



The Trestle Board



MWSA

6th Masonic District in Texas

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*Brother Rhett McCullough,
President, MWSA District 6*

Our web site is www.mwsa6.org.

Death of Burnis Covington, Veteran, Mason, Public Servant & Compatriot

by Rex McGee



FROM THE PRESIDENT.....

Greetings, Brethren,

Last week at our monthly MWSA meeting the program was given by R.W. Paul Dempsey our District Deputy Grand Master. The program was philosophical in nature and caused all of the attendees to stop and think about the deeper meanings and goals of Masonry. In particular the prayer that is given soon after an EA candidate enters the lodge room was broken down and explained by sentence or phrase. Most of us have heard that prayer, and many others during degrees, many times without considering the deeper meanings within the prayer. We are praying to the Great Architect Above for guidance and strength to further His Kingdom by becoming better men and leading and encouraging others to be better for His Glory. Once the prayer has ended with Amen, we say in unison So Mote It Be. That is not the end of the prayer. It is the beginning of our duty in our everyday life. We are called to spread Brotherly Love and Affection and to diffuse Light wherever we go and to whomever we meet. So Mote It Be. Rhett McCullough, president MWSA 6.

P.S. I encourage all master mason to attend the MWSA meetings. The discussions are in a less formal manner than in a regular stated lodge meeting. You just might learn something. I know I always do.

Burnis was born on October 05, 1925 and passed away on March 11, 2019. These ninety-three plus years covered a lot of things the younger generation calls history. He lived through the Depression, World War II, Post WWII America, changes brought about during the 1960's --- the Vietnam War, Civil Rights Protests, flower children, the growing drug culture, the assassinations of US President John F Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Cuban Missile Crisis, and finally ended on a good note when the first man is landed on the moon. America kept growing and every decade thereafter was marked by its own set of peculiar changes presenting its own set of problems.

Burnis enlisted in the Navy on July 24, 1943 and served until his discharge on March 04, 1946. People who are not aware of historical events may not realize that the

world changed significantly during this period of less than three years. This was due in part to what he and people of his generation did during those years. I'll take the opportunity to chronicle a few days during that short period of time that literally set the direction of the future of our world. Burnis was a young Sonorman 2nd Class and was assigned to the ATR 97 which was an Army Fleet Tug which was manned by naval personnel. On D-Day Burnis & his crew were assigned to haul ammunition to the beach. The Tug towed a barge loaded with ammunition, which was then off loaded into small boats to run it into the beach and then unloaded it on the beach. Burnis said he was never as afraid as he was that day as three of the ammunition barges were blown up and sank. Returning from the beach they would pick up the wounded and dead. This horrifying experience led to a life time of night mares related to the D-Day Invasion of Normandy. To give one some insight into the carnage of this day total Allied casualties included over 209,000 casualties, with nearly 37,000 dead amongst the ground forces and a further 16,714 deaths amongst the Allied air forces.

Upon his discharge from the Navy Burnis attended Telegraph School and worked for the rail road four years and then moved on to employment with the United States Postal Service where he worked until his retirement as Postmaster of the South Dallas Station.

Burnis experienced life through WWII, Korea, Vietnam, The 1993 Marine Barracks terrorist bombing, the 1983 Invasion of Grenada, 1989 Invasion of Panama, 1990 Persian Gulf War, The 1993 World Trade Center bombing, The FBI's deadly siege of the Branch Davidians in 1993, the 1995 Oklahoma City terrorist bombing in 1995, The Terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent hostilities generated from these attacks that are still occurring today. These are the tragedies that easily pop to ones mind, but it has been a constant parade of nasty little tragedies since Burnis set foot on Normandy on D-Day. The world changed a lot since the invasion of Normandy, yet as Burnis once told me in one of our many long conversations about the state of the world---"it doesn't look like the world learned one hell of a lot from WWII, but just think what we would be talking about if we hadn't won that war!"

