

Culver City-Foshay # 467 F. & A. M.

TRESTLEBOARD

OCTOBER 2010



FROM THE EAST

In my March 2010 Trestleboard article I made the comment that “my time as Master feels as if it is flying rapidly by!” I also mentioned that my only remaining months were March, April, May, June and onward to December. This was a fun way for me to say that I have a long year ahead of me! However, looking at my year and seeing the actual months that now remain, I really am rapidly approaching the end!

A lot has happened and September was no exception. We received three new applications, held a 1st Degree, two 2nd Degrees, a 3rd Degree, participated in an Officer’s School of Instruction and to top it all off, we traveled to San Francisco to attend the 162 Annual Communication of Freemasons of the Grand Lodge of California where some unique legislative items came before the voting body of Grand Lodge and the results will be shared at our next stated meeting. So, if you wish to learn what’s new in Freemasonry for California Masons, be sure to attend our next Stated Meeting.

We are now in the month of October and we only have three months, counting this one, for the officers in line to qualify and for the incoming Master to plan and execute his installation plans. This is a very exciting time for a lodge, since incoming officers are working hard to qualify and outgoing officers are counting the days to freedom.

Before the year comes to an end, I hope to see a few new committees created and put into action. The first of these is the Member Outreach Committee. I have already created this committee and currently sit at its head; however, it is something that I would like to see move forward and I would love to have someone volunteer to take this committee into the future. The primary responsibility of the Member Outreach Committee is to simply call all the members on our roster and to check in from time to time to see that each and every member of the lodge is included in the communications of the lodge and not forgotten as members of our fraternity. It has been a pleasure to call members, some of whom have not been to lodge in over 20 years and to hear their stories and their feelings about Masonry.

The other committee that I would love to see created is a Travel and Safety Committee. I have learned that many brethren who do not attend lodge fail to do so out of an inability to reach the lodge for one reason or another and when brethren cannot come to lodge for transportation reasons, I feel we should have a way to get these brethren to the lodge so that they can sit in our meetings and eat with us at our dinners and be an active part of the fraternity. I have already had several brethren ask if I would include them on this new Committee and so I hope to hear from others who would love to help as well.

The creation of these committees is in no way a desire to over flood the lodge with new responsibilities or to overwhelm the incoming Master and other officers as they attempt to keep them moving forward. These committees are an answer to the many questions that I have not only asked personally but have been asked as far as the current state of Freemasonry and what is being done to counter or correct the various difficulties found in one area or another.

Please support me in the last few months of the year as I attempt to lay the final stones in my work as Master. If you can attend our Dinners and our Stated Meetings and have not yet done so, please come back. We miss you. Also, if you can help on a committee and assist in the building of the lodge, we welcome you to do so. My cell phone number is listed with the other officers of the lodge. I look forward to your calls and your suggestions as my years rapidly comes to an end.

Fraternally,

Jonathan P. Dilley, WM



FROM THE WEST

Masonic Education

I am grateful to the brethren who have complimented me on the historical and academic articles I have been writing for The Trestle Board over the past several months. I plan to continue discussing similar topics for the foreseeable future; however, the comments I've received have inspired me to use this month's space to propose some interesting activities in which any lodge members interested in Masonic history and philosophy may actively participate.

Since members of our lodge have first expressed their interest in Masonic education, I have been reflecting on and reading about how Masons have incorporated learning into their lodges throughout history. Because lodges before 1717 were more secretive about their existence and activities than today, we often have only tantalizing hints about Masonry's influence. Still, a number of clues suggest some lodges in the England of the 1600s were centers of scientific discussion and even experimentation. Through some records, we know that Newton's work inspired a number of materialists and mechanists in English Masonic lodges who believed that Masonic rites illustrated mechanistic principles. In London, lodges provided forums for such ideas, and some Masons performed Newtonian experiments with light rays, which eventually led them to focus on the study and classification of metallic substances.

Perhaps Masonry was influential, even central, in the formation of history's most famous and important scientific organization: the Royal Society. For example, a leader in the formation of the Royal Society, Robert Boyle, writes about how, from the age of 18, he was invited to participate in the studies and discussions of a group known as the Invisible College or the Philosophical College, which was a group of scientists and scholars who met to improve their own knowledge and plan how to disseminate it to the world at large. At this time, scientists (then known as natural philosophers) often jealously guarded their discoveries; the Royal Society encouraged the practice of quickly communicating discoveries so that others could apply the new knowledge to their own work. What is interesting in Boyle's descriptions of the Invisible College is that he heavily uses Masonic terminology. Was the Invisible College an early, scientifically-minded Masonic lodge, and perhaps even the seed that grew into the Royal Society? We may never know, but the fact that we can legitimately ask such questions demonstrates the influence of Masonry on the history of knowledge, at least in England.

In America, it seems that the role of education in Masonic lodges had a more working class, practical character. From trade workers on the East Coast to ranch workers on the Texas frontier, American lodges gained much of their membership from the rising middle class and skilled workers. In the 19th century, most of these men could be expected to have some education; they were basically literate, had some knowledge of math, and a general, if limited, understanding of the world and its history. Books were easily available and relatively cheap, and could be checked out of subscription libraries, one of the inventions of our Masonic ancestor Benjamin Franklin.

