



Trestleboard

December 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

At our Stated Meeting this month, we will be voting on an amendment to our By-Laws to raise the application fees and perform a background check on an applicant. Notices explaining the amendment were mailed out to the members as well as having been posted in last month's Trestleboard. I look forward to seeing you at our December Stated Meeting to vote on this amendment.

Last month we held our Election of Officers for 2010 and I am honored and proud to say that the following Brethren were elected to serve for the ensuing Masonic Year: **Master-Elect**, Brother Jonathan P Dilley; **Senior Warden-Elect**, Brother Curtis S Shumaker; **Junior Warden-Elect**, Brother Masato Francis Taguchi; **Treasurer-Elect**, Brother Douglas Warner; **Secretary-Elect**, Clarence Kussner, PM. Please note that for the first time in many years there are no Past Masters in the Officers Line other than the Secretary. This says a lot about the dedication of these men and it is important that you support them as they take on their new duties and responsibilities.

The time from November 1st through January 1st is a very special time for me. It's the one time in the year when opportunities are given to us to show that we are truly Thankful for our many Blessings in life and are reminded that as long as we hold true to our faith and Trust in the Great Architect of the Universe, Peace on Earth and Good Will Towards All Mankind is truly possible.

Some of us will be spending these Holidays with family or friends, and some of us will be alone. No matter where we are or who we are or are not with, we are important, we are loved, we are part of the Creators Creation. So during this Holiday Season, be kind to yourself and reach out to others, especially those less fortunate than we are and share some of the many Blessings in life that we have received and help to spread the message of "PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TOWARDS ALL MANKIND". Happy Holidays.

God Bless Us All

Fraternally,

David Francis Philips, Master



FROM THE WEST

The month of December is a month of many Holidays, all of which are centered on family and the spirit of harmony and giving. Christmas celebrates the resurrection of light and the value of sharing light with the world around us. Hanukkah celebrates the preservation of light or the lasting strength of light that is protected and is not extinguished. The winter solstice reverses the gradually lengthening nights and shortening days, thereby lengthening the days and giving us added light in a rising or new birth of the sun and the start of a new year. No matter how we celebrate the Holidays, as Masons, we have a responsibility to share the light that has been given to us with the world around us.

Dan Brown, author of the recently released book, "The Lost Symbol," has spoken on many occasions about his feelings on Masonry. His ultimate statement when asked why he has chosen the Freemasons as a thematic element in his book, the response is always the same. With world religions constantly at war one with another, says he, it is refreshing to see a global organization that meets together with a singular purpose regardless of religion and all agree to worship God as the Architect of the Universe. There is no singular religion in Freemasonry, rather, the collection of all religions worshiping in harmony. This is the impression that we have on the world when they look upon us with inquisitive eyes and questions as to who we are and what we do.

As we enter the Holidays and attend the celebrations surrounding them, please keep in mind the great responsibility that we have to continue to shine in the world as messengers and bearers of light. The light that penetrates into the darkness and opens all the mysteries we claim to possess. One of the greatest secrets of Freemasonry is the passage of light from brother to brother. Let us continue to pass the light of Freemasonry to one another and to the world.

God Bless You All!
Fraternally,
Jonathan P. Dilley, SW



FROM THE SOUTH

Light on The Staircase, Part IV

Now that we have finished discussing the Trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) over the last few months, we now move on to the higher subjects of classical education, the quadrivium, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. For this article, we will focus on arithmetic.

For the previous subjects, ethical and societal issues were most important. However, our discussion of the subjects of the quadrivium will be chiefly concerned with science, nature, and metaphysics. Of course, arithmetic and geometry have practical and ethical dimensions as well; basic systems of counting and measuring are necessary for the harmonious conduction of human affairs even in the most primitive of civil societies. Nevertheless, I would suggest it is the esoteric aspects of the quadrivium that are of most importance to Masons.

Today, and for the last few hundred years, people have seen numbers mainly, if not entirely, as nothing more than practical tools for measurement. To see arithmetic in its proper light, we must go back further, at least as far back as the ancient Greek Pythagoreans. According to the early Greek writers and historians, Pythagoras was born around 570 B.C.E. Perhaps the first human to call himself a philosopher (Greek for "lover of wisdom"), Pythagoras traveled throughout Greece, Egypt, Babylonia, and other regions, seeking knowledge. He eventually founded a religious philosophy based on the study of numbers. In fact, he and his followers saw all the subjects of the quadrivium as expressions of number: arithmetic, the study of number in itself; geometry, the study of number in space; music, the study of number in time; astronomy, the study of number in time and space.

