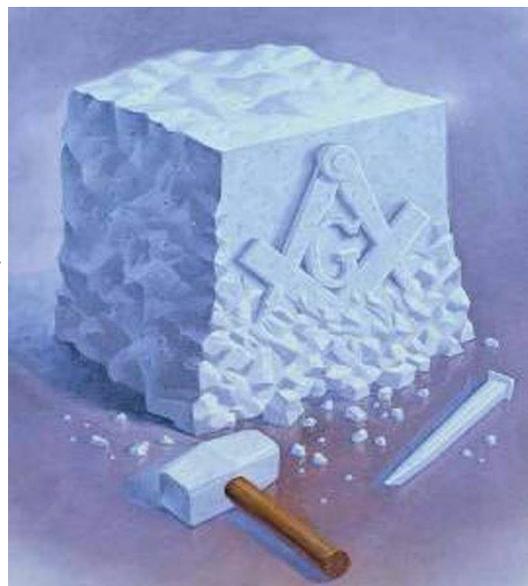
Mike Hamrick, PM
Secretary

Brothers,

We are quite busy, as the Master observes, particularly this month. Please note the Masonic Happenings dates on the next page, but also note that we will be scheduling and conducting a Master Mason degree before the next Trestleboard is published. I believe that the desire is to schedule this for an upcoming Saturday, likely late-March or early-April. I will certainly send out an email to those for whom I have an email address, but if you are receiving this Trestleboard via mail, that means that I do not have an email address for you.

If you wish to receive notification of the degrees, and perhaps even receive future Trestleboards via email, please drop me a note at secretary@phalanx31.org to get on that distribution list. I also try to post information on our Facebook page, so if that is your preference, please search for and "Like" Phalanx Lodge #31 on Facebook, so that you'll receive new posts.

Fraternally,
Mike Hamrick, PM





Chris Crump
Senior Warden

Brothers, here are some excerpts from another article I thought you may be interested in reading:

Brethren, I ask you to reflect back, when you first became a Freemason - did the significance of a simple handshake change dramatically for you? It certainly did for me!

What to me was a time-honored ritual of greeting or meeting someone for the first time and where the act of shaking hands was just a relatively meaningless formality, after my initiation it immediately took on new significance. A handshake acquires new meaning with much more intensity and substance because now the person I greet for the first time could be a Brother Freemason; and the

Brother I do know of course, I get great pleasure in greeting him.

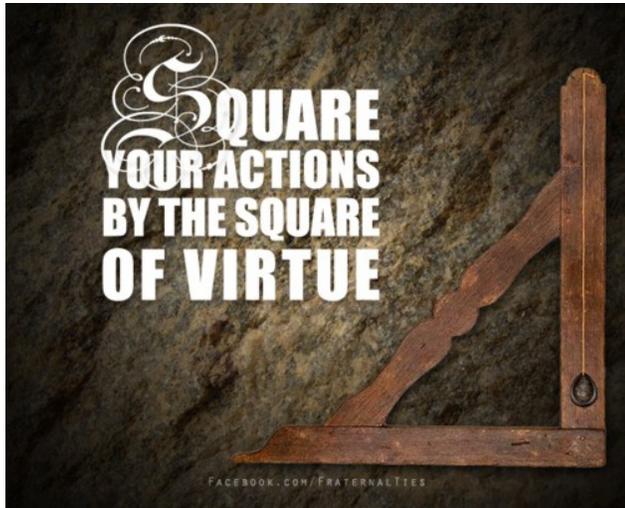
What is it that allows us to feel more comfortable when greeting one another as Brethren? It is that as brothers within our gentle craft we are all partakers of the same basic principles and have shared similar experiences --all of which has created incredibly strong inherent bonds throughout which are woven with informal and unspoken ties.

I think we can all agree that our world has changed and continues to change dramatically. Our current way of thinking has more scientific emphasis and I would suggest less import on authority, traditions and things held sacred.

I believe our Lodges should strive for better Masons rather than more Masons. There is a story about a man who was considering offering himself as a candidate to Freemasonry. He gave himself the initial task of selecting one of two Lodges in his area. After he was made a Freemason a friend asked why he had selected his particular Lodge. His reply was that after interviews, to him the selection was easy in that one Lodge was very interested in him as a candidate the other was interested in him as a man. Which do you think he chose?

