

# TRESTLEBOARD

## PHALANX LODGE NO. 31



Volume 218, Issue 7

<http://www.phalanx31.org>

July 2015



John Harder, PM  
Master

My Brothers,

Here we are approaching the 236th year since our lodge was formed during the Revolutionary War (Phalanx #20 - Oct 4, 1779). Where are we now? Under our current charter (Dec 2, 1797) we are mid-way through our 218th year, and our nation appears to be sailing uncharted waters, some say much like it saw prior to July 4th, 1776. I have noticed that FEMA ads have been running daily on early morning radio urging us all to have supplies on hand and to make a plan with our families on what action to take should we face natural or man made uncertainties. There are many resources available online to help guide you. Take time to consider this and prepare. Those of us who were scouts remember our motto "BE PREPARED!" Please continue to pray for our country, our far flung military, our lodge family and yourself.

We are now into the 'Dog Days' of summer and have a new Entered Apprentice starting his studies, and a new Fellow Craft working toward his 3rd degree. Thank you to everyone who turned out for these recent degrees, both went very well. We will soon be conferring a Master Mason Degree and a Fellow Craft Degree, stay on top of your parts by attending practice on Tuesdays. Want to join the degree teams? It's easy, meet us for practice and get rolling! Don't miss the Secretary's message for important information and updates. See you in lodge.

Fraternally,  
John Harder - Master



### THE DOOR

By Brother Victor E. Moore

I thought to myself, as my hands touched the door,  
What in the world am I doing this for?  
Dressed as I never expected to be,  
Were they going to play some fools game with me?

I stood there a moment, when I heard the command,  
You must knock on the door with your own hand.  
The door opened slightly, I thought to go in,  
But to my surprise, there were questions again.

I knew not the answers, but luck was with me,  
My guide seemed to know what the answers should be!  
When the door finally opened, and I was led in,  
I said to myself.....It's about to begin!

When they start to laugh, I'll hold my head high,  
I'll not step back, no matter what the outcry!  
As I walked on in, I could feel their eyes,  
But I heard no laughter.....I heard no outcries.

They seemed to be following some sort of a skit,  
I wasn't quite sure how all of it fit.  
My apprehensions were eased, my fears were no more,  
It was not as I imagined from without the door.

As I was soon to discover, it was a most solemn event,  
Instruction and guidance were their only intent.  
When it was all over I knew one thing for sure,  
I would never regret..... that first knock on the door.





Mike Hamrick, PM  
Secretary

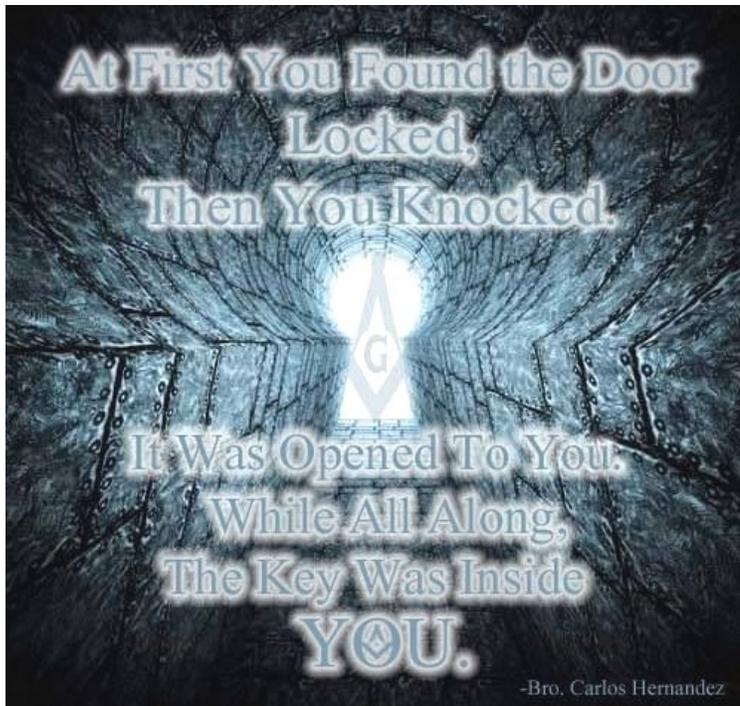
Brothers,

We really were busy in June with our regular Stated Communication and two degrees, and our activities continue in July with Saturday's Lecture Service. This Lecture Service is in essence a School of Instruction for the Lodge, and an opportunity for us to refine our degree and ritual work. There will be time for fellowship as well, so if you are available, we would love to see you this weekend. And with both a Fellowcraft and Master Mason Degree on the horizon (not yet scheduled), our calendar will certainly continue to be quite active during the latter half of the summer; and we will continue to meet on Tuesday evenings after our July 14th Stated, in order to prepare for these upcoming degrees.

We have received the agenda for the September 25 & 26 Grand Lodge Annual Communication, which includes the proposed CODE amendments. We will discuss these in detail at our regular monthly meetings, so that you can be fully informed.