For the Pythagoreans, the most interesting aspect of numbers was not their practical application, but what they revealed about the hidden qualities of the world. For example, consider the basic concept of quantity and substance. Every form of matter has substance, which can be measured and divided into quantities. However, we can only perceive substance and quantity when we have matter present. Do substance and quantity have a separate existence within the fabric of the universe, just waiting there for us to apply when we need them? These mysteries of existence, along with the hidden qualities of things were what drove the Pythagoreans to study numbers so relentlessly.

Over time, Pythagoras and his followers evolved a system whereby each individual number had its own quality. One, known to them as the Monad, represented unity, the indivisibility of the universe. It was less an actual number than a sort of cosmic scaffold, the foundation on which the universe was constructed. Two, the Dyad, embodied the qualities of duality and opposites, the importance of which impressed Aristotle enough to preserve in his writings the Pythagorean Table of Opposites, which includes limit/unlimited, odd/even,

male/female, at rest/moving, light/darkness, good/bad.

The next number, the Triad, was even more versatile, allowing for such concepts as relation between extremes, rankings of quality, and all forms of thought that were needed to understand our universe in ways beyond simple dualistic, black versus white comparisons—it allowed us to conceive the concept of harmony, in all its meanings. Each number up to ten was likewise given its own specific quality, but for our purposes, it is worthwhile to look more closely at the Triad. Of course, it gave us the triangle, whose uses in architecture and other fields is limitless. Plato used it to analyze human nature in categories of three:

types of humanity—curious, ambitious, covetous

desires—knowledge, honor, profit

the soul—rational, spirited, desirous

virtues—wisdom, courage, temperance.

Even today, when looking at the way we group and organize information of any kind, one can not help noticing that the human mind seems to have an affinity for threes. (Think quickly—how many times does the number three appear in our lodge room and rituals? I will list a few at the end of this article.)