Anyone that knew Burnis was well aware of his pride in being a Freemason. I'll attempt to categorize his accomplishments that may have the most significance to those of us who are Masons. I think the length and

breadth of his involvement and the apparent accomplishments will indicate to everyone else his significance to the Craft for over fifty years.

Burnis received his Entered Apprentice Degree on May 27, 1968, passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft on August 05, 1968 and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on September 23, 1968.

Burnis served at least once in every Office in the Lodge during his tenure as a Freemason. After coming to Northeast Texas, he became a member of every Lodge in District 6 and served in each for many years. He was awarded a life membership in R.C. Buckner in 1976, became an endowed member in three Lodges and received the Golden Trowel Award in 1990, the highest award a Lodge can bestow upon one of its members. He received his 50 Year Service Award at Temple Lodge on November 07, 2018. He served as Worshipful Master at R.C. Buckner # 1176 in 1975, at Temple Lodge # 70 in 1995, and Mt. Vernon Lodge # 691 in 2011.

Burnis served in the following Grand Lodge offices:

- District Deputy Grand Master, District 14C in 1980;
- Grand Senior Deacon in 1990;
- Grand Tyler in 1993;
- District Communications Officer, District 6 in 1996;
- And Grand Representative in 2005.
- Burnis also served on numer Grand Lodge Committees and are listed as follows:
- Masonic Graduate Advisory Committee from 1991 to 2000;
- Credentials Committee # 2 from 1988 to 1990;
- And the Credentials Committee from 2007 until 2013.

Burnis was an extremely knowledgeable Mason when it came to Masonic history, Masonic Law and he held Esoteric Certificates from 1986 until 2001.

Burnis was also a member of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry where he was awarded the 33rd Degree. This is a significant accomplishment in a Mason's life as very few masons receive the prestigious 33rd Degree. He was a member of the York Rite, Chapter & council, the Shrine, and Grotto.

Burnis in his last years became a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. He was the oldest member of the ILT David Richard Reynolds Camp # 2270 in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. Due to his advanced age and failing health, eyesight and hearing he was not able to

participate in many activities of the Camp. Nevertheless, he was a valued member and will be always be honored in the Camp as a Southern Gentleman and Compatriot.

Burnis was married to his wife Betty for 64 years who passed away several years before him. He leaves behind his daughter Patricia, a son Gary, his son-in-law Bill guy and host of other relatives, friends, fellow compatriots and brother Masons.

Burnis was a man who participated in many great & noble causes. He was a man to be honored for his service to his country not only as a military veteran who participated in one of the most momentous battles in history, but also as a dedicated public servant, and a man who believed in and practiced Masonic principles. I am proud to have called him my friend.

HIS MONTH'S JOKE

Elks vs Masons

Two men were riding in a truck together through Montana observing the wildlife along the way.

Upon spotting a wild elk, the first man says to the other, "Did you know that elks have sex about 10-12 times a day!?"

The other man replies, "Oh no!"

"What's wrong?" the first man responds.

The other man says, "I just joined the Masons!"

Topic 4 - The Grip and Word of a Master Mason

The Grip of a Master Mason

In the drama of the Third Degree, the Grip of a Master Mason is depicted as the "Saving Grace" of the candidate, pulling him from the depths of death and darkness back to life and light. However, too often, that is where the effort of the Master and Lodge ends. It ends not because of any malicious intent, but because most Lodge members do not truly understand their role in what has just occurred.

The significance of taking this newly raised man by the "Strong Grip of a Master Mason" has been lost. We see it as a physical act, performed time, and time again, and view it as the completion of the second section of the Third Degree. The Grip is often thought to hold some mystical power, which having been passed down to us from antiquity will, in conjunction with the ritual, accomplish the goal of making the man a Master Mason. However, remember that it, like many other things in our Lodge rooms, is just a symbol.

