



Trestleboard

November 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

I have been informed that several members of the Lodge including myself, did not receive the October Trestleboard. I do not have an explanation as of yet, but I do know that our editor brought them to the Post Office to be mailed. He is trying to get answers for me. In the meantime, I encourage you to go to our web page, www.calodges.org/no467/, and download the October Trestleboard. And if at any time you do not receive the Trestleboard, you can always go to the Lodge web page and download it.

This month at the Stated Meeting we will be holding the Election of Officers for the ensuing Masonic Year and I am hoping that you will try to attend the Stated Meeting to show support for the your Officer Line. They have been working very hard in preparing for next year, some of them doing 2 years work in 1 year. You should be very proud of your Officer Line, everything that they do, they are doing for the well-being and future of the Lodge.

At our Stated Meeting of Wednesday, October 7th, 2009, a Motion to increase our Application Fees and require a background check of the Applicant was presented by Brother Richard Pierce, PM. It was properly seconded and recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.

This Motion will require a change in the By-Laws of the Lodge and as required by the CMC, as stated:

ARTICLE IV

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Those portions of these Bylaws relating to the day and time of Stated Meetings and the amount of fees and dues may be amended at any Stated Meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present. All proposed amendment must be presented, in writing, at a preceding Stated Meeting and written notice must given to each Lodge member setting forth the text of the proposed amendment and the date of the Stated Meeting at which the vote is to be taken. It shall have no effect until approved by the Grand Master. The Secretary of the Lodge shall note in the minutes of the Lodge the notice of the proposed amendments when made. When transmitting an amendment for approval, he shall forward a certificate, under seal, showing that the law has been complied with and that the amendment has received the required vote. *[Amended: 2007.]*

[Source: Sections 16100 and 19040 of the 1991 California Masonic Code.]

And as required by the CMC, I hereby notify all Master Masons of Culver City Foshay Lodge #467 that we will be discussing and voting on this motion at our December 2nd, 2009 Stated Meeting.

This is the motion as it was presented at Lodge:

MOTION TO INCREASE APPLICATION FEES

Of

**Culver City Foshay Lodge #467, F&AM of California
(Requires Change In By-Laws)**

RESOLVED, that the required fees for Application for Degrees in Culver City-Foshay Lodge # 467 be raised from the current \$169.00 to \$210.00 in keeping with increased administrative costs.

In addition, for a fee of approximately \$40.00, a modest background check, requested by the applicant himself, will usually reveal criminal convictions as well as any financial problems such as bad credit or similar information. The information obtained is essentially the same as a landlord usually requests from a potential tenant and is readily available from any number of sources via the

internet.

In recent memory, the lack of background information on potential applicants has created situations which have resulted in disharmony and discord in California Masonic Lodges and in some cases, actual fraud, embezzlement of lodge funds and other fiscal/criminal problems.

Therefore, it is also proposed that: **In addition to raising the application fee as noted above, that we (the Lodge) also require the prospective member to himself institute a background investigation and prepay it as part of the application process for our Lodge. The applicant will then present the investigation results to the Lodge Secretary for examination, along with his properly endorsed application and a check in the amount of \$210.00. The Lodge would NOT retain physical possession of the report and it will immediately be returned to the applicant after examination by the Master and the Secretary.**

There is NO provision in the California Masonic Code forbidding this practice and I am informed by the Grand Secretary that several lodges in California already require such an investigation as part of their application process.

It is respectfully requested that the lodge members cast a favorable ballot on this measure for the benefit and well being of Freemasonry in General and Culver City-Foshay Lodge # 467 in particular.

Fraternally,
Richard Pierce, P.M.

You are encouraged to attend Lodge in December and participate in the discussion and voting for or against this motion.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our Brethren and their families a Happy Thanksgiving.

God Bless Us All,
Fraternally,
David Francis Philips, Master



FROM THE WEST

As a candidate, one of the first lessons learned is how to act as a mason, as a citizen and as an individual. We then learn that masonry is a progressive moral science, divided into different degrees and lastly, we find duty and honor to lead us in steady obedience to the tenets of freemasonry.

What comes next? How do we learn as a brother if the degrees are complete? What programs do we have in place?

It is true that we can involve ourselves in the degree work and review what we have learned by performing it. Another powerful option is the officer line. A simpler solution is to sit on the sidelines and watch the show, however, is any of this enough?

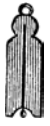
My purpose in posing these questions is not to provide answers; rather, my goal is to begin the thinking process that will help us to grow as brethren collectively within the lodge.

Let us each participate in the laying of cornerstones just as our Brother George Washington prayed in the laying of the cornerstone for the United States Capitol building on September 18th 1793 as the Worshipful Master of Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22 of Virginia:

"Certainly my dear brethren, it must be as grateful to you as it is to me, to possess the great pleasure of laying this corner stone, which we hope, expect and sincerely pray to produce innumerable cornerstones; and that on every one of them, may spring immense edifices. We fervently pray to the Great Grand Master of Heaven, earth and all things, of his infinite wisdom, strength, goodness and mercy, to grant. So may it be."

This is the great work which we are called to perform as masons. Let us be faithful and diligent in the performance of this, our greatest responsibility in the laying of living cornerstones and the building upon them edifices which we hope will last thru eternity.