- R. W. Bro. Len Wyllie (Originally presented March 22nd 2003 at Oliver B.C. - For District 10's Masonic Day)

Fraternally,
Chris Crump - Senior Warden



Upcoming Masonic Happenings

Tue. March 10 - Stated Communication
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Lodge Opens

Tue. March 17- Spring School of Instruction (Phalanx Lodge)
6:30pm Dinner, 7:15pm Work Begins

Wed. March 18- Spring School of Instruction (Mint Hill Lodge)
6:30pm Dinner, 7:15pm Work Begins

Mon. March 30 - Grand Master - MWB Douglas Caudle visit
(West Gate Lodge) 6:00pm Dinner, 7:00pm Lodge Opens

Tue. April 14 - Stated Communication
6:30pm Dinner, 7:30pm Lodge Opens

BIRTHDAYS

MARCH				
01 - Alan T. Parker	08 - Matthew S. Jordan	20 - Bob K. Braswell	04 - Irwin Belk	14 - David A. Holmes
02 - Walter Grahling Jr.	09 - John S. Harder	20 - Daryl W. Kelly	04 - Allan Laymon	14 - Dale I. Gillis
02 - Larry G. Jacobs	09 - Robert L. Saye Sr.	21 - George Dizes	04 - Warley M. Araujo	14 - Richard A. Vinroot
02 - Eugene A. Corey	09 - Charles A. Cutlip	27 - Neil F. Crossley	05 - Ernest A. Morrison Jr	14 - Kai T. Ferrell
03 - Jack L. Rimmer	10 - Bernard W. Manton	29 - Randall E. Baker	07 - Timothy E. Pope	14 - Walter E. Dickson
03 - Thurston Thompson	12 - Robert C. Richardson		08 - Edgar A. Miller Jr	16 - Tony Woodward
03 - Dennis A. Moody	12 - Vernon M. Goode	APRIL	08 - Glenn C. Harrelson	21 - Lewis Berryhill Jr
06 - David A. Rose	15 - David L. Burris	03 - Blair Carpenter	10 - Boyce M. Brown	22 - Dorsey Hardy
07 - Donald A. Gilmore	19 - Anthony Yankowski	03 - Willie Brumbalow	10 - David W. Morrison	29 - Robert A. James
08 - Fred A. Jenkins	19 - Eric Wainwright	03 - Anthony T. Pressley	11 - John C. Donaldson	30 - Duane H. Burch
	20 - Randolph Kiser	03 - William S. McGee	13 - Larry J. Morgan	
		03 - Earl S. Stegall		



WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?

(A short Talk Bulletin posted by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana)

A Mason is sometimes asked by a friend, a neighbor, or a business associate, "What do the Masons do?" The question may be worded more generally, "What are the Masons?"

In either case, the Brother is challenged by the realization that there is no simple answer which he can rattle off "from the top of his head," because the questioner is really asking him for a comprehensive explanation about what organized Freemasonry is, what its principles and purposes are, what programs it is engaged in, how it carries them out, and what satisfactions the individual Mason derives from his Masonic membership.

Some of these considerations arouse the fraternal doubt that "you can't tell that," or "that's secret," so that the Brother's reply is marked by hesitation or reluctance to explain.

Puzzled by the difficulty of knowing what facets of the vast subject of Freemasonry the questioner is really inquiring about, the Mason "just doesn't know where to begin," and too often may avoid a simple statement of facts. He isn't sure of what to say.

Or, knowing that his questioner is a "practical man of affairs" who measures outcomes quantitatively, in materialistic terms, he realizes that Freemasonry's reputation cannot be explained by charts, statistics, or financial statements, because the Fraternity's real worth can be expressed only in spiritual terms, and that is rather difficult to explain to the uninitiated. Masonic terminology, the most comfortable words with which to reply, seems inadequate or out of place. Masonic "secrecy" gets in the way.

Embarrassment is probably the commonest cause of a Brother's difficulty in replying to the question. He is embarrassed because he realizes that he doesn't really know enough about the Fraternity to give a good simple reply. He knows that there is much more Masonic activity going on in other lodges all over the country and throughout the world, but he has never taken the time to experience some of it or to read about it with real interest. He hasn't given much thought to the subject. He never expected to be asked such a question by a non-Mason outside the lodge. Even though he has experienced Masonry, he has never tried to express in words just what Freemasonry means to himself.

A well-informed Brother, therefore, will prepare himself for the possibility of being asked such a question. Even though no one ever asks the question, he will have the confidence of knowing what Freemasonry means, especially to himself.