The Grip should signify in the hearts and minds of every member of the Lodge, the beginning, not the completion of their role in making the man a Master Mason. The Master conferring the Degree represents not only himself, but also the Lodge, and the Grip represents a contract between the Master, the Lodge, and the Candidate. The contract says to the Candidate, who having just obligated himself to the Fraternity and the Lodge, that the Lodge now fully commits itself to helping the Candidate fulfill that obligation. The Master and the Lodge demonstrate that commitment by the handshake, and upon the F.P.O.F. The F.P.O.F. helps to illustrate how the Master and Lodge will endeavor to succeed in accomplishing the commitment. The Lodge members should be telling the Candidate by this act that they promise to do everything in their power to ensure that he is successful in his quest to become a better man, morally, intellectually, and spiritually.

The Word of a Master Mason

Like the grip of a Master Mason, the Word is often thought to be magical and mystical, inherently empowered to do wondrous things. However, it also is just a symbol. Fortunately, if the meaning is understood, and then properly acted upon, the Word can perform wondrous things in the lives of others.

The Word, regardless of what specific word it is, or how it is pronounced, should be a symbol of the love, the passion, and the commitment, that the Master and every member of the Lodge has towards assisting the Candidate. It is the affirmation of the Grip, and amplifies the promise of the Lodge to support the Candidate in his efforts to overcome the temptations, ignorance, and the obstacles and hardships of life. By this action, the Lodge will ensure that he becomes a better man morally, intellectually, and spiritually.

The "Word" resides in the heart of every man and is the creative force behind his actions. Committing to finding and sharing that creative force to improve the life of another is true Brotherly Love; it is the Truth that is the foundation of every virtue, and the same Truth that

resides at the last rung of the ladder in our quest for spiritual understanding.

“I have taken your hand, and now I give you my word.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Are the grips of the various Degrees in Speculative Freemasonry more a representation of a greeting or a covenant?
2. Does the raising of the candidate represent the completion of his becoming a Master Mason, and why?
3. Do you agree that the F. P. O. F. is a two-way commitment? The Grip of a Master Mason

Several Masons showed up to assist with the sale and help the customers. A couple of the Eastern Star Ladies came to the Masons rescue to help them by providing baked products, helping them arrange the products and posting prices.

The day was cool and overcast and had some impact on the amount of traffic that got out for the event. However, the event turned out good for the Lodge and provided a lot of good conversations and fellowship with community members who ventured out during the day.

District Deputy Grand Master brings Spring Educational Program at MWSA

By Rex McGee

This month the Masters, Wardens and Secretary's Association sponsored the Grand Lodges Annual Spring Program titled "Masonic Philosophy". The program was presented by the District Deputy Grand Master, Paul W. Dempsey. The program proved to be an interesting topic and will give Mason's, both young and old, something to reflect upon for a while.

Right Worshipful Dempsey will be bringing at least one other program at the request of the Grand Master as educational opportunities for the brethren. District Deputy Dempsey has volunteered to bring programs to the MWSA, as needed and requested, as well as volunteering to write several articles for the "Trestle Board", the newsletter of the District 6 Masters, Wardens, and Secretary's Association.

Right Worshipful Dempsey has been very active since being installed as District Deputy and makes excellent, interesting, and timely presentations on Masonic subjects.



World of Masonry Myths and the Reality Regarding Masonry's Declining Membership

by Rex McGee

We often hear about the dwindling number of lodge members and inevitably we hear someone begin lamenting that old age & death is taking its toll on our noble fraternity. No doubt this is a factual statement and the reality of life. . We have come to that time in the study of membership loss to dispel many of the myths surrounding loss of membership and look at the hard cold reality of life. Our Fraternity does suffer losses of membership from death which diminishes our number, however when one looks past the obvious we find a world of other reasons, unlike death, that we actually have some control over.

Let's look at membership in Texas between the end of 2008 and 2018. Ending membership in 2008 was approximately 106,000 and we ended the calendar year of 2018 with approximately 69,000 Masons in Texas. Over a period of ten years the Masonic Fraternity in Texas had a net loss of 37000

David Elliott Lodge # 364 Has Garage Sale

by Rex McGee

David Elliot Lodge # 364 sponsored a Garage sale on Saturday, March 23, 2019 at the local Lodge in Omaha.