For these men, their lodges were not only places to meet, perform ritual, and improve themselves morally, they were also places to attend lectures by knowledgeable brethren on science, history, literature, and other subjects of importance. Perhaps Franklin gave us a good model for an educational lodge in one of his non-Masonic organizations called the Junto. This group was formed of men in professions including printers, surveyors, and cabinetmakers. Primarily, they were concerned in advancing in their careers and learning the best ways to invest their money, but, as this list of questions they asked at meetings indicates, they had broader interests as well. The following is from Franklin's autobiography:

"Have you met with any thing in the author you last read, remarkable, or suitable to be communicated to the Junto? Particularly in history, morality, poetry, physics, travels, mechanic arts, or other parts of knowledge?

What new story have you lately heard agreeable for telling in conversation?

Hath any citizen in your knowledge failed in his business lately, and what have you heard of the cause?

Have you lately heard of any citizen's thriving well, and by what means?

Have you lately heard how any present rich man, here or elsewhere, got his estate?

Do you know of any fellow citizen, who has lately done a worthy action, deserving praise and imitation? or who has committed an error proper for us to be warned against and avoid?

Have you or any of your acquaintance been lately sick or wounded? If so, what remedies were used, and what were their effects?

Do you think of any thing at present, in which the Junto may be serviceable to mankind? To their country, to their friends,

or to themselves?”

In the spirit of Franklin, I would like to propose two reading groups for our lodge; in the near future, I will also put forth another interactive project for the lodge.

The first reading group I have in mind would be limited to Master Masons so that we can freely discuss any issues restricted by our oaths. This group would meet every two weeks, each week discussing a short piece of writing related to Masonry, which would be distributed to group members in advance. Readings could include essays by Masonic authors on historical or esoteric subjects, and also works that while not directly about Masonry, are still relevant to Masonic thought and values; for example, one of the first readings I would suggest would be Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” which is perhaps the most Masonic work ever written by a non-Masonic author. Further readings could include poems by important poets where were Masons and studies of the lives of great Masons, such as Mozart and Franklin. The readings would always be short, no more that 20 pages, which should be read with ease in the two week interval between meetings.

The other reading group, open to all, which would also meet every two weeks, would have a long term focus on two works of literature: the epic poem Beowulf and J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings. These may seem like unusual choices for a Masonic reading group, but here are my reasons for suggesting them: First, both books focus heavily on concepts important to Masonry in general, such as honor, compassion, hospitality, protection of the vulnerable, loyalty to family, tribes, and nations, the importance of taking oaths and the keeping of them, and the triumph of light over darkness. Second, taken together, these books provide a comprehensive overview of the English language, from the Anglo-Saxon origins of Beowulf to the place of English in the 20th century as a world language. Tolkien’s main profession was linguistics, and he wrote his epic, in part, to express the modes of English communication at different times of its history, to show its beauty and versatility. As a professor of literature, I have often taught these works to improve my students’ knowledge and understanding of the English language, and it is my goal that any member of the lodge who joins this group, whether a native or second-language English speaker, will come away with improved reading and usage skills as well as a deeper understanding of our country’s language. Again, this group would be open to all Masons of any degree, and even potential Masons or their friends. Although we would discuss these books in relation to Masonry, we would avoid any discussion inappropriate outside a tyled lodge.

Since these groups would meet on alternating weeks, you could potentially belong to both of them. I have not set a schedule for them yet because I want to get input from interested brethren on what days and times would be best to meet. Let me know in the near future if you are interested in one or both groups and we will work out the best times and get started in the next few weeks. I’m looking forward to seeing many of you soon.

Fraternally,

Curtis Shumaker
Senior Warden





FROM THE SOUTH

The Tree of Life and the Temple of Glory

Greetings, Brethren! With the Autumnal Equinox upon us, here are now my words for reflexion:

Indeed, there is a strange coincidence that happens between this creature called man and Mother Nature when the latter begins to shed her leaves of autumn; for this is the time when pensive thoughts take root within the human, melancholic psyche; when his sanguinity is but a distant memory and he prepares for a rigid slumber in the icy arms of winter. Yet how majestic are the colours which line the paths beneath the trees where he has lately trodden! How brilliantly do the ruddy and amber glows burn their way into the brain! There they burrow deeply to sustain this child during a lengthy hibernation after he has set his pallet for a season.

