

Trestleboard

October 2009

Culver City Foshay No. 467 F. & A. M.

*A year dedicated in Loving Memory to
Gaylord "Pops" V. Roten
Outstanding Masonic Youth Leader &
Past Master of Liberal Arts Lodge No. 677*



FROM THE EAST

Congratulations to Dick Pierce, PM on becoming our latest recipient of the Hiram Award for his outstanding service to Culver City Foshay Lodge. The evening of the presentation was well attended and The Right Worshipful Kenneth G Nagel, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of California, F&AM, presented the Hiram Award to Brother Pierce on behalf of the Lodge. And when The Right Worshipful Kenneth G Nagel is installed as Grand Master Of Masons in California at the Annual Communications of Grand Lodge, Brother Pierce will also be installed as Grand Pursuivant, another well deserved honor.

I have mentioned before that your Officers are doing an exemplary job in performing their duties. They have risen to and surpassed the challenges that have been placed before them, and continue to do so. The newer members of the Lodge come to the dinners and to most of the degrees. Even the Candidates come to the dinners and the degrees that are appropriate to their station. However, there is still one thing missing, and that is you, our older members and Past Masters. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience within the full membership of this Lodge, but it is not being shared with your Officers and newer members. I encourage you to try and come to at least the Stated Meetings, introduce yourselves to your Officers and participate in the business of your Lodge.

I'd like to close my article with something I wrote in December 2008 as Master-Elect, that today has more relevance than when I originally wrote it.

To our older members, you are the cement that has kept and continues to keep our Lodge together. Without your attendance at our meetings, we lose the benefit of your wisdom, knowledge and experience. Not to mention your support and guidance for our newer younger members. Younger men have a tendency to be either impatient or impulsive, and they need to learn that all good things come, including positive change, only with "Time, Patience and Perseverance". This is a lesson that we as the older members of the Lodge can teach them. But the lessons cannot be taught if you do not come to Lodge. The best teacher is the teacher who teaches by example, not only words.

To our younger and newer members, pursuing positive ideals, seeking further light and working towards improving our Craft are the very things that we, as Masons, all have in common. However, you should not attempt to build your edifice on a weak, loose or shallow foundation. Not to discredit the knowledge you may have already had before you became Masons, but Light comes from Wisdom, Wisdom comes from Knowledge, and Knowledge comes from Experience. Where does that Experience come from? From the members who have been around a long time, have gone through the chairs, have come to meetings and have participated in the operations of the Lodge. You have a wonderful opportunity to enrich your lives, Spiritually, Masonically and personally, not to mention socially. And there is a way to do that, by active participation in the Lodge, and, as I mentioned earlier, and as you were taught when you became a Master Mason: "Time, Patience and Perseverance Accomplishes All Things"!

God Bless Us All

Fraternally,

David Francis Philips, Master



FROM THE WEST

If you haven't noticed already, the year is quickly coming to an end! As the end approaches, I am forced to reflect on what we have accomplished as a Lodge in 2009 as I look forward to 2010. From the restoration of our building, including a true Hollywood Style face lift of the exterior as well as the interior of the Lodge, to the solidification of our officer line and ritual. It has truly been an amazing year and I feel we have all grown closer together as Brothers and as Masons!

In preparing for the year to come, I wish to create a dialog with the brethren of the Lodge. I wish to open my door and allow any and all who wish to call and discuss their feelings as well as their ideas for how we can continue to grow as a Lodge and as a Fraternity.

Some of the brethren have already done this and have shared great ideas for the year to come. In fact, we will have several great programs coming in 2010 as a result of this open dialog and I expect to see many new committees created in an effort to strengthen our dedication to our membership. This dedication is not just focused on our active membership but also to those who may be less active and seeking greater connection to our Lodge as a whole.

Some examples of ideas that have already been put into action:

The 1st Saturday of each month, Candidate's School of Education

Our Table Lodge being open to non-masons

The restoration of our Lodge

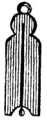
A Masonic Authors lecture series currently being organized for 2010

Please take advantage of my desire to speak with any and all who care to voice their thoughts and ideas and if you do not have any thoughts or ideas at this time, think about what you would like to see in our Lodge or in Freemasonry in general and once you have discovered what it is that you are truly passionate about, call me, contact me and talk to me and let's start to work together as a Lodge to continue the momentum that we owe a great deal of gratitude to our current sitting Master for the hard work and leadership that has made this great year possible!

My cell phone number is (310) 920-3510 and is also listed in the directory found in this Trestleboard. I am available anytime during the day or the night and if you cannot reach me, simply leave a voice message and I will reply as soon as I am able.

I look forward to speaking with as many as wish to call and I hope to also hear from some of our less active brethren as well. My door is open to you all!