The Ladies of the Order of the Eastern Star also had a Bake Sale to assist the local Masons with their garage sale.

Masons. This equates to an average loss of thirty seven hundred (3700) per year. During this same period we experienced an average number of initiations of twenty five hundred per year (2500) and an average number of losses through deaths of three thousand six hundred and fifty (3650) per year.

Simple math tells us that deaths, 3650 per year, and the number of newly initiated, 2500 per year, leaves us a deficit of 1150 per year. This is proof positive that deaths are impacting the number of losses in membership in Texas. BUTTTTTTTTTTTTTT, and that is a big but, hold the horses, the cold hard figures above indicate that the Texas Fraternity has a net loss yearly of approximately 3700 members per year. When one compares deaths to the newly initiated we find only a loss of 1150 per year. We have now proven the fact that death impacts membership negatively, but on the other hand we have dispelled the myths that deaths are our only problem. Where are the other losses coming from? We indicate an average yearly loss of 3700 members and the figure of losses due to death over those initiated leaves a figure of around 2550 (3700—1150=2550) members. The big question now is what is happening to those 2500 members every year that causes them to give up their membership in the Fraternity?

Texas Grand Lodge records and other Jurisdictions records indicate that the Fraternity, as a whole, after losses by deaths are suffering crippling losses through failure to advance, demits, and non payment of dues and a small number of other various reasons. Over the past ten years it appears that we would have had a net loss due to deaths alone, however when you look at the total losses past the issue of deaths and newly initiated one will find that on a yearly average two thirds of the net total loss is due to other reasons that we should have a degree of control over.

Extensive research has been completed over the years to address this issue and various causal factors have been identified. Some of the more prevalent causes are listed below and cover the loss of members who have long Masonic service as well as some of the newer “replacement” Masons discussed earlier. There are some jurisdictions that report losing twenty-five to thirty percent of “New” Masons before their five year anniversary.

Where does the staggering loss of membership leave the Masonic Fraternity? One Masonic writer and researcher, Stephen Dafoe, discusses this issue in one of his published articles called “A hole in our Masonic bucket”. He sees Masonry membership becoming statistically insignificant by the mid 2030’s if the rate of membership decline is not checked

These are not necessarily the “top ten” issues, so to speak, but appear as a prevalent theme of published research on the

subject of declining membership, the reasons for the phenomenon, and proposed actions to make positive changes in this area.

Prevalent Issues among newer Masons.

1. Too much time & money involved in the process of making it to the degree of Master Mason.
2. Masonry just isn’t what I thought it would be.
3. Regular business meetings are extremely boring.
4. Very little training other than some places have ritual study clubs which involves less than one to two percent of Masons in any given area.
5. There are such a small percentage of people who actually participate in anything including attendance at meetings.
6. Too many “clicks” in local Lodges and those clicks determine whether you are accepted as anything other than a dues paying member. They actively let you know that your voice is of no concern to them in the administration of “their” Lodge.
7. There has to be more to Masonry than Opening & Closing the Lodge in an antiquated & boring manner and then bickering over paying bills or what the Lodge will be doing this year---which is generally very little, if that much.
8. Being told every time you turn around that you or some other hapless person has just violated some innocuous Masonic Law, courtesy or tradition.
9. The Masonic Lodge has become mired down in boring & antiquated Ritual which is of nothing but a passing concern for the overwhelming majority of members of the organization, especially younger members.

Consistent Issues among longer tenured Masons.

10. Management issues at the Grand Lodges involving the Grand Master, Office Staff, and Grand Lodge Committees that forget they are the servants of the membership not vice versa.
11. Personal relationships between Masons souring and the subsequent creation of conflicts within the Lodge. Meeting upon the level and brotherly love seems to have been ushered out the back door.
12. “Clickish” behavior.
13. Lodge meetings are boring and there are no regular programs presented to entice members to show up for meetings.
14. Every Lodge has a small group that runs the Lodge with an iron hand and routinely ostracizes anyone who dares to offer an opinion contrary to the opinion or desires of the group and Lodge Elite.
15. Lodges no longer address health issues of aging Masons by offering transportation to them or holding fellowship activities when they would be available to participate.