Such words are the result of my ponderings over the industry of man when it seems that half his year is spent receding and that even the birds around him have lowered their tones for the assurance of the faint throbbing of the world's heartbeat. The deciduous aspect of trees and other foliage have provoked what I and others have pondered. It is meet that we should consider a parable of Christ as it is thus revisited:

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! (Mt. 21: 18-19)

Now, the intent of introducing Christian literature is not to be inferred as sectarian, but a fragment of that universal body of wisdom stemming from many faiths and philosophies. As it is in religion, symbolism gives to freemasonry meaning and resolution to the mysteries and to incongruities alike. The narrative, as quoted, seems odd to some interpreters who find it at variance with the forgiving character of Jesus in general. Yet, its occurrence was immediately after the visit to the temple where corruption was discovered and was regarded as equally offensive as the non-yielding fig tree. It is recalled, thus to note:

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the meneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. (Mt. 21:12)

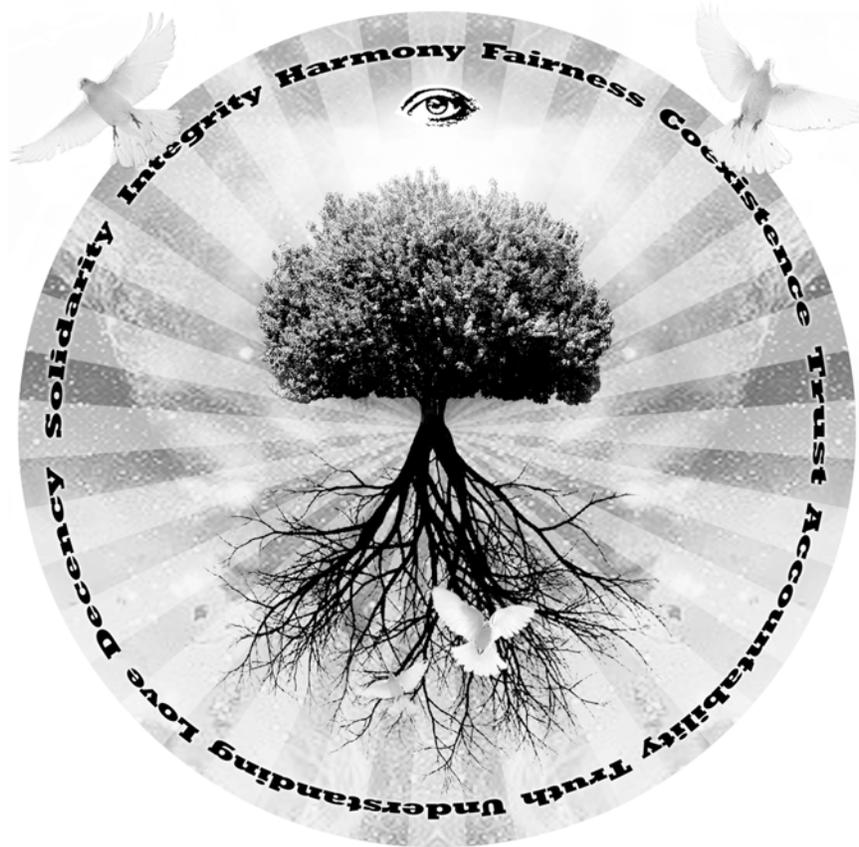
We seem to be at the dawn of a new era of freemasonry, when men seeking truth are knocking at our doors; and what shall they find once they enter our portals? Freemasonry, the sleeping giant, guardian of the mysteries in the modern age is arousing from his lengthy stupor and is prepared to carry the torch. This torch must ever burn and must never cease. The passing of the seasons is not indicative of the recessions of truth or virtue, and the lessons we learn in our rituals and lectures are themselves preventative to the barrenness of mind.

To the aspirant, who knows that implanted within him is a divine seed, will be given means to nurture it and govern its destiny. He shall have no care for the perils of nature, for these have been mastered by the wisdom he has attained. To him, the fervent and amber glows of autumn are not merely reflections of previous accomplishments, but are significant of what is nurturing deep within. The Tree of Life never sheds; neither doth it fail to yield. The temple of glory is the temple of virtue and it contains no follies. One day we shall see a dying world transform into a newness of life. Our dormant periods will diminish in time, as the internal seed takes root. Returning to scripture in closing, and like unto the eye of God which traditionally shows no eyelid, we shall shine ever radiant; for it is written:

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. (Ps. 121: 4)

Fraternally,

Merrick Rees Hamer, PM,
Junior Warden



CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Great Artificer of the Universe
As we leave summer behind
May its memories be forever with us.
Let us look to the New Year ahead, and all that is to be.
Protect us in our new endeavors, so that we may learn from the past.
May your grace and blessing be upon us.
Keep our minds fresh and our outlook positive.
May we be guided by your hand to do the work ahead of us.
This we ask in your name
Amen

Ed Calzaretto
Chaplain

OCTOBER 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Degree/Practice 7:30pm
3 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm	4	5	6 Dinner 6:00pm Stated Meeting 7:00pm	7	8	9 Degree/Practice 7:30pm
10 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm	11	12	13 Degree/Practice 7:30pm	14	15	16 Degree/Practice 7:30pm
17 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm	18	19	20 Degree/Practice 7:30pm	21	22	23 Degree/Practice 7:30pm
24 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm	25	26	27 Degree/Practice 7:30pm	28	29	30
31 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm						



Chef's MENU:

Stated Meeting Dinner, October 2010

Chicken Marsala
Grilled Wild Salmon
Mixed Vegetables
Green Salad
Dessert

George Wollin
 Chef