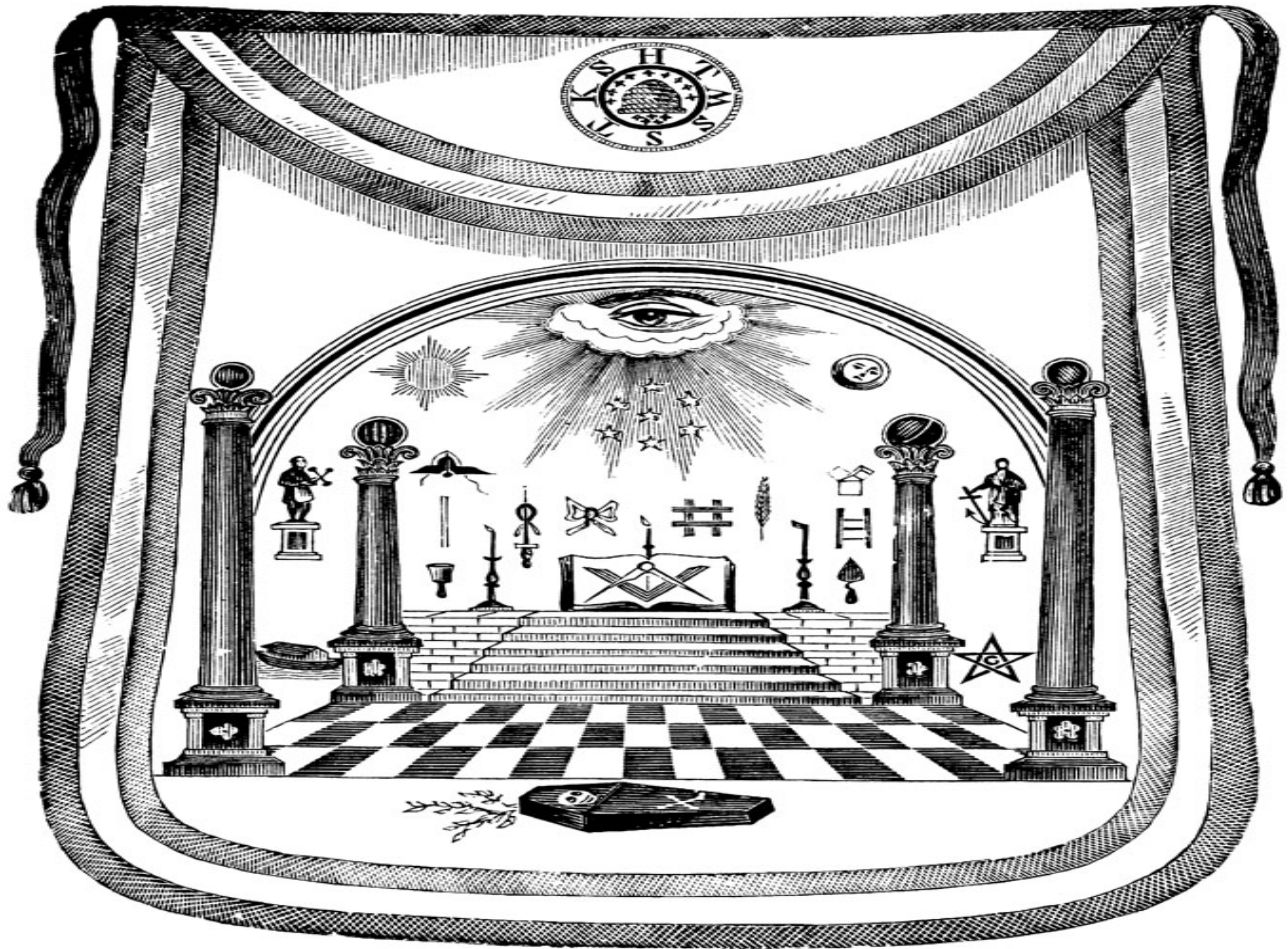
Clearly, the Pythagoreans reasoned, if numbers could provide us with such a powerful system of bringing order to the universe, they must have had profound qualities. To the Pythagoreans, numbers were divine. As they developed increasingly sophisticated mathematics, this belief was reinforced. For example, they discovered prime numbers, those mysterious, indivisible entities scattered with apparent randomness throughout the number line. They faced a crisis of faith when they found irrational numbers, such the square root of two. For centuries, they kept their mathematical and geometrical knowledge secret, considering it too powerful to entrust to the untrained. Eventually, one of their own, Euclid, broke his sacred vows of silence, believing that releasing this knowledge to the world was the greater good. He included these valuable secrets in his thirteen volume work, Elements, which for much of history had the most copies in print of any book, until the Bible overtook it in the nineteenth century.

Although the idea that individual numbers have divine attributes has faded over the last couple of centuries, it strongly affected the thinking of many of history's most important scientists, philosophers, and theologians, and has not completely disappeared even in 21st century America. Certainly, during Freemasonry's formative years, metaphysical concepts about numbers were still important, and this may account for the prominent place numbers have in our lodges and rituals, especially the Monad, Dyad, and Triad. Consider, for instance, how we have three degrees, three principle officers, three lights, three main jewels. Also think about the numerous situations in our ritual when we hear three percussive sounds. For the number two and its quality of opposites, consider the rough and smooth ashlar. For the number one and unity, think about the concept of a single supreme being, which is the single religious belief that gives our fraternity unity.

I have by no means exhausted all the occurrences of one, two, and three in our lodge, rituals, and dogma, but I wanted to leave some for you to find yourselves. Watch and listen for them the next time you attend a degree. Also, consider the possibility that you might gain a deeper understanding of our rituals and see hidden harmonies if you learn more about numbers' ancient, divine attributes.

Fraternally,

Curtis Scott Shumaker, Junior Warden



Chaplain's Prayer

To The Universal Overseer;

May good will and cheer,toward all mankind,be the watchword for the Holiday Season and New Year. May soldiers,wherever they are,be protected and kept from harm.

May the world as it is, learn to heal the many maladies that have befallen it.

And may Faith,Hope ,and Charity ring true throughout the world.

May the good Lord look down upon us, with the wisdom to make the world a better place to live in.

In your name we ask this. Amen

Ed C., Chaplain