Fraternally,
Jonathan Paul Dilley, SW



The Masonic Staircase, Part III

Last month we discussed the role of grammar in the life of Masons. This month, we climb further up the staircase with rhetoric and logic. In short, rhetoric is the art of speaking well, and logic is the use of rigorous systems of analysis to uncover truths that are not immediately obvious to the senses. Used together, they are important tools for building sound, convincing, and ethical arguments. As with the other subjects on the staircase, the formal study of rhetoric can be traced back at least as far as the ancient Greeks. The early Greek democracies debated issues in public forums, and politicians quickly learned that beautiful or emotionally moving speech had the power to sway crowds, sometime even more so than facts and truth. As with all subjects in their culture, the Greeks began to systematically study the art of rhetoric, organizing it into categories and systems so that it could be improved. A movement or “school” of philosophers known as Sophists traveled the Greek world, giving demonstrations of rhetorical excellence in order to attract students of public speaking.

It would take too much space to discuss rhetorical methods here, but those who are interested might take a look at the exceptional website <http://www.virtualsalt.com/rhetoric.htm> which defines, explains, and exemplifies many terms of classical rhetoric. For our purposes here, it might be best to simply give a few examples of rhetoric from a couple of our country’s founders. Thomas Jefferson cleverly mocks the tendency to be offended by religious beliefs different from our own with these sentences: “But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.”

Jefferson uses a rhetorical question (a question whose answer is self evident) to make a point by asking, “What is it men cannot be made to believe?” By this, of course, he means that man can be made to believe anything, regardless of how outlandish. Here, Jefferson uses a metaphor to explain the value of reason: “Man once surrendering his reason, has no remaining guard against absurdities the most monstrous, and like a ship without rudder, is the sport of every wind.”

Benjamin Franklin often used humor and plays on the multiple meanings of words, as in this sentence, spoken at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which uses the word “hang” both in its meanings as “to cooperate with” and “to execute”: “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

Despite its value, when too much trust is put into flowery and emotionally charged rhetoric, it has the power to obscure rather than reveal the truth. Although the Roman philosopher Quintilian was known as a great teacher of rhetoric, he was too optimistic when he claimed that those who learned to speak artfully would also speak virtuously. As we know today, countless politicians and despots have used artful speech to encourage or hide monstrous acts. Two thousand years ago, the Roman Emperor Augustus realized the dangers of rhetoric unsupported by truth and logic when a Sophist presented him with a convincing argument on some point or another. Augustus praised the Sophist and said the argument had convinced him. The Sophist, however, overcome with pride in his skill, offered to present an opposing argument that would convince Augustus the opposite was true. Augustus had the man executed on the spot, saying that no man should have the power to alter truth with mere words.

This brings us to the next step on our staircase, logic. In short, logic attempts to develop our critical thinking skills in order to create ideas and discover truths that are not obviously apparent to our senses or everyday experiences. Sometimes it involves starting with what we know, then rigorously determining what true conclusions can be reached from that knowledge — this is known as deductive logic. Sometimes it involves gathering facts to support general truths — this is known as inductive logic.

Rather than defining further or giving examples of logic, I would like to summarize Plato’s great work “The Myth of the Cave” which stresses the importance of logic in a civil society. Plato begins by describing a race of men who have lived all their lives chained to a wall in a cave. They can only see the wall in front of them, which is lit by a fire behind them. From time to time, figures pass between the fire and the bound men, casting shadows on the wall. Because these men have never seen anything else, they believe the shadows are real and have substance. Eventually, one man breaks free, leaves the cave, and sees the true world in the light of the sun. He returns to the cave and tells the others that the shadows are only images of objects, that the fire is a false light, and that the true light of the sun and the substance of the world is waiting for them outside the cave. They, however, refuse to believe him and fear to leave the cave to test his claims.

At this point in the story, we feel superior to these pathetic, ignorant men who hid in darkness from the truths that allow them to lead full and complete lives. However, Plato turns the tables on us by saying that we are the men in the cave, that the world we see with our eyes is merely a shadow, and that the sun is only the false light of the cave. He reveals to us that the true light of the world, the light that can set us free to live is the light of reason and analytical thought. Only when we learn to see past the shadows and use logic to reveal that which our senses alone cannot teach us will we be able to live as true human beings.

Consider how much this story has in common with our Mason journey: the movement from darkness to light, the search for the truth of our existence, the application of a rational, moral system to teach us how to live.

As Masons, we should always be aware that in a democratic society, we get the government we deserve. If we allow ourselves to be misled by fine-sounding or emotionally powerful rhetoric to support candidates or policies which are unsound, we are chaining ourselves in the darkness of the cave. It is a civil and Masonic duty to understand enough about rhetoric and logic to see through the shadows of false arguments and to recognize those arguments that are sound and based in truth, so that our judgments and actions are based on the true light of reason.

Fraternally,
Curtis S Shumaker, Junior Warden

Chaplain's Prayer

Great and Benevolent God;
As the Holidays near, let us give thanks for Your many blessings.
And may the less fortunate be helped in turn. We pray the Lord,
shine down on us all. With Faith, Hope and Charity almost any thing is possible.
All this we ask in your name. Amen.

Ed C., Chaplain