Fraternally,
Jonathan Dilley
Senior Warden



FROM THE SOUTH

The Light on the Staircase, Part II

by

Curtis Shumaker,

Junior Warden

In my last column, I discussed in general the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences and left you with questions regarding each one. This time, we will look more closely at the subject of grammar and consider how it applies specifically to Freemasonry.

First, a basic definition may be helpful. Although people usually think of grammar as a set of rules that we use to construct statements, it is more properly described as an attempt to explain how language works and help us understand why some arrangements of words make sense and others are confusing.

The human brain has known how to use language properly long before the concept of grammar was invented. The study of grammar simply helps us understand how language works and, we hope, find ways to use language more efficiently and eloquently. A Mason has, or should have, a clear understanding of the ethical and moral principles on which our fraternity is based. When someone asks us to explain what Freemasonry is all about, should we not be expected to answer in an articulate manner that leaves no room for confusion or misinterpretation?

The ability to speak and write well seems to be declining in our country. Take a look at Twitter or any other on-line discussion forum and note how many entries are confusing, borderline illiterate, or simply impossible to understand. Or, for a spoken example, go to this link:
http://blogs.suntimes.com/ebert/2009/08/the_gathering_dark_age.html

Hit the “page down” key four or five times and watch the two short clips. These people are speaking in formal settings, where preciseness and formality of language is expected, yet they are unable to express a single articulate thought. The price of the loss of our communication skills is the decline in the quality of our country’s political and cultural discourse. As Masons, we are expected to be loyal to our democratic government and do what we can to support and develop it. Simply by training ourselves to be clear and articulate, we can set an important example and encourage people to reverse this downward trend.

Last month, I asked you to think about why the language of our rituals is so elaborate. This question has many answers, but here’s one that I think is especially relevant: Consider how important symmetry is in our descriptions of the lodge—we talk about the precise dimensions of the lodge room, the tiled floor, the smooth, perfect ashlar, and other visual symbols, as well as the beautiful perfection of King Solomon’s Temple itself. Think about how much precision is required in the physical movements of our rituals. Could the wording of our rituals also have a symmetrical structure that mirrors the lodge itself? One tool of grammar that we often see in Masonry is parallelism, a technique that creates balance between parts of a sentence, making it more dramatic and easier to memorize. Take this example from the Roman senator Cicero, which was copied and modified by a recent U.S. president: “Do not ask what Rome can do for you; ask what you can do for Rome.” Notice how the second half of the sentence reflects the first. The only word not repeated is “not.” This is parallelism and it gives the sentence a rhythmic, almost musical, quality. Used in Masonic ritual, this technique adds a level of beauty and stately grace to the proceedings.

Let’s consider just a sentence or two from a non-ciphered portion of a degree: . . . we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure will derive figure, strength, and beauty, and from which will result a due proportion and just correspondence in all its parts.”

Here, we can see several parallel structures. For example, notice how each half of the sentence contains two word pairs, similar in meaning: “proper application/useful rules” and “due proportion/just correspondence.” Also, notice the similarity in the two key verbs: “will derive/will result.” The effect of this repetition in wording and meaning is that the sentence’s message is reinforced, remembered more easily, and expressed more eloquently. Parallelism is especially heavily used in the oaths. Whatever your degree, take a look at your obligation and notice how many word pairs are used, and how many times sentence structures are repeated. As you may have noticed, this makes your proficiency much easier to memorize.

However, I believe the most important purpose of our ritual language is not just to make the texts sound beautiful or memorable, but to reflect the beauty and symmetry of the lodge itself. The words and sentences become the well-cut and perfectly polished stones with which we erect a mental lodge within ourselves, and carry with us when we leave the physical lodge. By carrying within us a perfect, symmetrical structure of language, we are encouraged at all times to conduct ourselves as elegantly and properly in the world outside the lodge as we do inside it.



Gen. Richard Pierce receiving the Hiram Award for 2009

Chaplains Prayer

To the source of all that is;
 Once again we are about to embark on another journey to Grand Lodge.
 Grant us the wisdom to make informed decisions.
 Help us keep our minds open, and able to see the light.
 May enlightenment and fellowship be the watchwords of the day.
 Keep us from harm until all is said and done.
 We ask this in your name. Amen
 Ed C.
 Chaplain

Masonic Service Bureau Report

The regular meeting of the bureau was August 23rd, 2009.
 The Most Worshipful Stephan R. Doan went over the details of the Grand Master's resolutions, proposals, and decisions for the year 2008/2009. Questions were asked and answered.
 Next month's meeting will be November 8th, 2009. Once again the Midnight Mission will be collecting any usable clothing. If anyone has anything to donate please bring it upstairs to the foyer of the lodge and I will take care of it. Or you can contact me at H-310-3984507 or W-310-6527224. With things as they are please consider any possible donations.
 Thank you ahead of time for your help. Until next time, Your Service Bureau Rep
 Ed C.