As one can see numerous issues have been identified. Along with those issues we find theoretical causal factors expressed by membership and possible solutions. Somewhere in all this

data is information that could possibly set us on a direction of changing course in our declining membership.

As one can see a big part of this equation is not replacements for those Brothers that have passed on to their just rewards, but figuring out a way to keep those Masons we already have in the Fraternity. How do we get them to the Lodge? How do we keep them interested in attending? How do we meet the needs of the younger Mason while not neglecting the needs of the older Masons? How do we establish mutually inclusive goals? As Masons we have accepted the belief that from clay we have sprung and to it we must return when the messenger of death visits our door. We can safely assume we have absolutely no control over death as that is not within our earthly province. The other issues leave us with room for a degree of improvement.

Some jurisdictions have started projects to address these losses. These are just a few.

1. Provide transportation to Masons in Nursing Homes or those who are no longer able to drive, especially at night.
2. Start up a phone chain to call Masons who don't have the opportunity to get out as easily as they once did. Find out & assist with their needs.
3. Have a committee to visit Masons who are home bound or in Nursing Homes.
4. Have social affairs more often at the Lodges. Our Lodge building sits there the biggest majority of the time. Bring the family and friends out for activities and introduce them to Masonry as a family organization.
5. Have some daylight lodges or festive lodges where transportation is furnished to Lodge.
6. Consider Lodge waving dues for long term members that can no longer afford dues.
7. Calling members who are going NPD to determine if they are aware of it and if the Lodge could assist them keep their membership active.

I see two things that would go a long way toward solving many of the issues listed above. They are:

1. Learning and practicing the real meaning of Brotherhood, and
2. Developing programs that will make Lodge meetings interesting and a good investment of ones time and resources.

Quitman, Texas. The event will occur at the Flora Lodge in Quitman, Texas

The Banquet & Fraternal visit will occur on the evening of April 04. The School of Instruction will take place on the morning of April 05.

The Worthy Grand Matron, Carolyn Martin and Worthy Grand Patron, Burley Jones are both scheduled to attend with various other Grand Chapter Officers and Officers from other States.

Temple Lodge # 70 holds Pancake Fund Raiser To support Scholarship Program

by Rex McGee



Members of Temple Lodge and the members of a local family teamed up to hold a fund raiser to benefit the Temple Lodge # 70 Scholarship Program in memory of Manuel Copeland relative of the family and past member of the Lodge.

The fund raiser was held at Jo's on the square in Mt. Pleasant on Saturday, March 30, 2019, starting at 8:00 a.m. The Copeland family provided all the supplies for the breakfast, Jo's provided a place for the fund raiser and the Masons provided assistance in the cooking, greeting and cleaning.

The proceeds will be used to provide scholarships to eligible students continuing their educations. This is an example of local organizations, businesses and the community joining together to work toward worthy purposes for those wishing to continue their educations.

In the great state of Texas, education was given extreme Importance from the beginning, thanks to the initiative of some very hardworking individuals. Not only were

District 1 – Sections 9 & 10 Fraternal Visit and School of Instruction

by Rex McGee

The Order of the Eastern Star announced they will present their District 1—Section 9 & 10 Fraternal Visit & School of Instruction on April 4 and April 5, 2019 in

they all Masons, but they shared a common goal of making sure Texas had the best possible educational resources to offer its citizens. To understand the true impact of Masonry on the Texas education system, one must first look at what education means to the Masonic Fraternity. The importance of a quality, liberal education is essential to Masonic degrees, and is covered thoroughly in the second degree. Texas was founded by men that contained a large number of Masons.

Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar was elected as the President of Texas in 1838. He was known as the “Father of Texas Education,” because during his presidency, a bill was passed that set aside lands for public schools and two universities. Some believe that Lamar had the most influence on Texas education, as under him, the founding of the Texas State Library, and the public school and university land set-asides laid the foundation for a Texas-wide public school system. His famous saying, now the motto of the University of Texas was, ““A cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy. ”Because of the bill passed under him, new schools and universities were built, giving children a place to learn and grow mentally and physically.

Finally, Sam Houston was another important figure in the history of Texas education. A Mason and a wonderful leader, he himself did not have a good education growing up. This unfortunate event, however, taught him even more about the value of an education. Houston once said, “It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to hope that my children will be in circumstances to receive a good education. Mine was defective and I feel the inconvenience, if not the misfortune of not receiving a classical education. Knowledge is the food of genius, and my son, let no opportunity escape you to treasure up knowledge.”

Apart from individual Masons helping out education in early Texas, Masons as a whole helped establish a lot. In the late pioneer days, the most common place to find a school in Texas was on the ground floor of a Masonic lodge. By making schoolhouses a part of Texan communities early on, Masons assured that schools and education would continue to be a part of Texas as it continued to grow. Early on, Masonry played a huge part in flourishing education in Texas. Noted Texas historian (and non-Mason), Frederick Eby, said it best when he wrote: “Education in Texas is forever indebted to the courageous assistance of the Masonic Brotherhood. The evidence leaves little doubt that Masons were using every means in their power...to bring about the creation of educational institutions.” All over Texas, the early work of Masonry is reflected in

our public school systems, in our universities, and in every kid who is able to take advantage of a quality education and build a better future for him or herself. As Masons everywhere continue this legacy through charities to benefit education; it’s easy to see that the journey is not yet over. With generous support, donations, and effort, Masons today continue, and will continue, to better the education system and help build America’s future.

Temple Lodge has participated in a Scholarship program for many years and look forward to continuing this program as long as local students need assistance in meeting their educational needs.



Even our District Deputy Grand Master pitched in!

You Might Be Involved With The Freemasons If

by Thomas George
(Carrollton, Ky, US)

1. ...If your yearly dues are bigger than your car payment.
2. ...If you are looking for a new degree team, because you feel you do not get enough practice with two.
3. ...If the only day of the week you do not break bread at a lodge is Sunday.
4. ...If in any year, you can find yourself in more than one chair.
5. ...If you ever had to turn down joining a Masonic appendant body because you could not find a day in your schedule for another organization.
6. ...If, on your calendar, you have written the hat and ring you need to bring with you for the evening.

7. ...If you have driven to hear the talk on the cup of brotherly love more than once.
8. ...If you are listed as a master ritualist in more than one grand lodge.
9. ...If you have been asked more than once to give a degree lecture for a lodge at the last second.
10. ...If you do not pass an open lodge without visiting.

District 6 District Deputy Grand Master Dives into duties

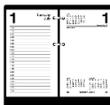
by Rex McGee

District Deputy Grand Master Paul W. Dempsey had a busy month of March as he fulfilled his obligations to the Lodges of District 6 and to the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Texas. The District Deputy is charged with making at least two official visits to each Lodge each year and inspects their books, facilities and offers advice, training or expertise in any area of which he may be of assistance. At each visit he is charged with delivering greetings from the Grand Master and discussing the programs and agenda of the Grand Master for the year.

Right Worshipful Dempsey visited each of the six Lodges and was greeted by the Lodges with enthusiasm and proper receptions. He delivered the program of the Grand Master, introduced the District team and assured each Lodge that the Team exists to be of service to the Lodges.

