



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

TRESTLEBOARD

MAY 2011



FROM THE EAST

Our Library's Valuable Resources

Although it will have passed by the time you read this, I am writing this column during National Library Week, which has encouraged me write a few words about our unique and extensive library and also to inaugurate a series of recommendations for lodge members. Over the new few months I, and other brothers, will write overviews of specific subject matters contained within our library, such as history, Masonic education, literature, science, philosophy, and religion. The purpose of these articles will be to more familiarize our brethren with the literary resources available to them, as well as to suggest a systemized approach to using these resources to best continue their intellectual development.

As Masons in general, we should always strive to enlarge our understanding of the world, its peoples, and their key ideas and beliefs. I believe our moral development is directly tied to our intellectual evolution. The more we understand about the world outside of ourselves, the more apt we are to feel true sympathy and empathy for that world and its inhabitants. I further feel that as Masons of Culver City-Foshay Lodge, we have an added responsibility to put to good use the remarkable library Bro. Merrick Hamer and others have worked so hard to develop, especially when we consider how difficult and even dangerous it was for many Masons in past ages to possess books. Once, a man would have had to risk his life and undertake long searches to read, for example, the writings of Galileo; now, we can check out a copy of his works as we leave the lodge room. However, books that sit endlessly on a shelf are a waste of energy and knowledge. Members of this lodge should see it as one of their particular duties to spend at least some time exploring the library's contents and reading tomes from which they may have something to learn.

For this month, I simply wish to address a single author who may be read for both entertainment and enlightenment: Jorge Luis Borges. Although no one has found clear evidence that he was a Mason, in many ways Borges (pronounces BOR-hays) is a Mason's writer. For example, his stories are highly allegorical, using the lives of ordinary men to explore the profound questions of human existence. Also, in almost every story, the main character undergoes an initiation, and, like initiations, the stories convey a sense of surprise, beauty, deep mystery, and profound enlightenment. In fact, although his stories are rarely more than five or six pages long, they can cause readers to feel as exhausted and elated as one feels upon completing a degree ritual.

Masons are committed to the concept that an idea can profoundly alter a person's life and that, by spreading to many people, it can alter the world itself. In several stories, Borges takes this notion to the extreme. In "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," a man conceives a lost, ideal utopia (Tlon), complete with its own language,

history, and sciences, then spends the rest of his life planting forged artifacts and falsified books and documents in the museums and libraries of the world until all cultures begin to reform themselves along its idealistic plans: “Already Tlon’s . . . ‘language’ has filtered into our schools; already the teaching of Tlon’s harmonious history (filled with moving episodes) has obliterated the history that governed my own childhood. . . . At that, French and English and mere Spanish will disappear from the earth. The world will be Tlon.”

Masons also recognize, and try to overcome, the tendency of hatred and anger to outlive the men and circumstances that generated them, becoming a plague on humanity down through generations. Borges often exposes and criticizes this dark aspect of history, most brilliantly in the chilling story “The Encounter,” where two knives recreate, over and over, the duel to the death fought by their original owners. When any two men pick up the knives, they become, in some sense, possessed and continue the fight: The knives “had sought each other for a long time, down the long roads of the province, and at last they had found each other; by that time their gauchos were dust. In the blades of these knives there slept, and lurked, a human grudge. Things last longer than men.”

Although it is the most difficult to read, “The Library of Babel” is perhaps Borges’ best (and most Masonic) work. It presents a universe that is made up of endlessly repeating rooms, each lined with the same number of books, connected by doorways and stairs. (An illustration of this universe, together with the story itself, can be found at: http://jubal.westnet.com/hyperdiscordia/library_of_babel.html).

This universe is sparsely populated by librarians whose task it is to uncover the library’s purpose and meaning. As the story unfolds, we realize that each theory and method of investigation undertaken by the librarians mirrors the real world endeavors of the human race to understand its own purpose. We have, in a few pages, a summary of humanity’s intellectual struggle to understand itself.

Many other stories by Borges explore the questions about ourselves, our fellow humans, and our world that drew us to Masonry in the first place. Likewise, the books in our library, be they fiction, poetry, or nonfiction, address the endless mysteries of human existence. Take advantage of them.

Fraternally,

Curtis Scott Shumaker
Master



FROM THE WEST

Greetings Brethren

In the last Trestleboard I had promised to continue my explanation of the Candidates’ Ritual Education program in our lodge, its process and goals, including the memorization techniques of some of the brethren. As Senior Warden, this is an area of the lodge’s development that I am committed to supervise. While I will keep my promise, I ask for patience while I set it aside this month to address another subject that has deeply affected me.