Brothers, I do want to make you aware of our efforts for the Masonic Home for Children at Oxford's residents. We have several Brothers who have championed an effort to provide a Carolina Panthers game experience for all of the residents of the Home. This has been an ongoing project since March, and we have raised several hundred dollars more than the roughly \$2,000 for the tickets (which have already been purchased for the November 22 game against the Washington Redskins). We also plan to raise additional monies to offset the travel expense, as well as provide a pre-game and post-game tailgate experience, and perhaps even get the children and youth some kind of game souvenir. I suspect that there are few if any of the residents who've experienced an NFL game in person, so we are excited to be able to provide this opportunity.

Fraternally,  
Mike Hamrick, PM



### Upcoming Masonic Happenings

**Sat, July 11** - 8am - 1pm: Lecture Service

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

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



### BIRTHDAYS

<b>JULY</b>	17 - William Bradley	31 - John Jones	10 - Charles Whitmire	19 - Harry Hood
02 - Thomas Kirkpatrick	19 - Zaccues Oudin	31 - John Cain III	10 - Ronnie Long	20 - A.J. Morton
03 - Brad Hufeld	21 - Bill Goodyear		11 - Mike Miller	20 - Jeffrey W. Stegall
04 - Rocky Boyle	21 - Michael Davis	<b>AUGUST</b>	12 - David Austin	21 - Walter Moody
04 - Ralph Harkey	22 - James Eskridge	01 - Robert D. Elf	14 - Josie Smith	24 - Craig Dougherty
05 - Garry Krueger	22 - Robert Hall	01 - Billy Howard	15 - Robert Welch	28 - Kevin Stegall
08 - Charles DeKrafft	24 - Daniel Lawing	03 - Thurston St. Clair	15 - James Corne	28 - David Potts
10 - Richard Bohart	24 - Chris Cox	03 - George Ginn	16 - Charles Boggs	29 - John Knox
13 - Tommy Blacka	28 - Shane Smith	04 - Mack Wilson	18 - Larry Glasson	30 - Thomas Mann
13 - Ken Caudle	29 - Roscoe Lindsay	05 - James Gibson III	19 - Boyce Roberts	31 - Anthony Reis
16 - Robert Denton	29 - David Campbell	08 - Mihran Hamamgian		



### THE SOUND OF THE GAVEL

SHORT TALK BULLETIN - Vol.III October. 1925 No.10

by: Unknown

The long summer days are gone, Autumn is here and the world takes up its tasks. The judge returns to his bench, the preacher to his pulpit, the man of affairs to his desk and the teacher to his/her school - the boys and girls following with no quick step. To some it is a joy, to other a grind; but, all return to the work appointed them to do.

Last, but not least, the lodge is opened, tiled and tested; and the sound of the Gavel in the East calls the Craft from refreshment to labor. Soon the noisy quarries will be busy, making ready the stone for a living Temple slowly rising without the sound of hammer or ax; built by the faith and labor of good and wise men as a shrine of fellowship and a shelter for the Holy things of life.

The Common Gavel, it is a symbol both of labor and of power. As the square is no doubt the oldest instrument of our science, so the Gavel is its oldest working tool - some trace it back to the rude ax of the stone age. How simple it is - just a piece of metal with a beating surface at one end and a cutting edge at the other, with a handle for better effect in use. Every Mason knows by heart the explanation of its meaning, given him in the First Degree:

The Common Gavel is an instrument made us of by Operative Masons to break off the rough and superfluous parts of stones, the better to fit them for the builders use; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting ourselves as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The words are simple; their meaning is plain - searching, too, when we think of the rough and superfluous things which need to be broken off and polished away from the best of us, before we are fit to be used by the Master of all good work. Alas, the words are so familiar that we, too, often forget how pointed and practical they are, teaching us the first necessity of the Craft - its need of clean and square men.

As we listen to those words for the first time, we did not realize how much meaning they held. No one can. There are so many delicate touches in Masonry, so many fine arts, that time is needed to see and appreciate them. Its business is to build men, taking the raw stuff of us and shaping it into forms of beauty and use. Before us it holds an ideal and plan of a Temple, into which it seeks to build our lives as stones. So it begins by using the Gavel, cutting away rough edges and breaking off ugly vices. Any man who knows himself at all knows how much it is needed, if he is to be a true man.

Nor did we notice, in the surprise of initiation, that the Gavel is also used by the Master of the Lodge. With it he opened and closed the Lodge; with it he ruled. It is the symbol of his power. It is wonderful, if we think of it, how the humblest tool is put into the hand of the highest officer. So rough an instrument, the commonest in the quarry, hardly seems to typify a ruler. Yet in the three principal offices of the Lodge it is the symbol of authority. The Lodge is ruled not by a Square, still less by a Scepter, but by the sound of a common Gavel - only Masonry could have thought of a thing so beautiful.

Nor it is to wondered at, because no tool in the kit of the Craft is used so often, and in so many ways, as the gavel. Yet, as some one has observed, in all its variety of uses it remains the same. It is like a moral principle; it changes not. When the trough ashlar is first taken from the quarry, the first tool applied to it, in the process of making it fit for its place, is the gavel. Later, when the chisel must be used on the stone, the Gavel - is employed to carry into effect the design of the worker. The Gavel is used in breaking large stones, or for chipping off tiny fragments; and it is equally effective for both ends.