The District Deputy has also been presenting Grand Lodge Service Awards to eligible Masons and has assisted with other duties and presentations for local Lodges in District 6.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



- April 1st** – Frank Sexton Lodge #206, Entered Apprentice Degree at 7:00 p.m.
- April 1st** – Oasis Lodge #79, Training and Practice Session
- April 2nd** – David Elliott Lodge #364, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 2nd** – Border Chapter #211, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 4th** – Frank Sexton Lodge #206, Monthly Stated Meeting

- April 8th** – Avery Chapter #252, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 8th** – Oasis Lodge #79, Training and Practice Session
- April 8th** – Northeast Texas Shrine Clubs, Monthly Meeting
- April 9th** – Iron Bluff Lodge #1376, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 9th** – Pittsburg Chapter #381, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 11th** – Daingerfield Chapter #906, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 14th** – Temple Lodge #70, Training and Practice Session
- April 15th** – Linden Chapter #576, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 15th** – Oasis Lodge #79, Training and Practice Session
- April 16th** – Oasis Lodge #79, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 16th** – Omaha Chapter #997, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 18th** – Mt. Vernon Lodge #691, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 22nd** – New Boston Chapter #700, OES, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 22nd** – Oasis Lodge #79, Training and Practice Session
- April 23rd** – Temple Lodge #70, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 25th** – 6th District MWSA, Monthly Stated Meeting
- April 29th** – Oasis Lodge #79, Training and Practice Session

2nd Annual Benefit Golf Tournament Friday April 19th, 2019 Benefitting Iron Bluff & Oasis Lodges

4 Player scramble Lunch at 11:00 am Shotgun start at 12:00 at the newly opened Tempest Golf Club, Gladewater, TX

THIS MONTH'S HUMOR

There is this lodge located in the backwoods of a small southern town where the brethren are faithful masons but lack knowledge of receiving brothers from other jurisdictions. During one of the meetings, the JD informs the WM that there was an alarm at the door where upon the WM replied, "Attend the alarm and

report your findings ". The JD opens the door and see's to his amazement, a brother impeccably dressed with an elaborate apron and jewels about his chest. The Tyler being somewhat slow to answer for the visiting brother, the visitor states; My name is John Smith, PM of my lodge, Past District Deputy of my district, Past Grand Master of my Grand Lodge, Past Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, York Rite Legion of Honor, Past Imperial Potentate of the Shrine of North America, who humbly requests an audience with the WM. The JD upon hearing these words from the visiting brother and the elaborate apron and jewels upon his chest, immediately closes the door, returns to his post and informs the WM: "Worshipful Master, The Grand Architect of the Universe is at the door"!!!

CONFEDERATE PRISON LODGE

The story of an informal Masonic Lodge organization behind the walls of a Confederate Army prison in South Carolina is told by one who was there confined. In 1901 Brother J. T. Parker, Webb Lodge No. 182, Sigourney, Iowa, related the story to the editor of a Masonic journal from which Texas Grand Lodge Magazine quotes the following article.

In the Fall of 1864, it was my unhappy lot to be confined, with a large number of Union officers in the military prison of Columbia, S. C., and part of the time in the lunatic asylum yard in the east part of the city. While there a number of us who were Masons consulted together and agreed if we could get the privilege to meet in an upper room over the Confederate physician's office, and post up [practice the ritual], as we had become somewhat rusty, we would organize a lodge for instruction. The writer, with two others, was designated a committee to interview the doctor in charge. We did so, and the doctor most cheerfully granted our request, and promised to meet with us. The same evening, some 11 of us, nine states being represented, met in the room spoken of. One of our number had a copy of the Great Light. It devolved on the writer to test the brethren. After doing so, and all found to be Masons in good standing, we proceeded to organize an informal lodge for instruction, our jewels being cut out of paper. Boxes, properly placed, formed the stations and altar. Having tools to work with, our Great Light in place, we proceeded to elect officers. The writer was elected Master; Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary being chosen

and all appointive places filled, one of our number was taken and initiated an Entered Apprentice and duly instructed. What one of us was at a loss to give, some other Brother could. Since that time, I have often thought it the most thorough initiation I ever witnessed. After the initiation, not being hampered by any Grand Lodge to the contrary, we proceeded to confer so-called side degrees, and the victims, I have no doubt, were forcibly impressed with the ceremonies. Near morning we closed our lodge.