First of all, he will determine to give a Masonic answer, one which asserts the real nature of the Fraternity as a spiritual force, as "a way of life" which seeks to improve men morally and spiritually, by associating with other idealistic men who want to improve the quality of life around them by means of a brotherhood which emphasizes the Fatherhood of God.

In an age which derides ideals, absolutes, the concepts of law and order, and advocates relativism instead of standards of excellence, which angrily demands rights instead of responsibility, and which preaches a nihilistic doctrine of individualism (doing your own thing), Masons find it difficult to explain the Fraternity's idealism and its charitable and educational purposes. But it must be done. A Mason must give a Masonic answer to the question, "What are the Masons."

There are really so few "secrets" which a Mason is required to keep, and so much that he should be proud to proclaim to others, that his principal concern in answering questions is probably the doubt that he can give an adequate Masonic reply.

The esoteric parts of the ritual work, the grips and passwords of the three degrees, these are really the only "secrets" which should be kept inviolate. Because it is impossible to communicate to the uninitiated the joys and satisfactions of brotherhood experienced in "the labors of the lodge," this too becomes a secret because it is inexpressible.

But there is so much that can be told about Freemasonry, about the particular lodge, about the individual Mason, that the real problem in answering the question, "What do the Masons do?" is to say only enough to satisfy the questioner without boring or distracting him.

He can point out that Freemasonry is an educational organization. By means of the ritualistic ceremonies and other educational programs, Masons learn and teach the truths of morality, justice, patriotism, and the necessity of brotherly love to achieve those universal ideals. Reverence for the Great Architect is inculcated because men are brothers only if they are related to God as the, sons of the Creator Father.

He can explain that Masonic meetings, while resembling the meetings of any organized society, have a distinctly Masonic character.. They are opened and closed with prayer. They are patriotic because the nation’s flag is kept in an honored place in the lodge and properly saluted with the pledge of allegiance. They are opened and closed with Masonic ceremonies to remind the members of the principal purposes of the Fraternity, which are to develop brotherly love and respect for truth, not the truths of scientific facts or history, but the truths which guide a man to live happily and harmoniously with his fellow man.

For that reason Masonic meetings do not permit the introduction of discussions about sectarian religious differences or partisan political opinions. A Masonic lodge, if it is working seriously, teaches its members the principles involved in attaining a universal Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

A Mason is also free to explain that Freemasonry is a charitable organization, which acts to relieve the distress of local individuals who are victims of calamity, and that it has created programs and institutions to care for its needy senior citizens, or to provide scholarship aid for worthy and needy young people in college. Masonic Homes and Hospitals, Grand’ Lodge Scholarship Programs, Charity Funds, and the Hospital Visitation Program of the Masonic Service Association are examples of such achievements.

Freemasonry is also, but not primarily, a social organization, which arranges special meetings to which are invited wives, children, neighbors and friends for the purposes of entertainment and sociability. Masons seek the pleasure of associating with other members of the community, hoping thereby to reveal the serious and idealistic nature of the Fraternity’s objectives.

There is so much that a Mason can tell about his beloved Fraternity. But the way in which he tells it is more important than what he tells. When a Mason is conscious and proud of the moral and spiritual achievements he has made through Masonry, when he has been inspired to display the beauties of friendship, morality, and brotherly love, when he realizes that his own personal life is the most important evidence he can give to show what a Mason is, he usually finds it very easy to talk about the Fraternity to his non-Masonic friends. When he knows that his lodge is a spiritual force, when it is learning and teaching its members the universal ideals of the Craft, when it is actively promoting charitable programs and pursuing truth, he will tell what Freemasonry is with conviction and enthusiasm.

But he must know what he is talking about. This essay suggests only in general terms what he can talk about. He should be prepared to fill in the details. When he is convinced that he can supply those details, he is ready to answer the questions, “What do the Masons do?” and “What are the Masons?”

When he is asked the question he must then decide on how much or how little to say. A brief but adequate reply is advised, for if the questioner is not satisfied, he will undoubtedly ask for further information. The following answer is only a suggestion.

“Masons are men who voluntarily asked to join a lodge. They were accepted because they were good men who believe in God and hold high ethical and moral ideals. They go to meetings which they call the lodge, in order to learn and to teach what ‘friendship, morality, and truth really involve, and to practice on a small scale the reality of brotherhood. They also have meetings open to their wives, children, and friends where they promote an understanding of the serious nature of the Fraternity by entertainment and sociability. Practical programs for charity and relief are planned and executed. The special kinship they feel for each other as a brotherhood is their deepest satisfaction.”

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