On March 11th, Japan suffered an historical tragedy. As a native of that country, and with many friends and relatives yet living there, I could not pass the immediate days following the devastating earthquake without

profound emotional feelings. Even before I had learned that an earthquake had struck, I receive a call from a friend in Japan. With desperation in his voice he implored me to call my family there. Suddenly the line went dead. I tried calling my family but all lines were busy. I knew something was wrong. Then, of course, I heard the news reports about the quake and tsunami, followed by the mass destruction.

On the next day, early in the morning I received many calls and e-mailings from brothers of the lodge, concerned about my family, relatives and friends. They knew I was stressed out after being up all the previous night trying to connect with my family and friends overseas. The brethren were offering financial assistance, in case it was necessary to travel to Japan to aid my family. The situation would have made flights very expensive. I do not every recall receiving this level of kindness and support surrounding me, as I have from this Masonic Lodge. Freemasonry has deeply moved me. Finally, after three days passing, I made contact with my relatives and learned that they had survived the destruction. As it turned out, I would not need the generous offers of my brethren, yet I shall never forget the brotherly love I felt.

Lastly, as one who rarely asks for favors, I am asking that you pray for the people of Japan. More than 10,000 people have lost their lives and 10,000 others are still missing. Their families need our prayers and support.

Fraternally,

Masato Francis Taguchi
Senior Warden



FROM THE SOUTH

Ageing Gracefully

Age is a mechanism by which we move one step closer to the eternal East. As I turned 29 today, I thought it would be desirous to talk about how we should age gracefully. Okay, I have not, myself been graceful about it. I turned 49 and not 29. But this is just a number. How we act and display our actions says is how we show our age. As we age, especially us Masons, we come closer to understanding all that is taught to us in Masonry. Some of us take those teachings more so than others to heart, but in the end, we all take a lesson away. Every day that is added to our fruitful lives, is a day we learn to give back to our communities, our nation and ourselves. As the number of our days on this beautiful earth goes up, so should our understanding of life on this earth. We should strive to learn something new every day, preferably of Masonic nature, but also of other endeavors.

The goal should be that we must add value to our lives and those around us. If we each do a positive chore, once a year, we will have at least one for each year we will have lived on this earth. Imagine if we did well every day of our one year: by the time we are ready to enter the eternal East, how many good deeds we would have in our grab bag of Masonic deeds. The number of our age should be commensurate with the number of good “things” that we can accomplish for our fellow man. What those good “things” are has been the subject of numerous

articles and many a discussions in our lodges. It matters not, what matters is how many of those “things” we took with us back to our daily life, and how many of them we were able to implement as we moved forward. Hence if we look at the number of our age, and decide that we will try to better that number by the good deeds we do, then we can rest assured, that as Masons we have done that which is asked of us. You may ask, how and what does this have to do with “Ageing gracefully?” Well, to that I say we can say to anyone who asks of us, how did I spent my time on this earth, “for every year I spent on this earth I performed one good deed for humanity.” Now, replace the year with, months, days, hours, minutes . . . you get the picture. Happy Birthday to all whose birthday falls on this day.

Fraternally,

Mahmoud Ghaffari, P.M.,
Junior Warden

Masonic Service Bureau and Annual Breakfast

On March 28th, the Masonic Service Bureau held its 79th annual breakfast honoring the Grand Master, William J. Bray, III. The Grand Master commented on many reasons why our noble and glorious fraternity is thriving but one quality stands out more than the others. “It’s man’s primal need to search for truth.”

It is that search for truth that brings us together as Masons. We want to know. We have a yearning to know. And we experiment and explore together. Within these shared experiences we become better men, better citizens, better sons, better husbands, better friends, and better souls. This is why our fraternity is flourishing.

Along those lines of being better, the Masonic Service Bureaus in California are formed for the primary purpose of properly relieving the distress of Masons, who are members of lodges in other areas of the state or members of lodges in other jurisdictions, while residing or visiting in the area of the Service bureau. Additionally, they arrange for and conduct funerals for such Masons, visit sick sojourning Masons, operate a clearing house as applicants for membership in local lodges, make special investigations for lodges when requested, and conduct other Masonic service activities that the Grand lodge may direct in California.