"We soon met again, opened our lodge, and taking one of our number, proceeded to pass him to the second degree, and if anything, was omitted necessary to fully make a Fellowcraft, it was not our intention. After our regular work being through, the Confederate doctor came up, was tested and found a bright Mason. For the next two or three hours all enjoyed themselves. The doctor had many so-called side degrees that we were not in possession of, and he had as many victims as he could handle, and we, to reciprocate, taught the doctor some things not in his Materia Medica [Medica refers to pharmacology; as used herein the author is referring to the common everyday remedies not taught to the doctor in medical school].

We closed the lodge near morning, and soon met again. The moon, edicts, or regulations didn't hamper us. At this meeting the third degree was our lesson, and the Brother who acted as our candidate was of the opinion, when we got through, that he had been hazed.

I think our first meeting was in the first days of January, 1865. I have no record, and have to trust to memory. We met quite often up to the time we left the prison, Feb. 17, 1865. For some years after coming home, I had the names of the Brothers composing this lodge for instruction, but the list has been misplaced. I have not met one of them since we were exchanged. John M. Godown, of Fort Wayne, Ind., was one; Smith of Pennsylvania, another; Lock, of Vermont, another; a first lieutenant of the Second Michigan Cavalry another, his name has passed me, but he was the best posted [best ritualist] of our number. He could take any part, and do the work correctly. The others I cannot recall, but remember just how most of them looked.

I have made the claim that I am the only Mason in the United States who ever was Master of a Lodge in a Confederate prison.

Shrine Club News

by Rex McGee



The Shrine Club held its monthly meeting on the second Monday of the month at Herschel's in Mt. Pleasant. This was the first time the Shrine Club had met on the second Monday of the month which will be its normal meeting date for future months.

The meeting was opened by President Paul Dempsey welcoming the visitors and thanking everyone for attending. We had four visiting members from the Divan in Garland. They were Illustrious Potentate Bob Mantle and his Lady Priscilla and High Priest & Prophet Nik Fehrenbach and his Lady Laurie.

The first order of business was a discussion of the Annual IHOP International Pancake day to be held this year on March 12, 2019 from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. President Dempsey discussed the details of participation by the local Shrine Club and proceeded to develop a schedule for the member's participation at the Restaurant. The schedule was finalized and the President stated that he was looking forward to the Pancake fund raider for the Children's Hospital as he does every year.

Garrett Lyons announced that Lowes had donated a "Diablo" Skilsaw to the club for fund raising purposes. We decided to sell tickets and have a drawing at some time during the near future. We will work on this project and have it finalized by next meeting

The Illustrious Potentate, Bob Mantle, informed us that we could have a local installation into the Shrine by contacting the Divan and setting it up with adequate notice. This was in response to questions about having several individuals wanting to become Shrines, but not being able to work the Garland initiations into their schedules.

It was with much sadness that Brother Bill Guy informed us of the passing of Brother Burnis Covington, long time Mason and Shriner. Brother Covington passed away this afternoon peacefully. He will be greatly missed at all Masonic functions. Our prayers go out to his family and friends.

The Northeast Texas Shrine Club will have its next stated meeting at 6:30 p.m. on April 08, 2019 at Hershel's Restaurant in Mt. Pleasant, Texas. You need not be a member to attend. Bring your wife or a friend as we always enjoy having visitors.

SIGNERS OF THE CONSTITUTION

Known Masons (9): Gunning Bedford, Jr., John Blair, David Brearly, Jacob Broom, Daniel Carrol, John Dickinson, Benjamin Franklin, Rufus King, George Washington

Evidence of Membership And/or Affiliations (13): Abraham Baldwin, William Blount, Elbridge Gerry, Nicholas Gilman, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, John Lansing, Jr., James Madison, George Mason, George Read, Robert Morris, Roger Sherman, George Wythe

Those Who Later Became Masons (6): William Richardson Davie, Jr., Jonathan Dayton, Dr. James McHenry, John Francis Mercer, William Patterson, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer

Summary: 28 of 40 signers (70%) were Freemasons or possible Freemasons based on evidence other than lodge records.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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