While the Square, the Level and the Plumb has each one use and office, the Gavel is used in many ways, either by itself or with other tools all the time. Cutting, chipping, driving and setting it is always busy, always close to the hand of a Mason. Alike for suppression and for construction, its work never ends. It is the first tool of the Craftsman, and the last he uses as Master of the Lodge, if he is counted worthy of that honor by the merit of his labor and the trust of his Brethren. The Gavel is capable of doing great work, or of spoiling good material; it is at once the test and the triumph of a Mason.

So, naturally, the Gavel is an emblem of power. It is an emblem of the power for good or ill in the hands of each man, being the commonest of tools; and also of the power of the Lodge in the hand of the Master. If wielded roughly, it means ruin. If wielded weakly, it means failure. If wielded wisely, and in the spirit of brotherly love, it is a wand of magic and a scepter of good will. Man is tempted and tested by power as by nothing else. Few are the men able to use it and not abuse it. No man is a Master Mason, or fit

to be the Master of a Lodge, until he has learned to use the Gavel with dignity, self-control and gentle skill.

Since the Gavel is a symbol of the power both of Masons and of Masonry, it behooves us to ask how it is being used. Is the Gavel only an emblem and nothing more, like many another? Do we actually use it to cut away the vices and superfluities of life which unfit us for the use and service of the Master Builder? Or, to put it otherwise, do we take our Masonry seriously, as a way of learning noble ways of thinking and living? Or is it a thing of rote, to be neglected when anything gets in its way - just another order to belong to? In short, is Masonry the power it should be in our lives and in the service of mankind?

As the Gavel sounds in the East, calling us to another year of Masonic Labor, each of us ought to ask himself such questions as these, and answer them honestly in his own soul. What kind of a Lodge would my Lodge be if all its members were like me? What value would Masonry be to the world, if every one of its sons made the same use of it as we do? Do we answer the signs and summons sent to us by the Lodge, as we vowed to do at its Altar? If not, what is a Masonic Obligation worth, and what does it mean - nothing? Such questions tell us where we are in Masonry, and why we do so little with it. Surely it only fair to ourselves, as well as to the Craft, to ask ourselves such questions point blank. The Lodge opens on a new year, and we need to take stock of our Masonic life and duty. What we lack more than anything else in America today, as citizens and as Masons, is a sense of personal responsibility for our laws and institutions, which enshrine the spirit and genius of our nation. If Masonry had a great place in the early days of the Republic, it was because Masons gave it a great place by serving the nation in its spirit. Truth wins if we are true to it and make it win.

Just now cynical writers in Europe are saying that American Democracy must fail - that it cannot win. Of course it has not failed, else there would be more kings and more slaves in the world. But American is still on trial, and it will win only in as far as the village church, and the Lodge over the store, become real centers of brotherly love and neighborly cooperation and good will. When this sort of friendly and practical fellowship is abandoned by more than half of us, then our American Democracy will fail and go to pieces, or else be only a shadow of itself.

Hear now some amazing facts which ought to make us ponder. Less than half of our people ever attend, support or are in any way associated with any kind of church - a fact to make a man stop and think, if he is aware of what happens to society when the influence of religion fails or grows dim. Not less amazing is the fact that hardly fifteen per cent of the Craft ever attend Lodge, or pay any heed to the sound of the Gavel in the east. It is appalling, such sheer neglect, by indifference and carelessness, of matters so vital to the well-being of the nation.

The remedy, so far as Masonry is concerned, is not far to seek. It lies not far away, but nearby, asking each of us to take a new vow in his own soul to make his Masonry more real, more active, more in earnest both in his Lodge and in his life. Any other way there is none, and it must begin with you and me. It is not Masonry that is at fault, but Masons who forget and fail of their duty. It is time for each of us to take up the common Gavel, the first tool of a Mason, and divest our own soul of its apathy, ignorance, lack of zest and zeal.

What can we do to help the Master of our Lodge in the Masonic year now opening? At least we can go to Lodge and be a worker in the quarry; and our presence will increase, by so much, the influence of Masonry, and it will teach us to be helpers in the encouragement of brotherly love and fellowship. No man knows how far a simple act may go, gathering power as it goes. Our loyalty may be a tower of strength to fifty men who otherwise may lose heart and fall away. Our faithfulness will be an inspiration to the Master, who is human like ourselves, and pledged to bear many burdens in his heart. If each does his part, the sum of our labor will be very great, and the craft will increase in usefulness and power among men.

At the end of the day, when the lodge of our life is closed, and the sound of the Gavel is heard no more, the one thing no man will ever regret is that he lived in the fellowship of our gentle Craft, and labored in its service. Our life here amid sun and frost has meaning to ourselves, and worth to the Master of all Good Work, only as we invest such power as we have of light and leading to make the hard old world a little kinder for those who come after us.

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