We presently include fifty-one Masonic Lodges in our Los Angeles Masonic Service Bureau, representing an estimated 15,000-20,000 Master Masons residing in Los Angeles County area. In addition, there is a very large number of our Service Bureau assets.

Our Los Angeles Bureau carries on those high ideals of Masonry in providing aid and assistance to all distressed worthy brother Masons, and at the same time works to spread the cement of Brotherly love and affection to all it touches.

Respectfully submitted,

Dylan Nicholas and Sam House

JOB'S DAUGHTERS

By Heather Lynn Goodrich

Bethel No. 2 has some exciting events we would like to invite everyone to! We will be initiating three or four girls on April 25th and any Master Mason in good standing is more than welcome to attend. We will also be hosting a jumper lock-in—the lodge will be open all night for this event. We are going to have a jumper in the lodge room as well as music, games, and food on May 14-15th. Admission is \$5.00. We are also looking for donations to help many of our girls attend Grand Bethel in June. The cost of Grand Bethel is \$225 per girl and a donation of any amount would be greatly appreciated.

The Culver City Lodge book and garage sale earned a total of \$206.45, which the lodge divided equally between the youth orders.

If you are a Master Mason, please feel free to attend any of our meetings which are the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month at 7 p.m. We hope to see you around!

Love,

Bethel No. 2

P.S.: We will be selling treats at the next 2 stated dinners to raise money for Grand Bethel!



CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Life is good, life is great.
May we spend more moments with friends and loved ones.
May the sands of time run slowly for us all.
May we make the most of the time we have.
May we help those most in need.
And may the world as it is be a kinder and gentler
place to live.
Amen

Ed Calzaretto
Chaplain

MAY 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Dinner 6:30 pm Stated Meeting 7:30pm	5	6	7
8 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	9	10	11 7:30 pm 3 rd °	12	13	14 Youth Order Lock-in
15 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	16	17	18 ° 7:30 pm Degree/ Practice	19	20	21 Masonic and Youth Order Trip to Observatory
22 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	23 OSI at Ionic Composite 1 st °	24	25 ° 7:30 pm Degree/ Practice	26	27	28 Table Lodge
29 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	30	31				



Chef's MENU:
Stated Meeting Dinner

Chicken Breast
with FENNEL, ORANGE and OLIVES

Spring Vegetables

Tilapia
with MUSHROOM CREAM

Salad
TOSSED GREENS

Garlic Roasted Potatoes

Dessert

George Wollin
Chef



The article is adapted from The California Freemason Published in the Indiana Freemason, V. 37 n. 8. January, 1960

Voltaire and Freemasonry

"I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies and detesting superstition."

These are the words of a dying Jean Francois Marie Areout, French author, playwright and encyclopedist known as Voltaire. Born on November 21, 1694 in Paris, France, he died in the same city on May 30, 1778.

Different dates have been given but these are generally accepted.

It is probably because of his criticism of the established Church in France that his enemies (the Church) labeled him an atheist -- which he was not. He was a deist, one who loved God but hated the priesthood. Knowing him to have been a Freemason, this appellation is incorrect because one must express a belief in Deity to become a Freemason. He even erected a chapel on his estate and dedicated it to God. A writer in the Oregon Freemason best expressed Voltaire's status as follows:

Voltaire used those great talents wherewith God had blessed him for the welfare of his fellow men.

He befriended the poor and oppressed; he fought every form of injustice and always resorted to the use of the pen rather than the sword.

He never attacked real religion, the sincere worship of God, or the honest faith of any man, but aimed his barbs at the hypocrites; those who used religion as a cloak to hide behind while they upheld oppression of the people.

It was the ideas of this Freemason and philosopher set in motion, that led at least indirectly to the French Revolution which liberated the people from the rule of a tyrannical monarch and a corrupt priesthood.

At the age of 84 he was initiated into Freemasonry on April 7, 1778 in the Lodge of "Les Neuf Soeurs" (The Nine Sisters) in Paris with the French astronomer, Joseph Le-lande as master of ceremonies and Comte de Stroganoff (Court Chamberlain of the Empress Catherine of Russia) and Colonel La Roche as Wardens. His escort into the Lodge were Benjamin Franklin of the United States and Count de Gebe-lin of France. The Lodge was composed of the most famous scientists and literary men of the day. Due to his extreme age of 84, many of the usual preparations were dispensed with, but certainly not the requirement to belief in a Deity. He was invested with a Masonic apron, which had belonged to Claude Helvetius. He died two months after his initiation.

One of Voltaire's famous quotation is:

"If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

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