

# St. John's Lodge No. 9, F. & A. M.

## Trestleboard

MAY 2019

Jim Russell, editor



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Since our Worshipful Master is enjoying a trip to Scotland and England to visit a few Lodges and Masonic events, I thought I'd speak to the advantages of being a "traveling man" in Freemasonry.

One of the most important rights and privileges of a Master Mason is his freedom to travel. In ancient times, this privilege permitted Master Masons to work and travel in foreign lands, unlike other craftsmen. This special privilege was afforded to our craft, because their labor was required in different locations depending on which cathedral was being built at the time. As Operative Masonry gave way to Speculative Masonry, this



### From The Secretary's Desk

ancient right was retained and a Master Mason was allowed to freely travel from one Lodge to another, even though he is not a member of that specific Lodge.

In the modern day, "traveling" is the primary method by which a Mason expands his Masonic horizons, gains increased knowledge of our Craft and meets new brothers. By visiting another Lodge, a Mason gets to see variations in the work and gains insight into the different ways Masonic Lodges handle their internal business. This valuable experience will make the man traveling a better Mason and in return will make his Lodge better by virtue of his experience.

I have visited dozens of Lodges – in my jurisdiction and in others. Each Lodge has its own particularities, which I find fascinating. Some of the differences that you will find between Lodges: Differences in the "Work" (floorwork, different officers doing different parts, etc.); how budgets are executed; how minutes are circulated (posted, emailed, read out loud, etc.); different Lodge dress (Tuxes, business suits, come-as-you-are, etc.); different programs; how candidates and new brothers are mentored; Lodge bylaws; and much, much, more.

The majority of the improvements implemented at the local Lodge level are the product of imitation after a brother has traveled to other Lodges. "Traveling" is one of the primary methods by which we "improve ourselves in Masonry." Without it, a Lodge and Masonry will grow stale. It is important to encourage brothers, from the youngest Entered Apprentice to the oldest Past Master, to travel. Here are some methods to get out there and to be a true traveling man:

- Attend district-wide meetings and meet other brothers/officers in our area.
- Ask for copies of local Trestleboards to find out when other Lodges are holding events and degrees.
- Many Lodges have websites and Facebook pages, check these out for information.
- Attend the meetings of your Grand Lodge. Grand Lodge events are filled with meet-and-greets and hospitality rooms, which are fantastic opportunities to meet other brothers.

Finally, "Traveling" is just plain fun! Brothers love to meet someone new and welcome them as a guest. So, get out there, travel some and have some fun. You'll be surprised at the adventures you will have and the friends that you will make!

Fraternally, VWBro. Jim Russell

## CALENDAR



- May 4 (3:30pm): **St. John's Little League Game** *Soundview Field 3*
- May 5 (10am): **FABulous Family Brunch** *Columbia Tower*
- May 8 (6pm): **Board of Trustees**
- May 9 (7pm): **Officers meeting**
- May 12 – *Mother's Day*
- May 15 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: **St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated Official Visit DDGM5**
- May 18 – 19: **University Street Fair** *University Lodge 141 vender booth*
- May 27: *Memorial Day*
- May 29 (6:30pm): **District 5 Assoc. meeting (Razzis Pizza)**
- June 13 (7pm): **Officers meeting**
- June 14 – 15: **162<sup>nd</sup> Annual Communication Grand Lodge (Kitsap Convention Center)**
- June 15-16: **Fremont Fair** (*Masonic information booth*)
- June 17 (6pm): **King Solomon Lodge No. 60 Annual Strawberry Feed**
- June 19 (6:15pm): **St. John's 9 Stated Table Lodge**
- June 24: *Feast Day of St. John the Baptist*
- July 4: *Independence Day*
- July 11 (7pm): **Officers meeting**
- July 17 (6:15pm): **St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated; – Scholarship Night**
- July 20 (6pm): **family night Everett AquaSox baseball**
- July 25 (6pm?): **Festive Board with Piers Vaughan, speaker**
- July 27 (10am): **Past Masters Brunch Jimmy's on Broadway**
- July 31 (6:30pm): **District 5 Assoc. meeting (Razzis Pizza)**
- August 3 (10am): **Open Air Degree, Masonic Park**
- August 4 (9am – ?): **Lodge outing to Emerald Downs**
- August 14 (6pm): **Board of Trustees**
- August 21 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: **St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated** (casual dress)
- August 24 (5pm social hour): **159<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** *Ivar's Salmon*

# REGISTRATION TIME FOR GRAND LODGE 162<sup>ND</sup> COMMUNICATION

Have you made plans to attend this year’s annual communication of Grand Lodge? Don’t delay much longer. The block of rooms set aside by our Grand Lodge at the Hampton Inn and Suites attached to the Conference Center has already been filled and undoubtedly those in nearby hotels are filling, as well.\*

In recent years as many as twenty-thirty members and ladies of our Lodge have enjoyed participating in this annual gathering for fellowship, to consider proposed changes in our jurisdiction’s legislation, and to elect officers and Trustees to govern our affairs.

This year we’ll be meeting at the Kitsap Convention Center (Bremerton). Most of the action will be Friday, June 14 and Saturday, June 15; an invitation-only dinner will be held Thursday evening for Grand Lodge team members, while at the same time a BBQ buffet open to everyone will be held, as well. The “usual” Fellowship dinner will be Friday evening. Installation of newly elected and appointed Grand Lodge officers will be Saturday evening. A going-home, kick-off breakfast will be Sunday morning.

St. John’s members usually gather for a no-host dinner prior to the Saturday installation.

Due to the nature of the electronic voting system, attendees of the 2019 Annual Communication [MUST PRE-REGISTER](#) through the Grand Lodge website.



## Take Me Out to the Ballgame

St. John’s Masons and families will once again head to the Everett AquaSox baseball game July 20. “Pre-admission” opens at 6pm into the Coca Cola Food Pavilion, with hot dogs, hamburgers, fruit salad, baked beans, soft drink and reserved seating. Free parking on site.



Here’s a look at our future Mariners vs. the Spokane Indians (Texas Rangers farm club). Game seats will be in the lower rows on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side of the diamond. First pitch will be thrown at 7:05; fireworks following the game.

Get your \$10 ticket (\$24 value!) from WBro. Terry Grove (425) 610-4561. Only twelve tickets remain, so act now!

## DEPUTY OF THE GRAND MASTER TO VISIT

VWBro. Stephen C. Harrell will bring greetings from the Grand Master this month. The Deputy of the Grand Master is charged with the responsibility, among many, to make an “official” visit to each Lodge in his district at least once during the Masonic year.

Deputies of the Grand Master hold positions of great trust and responsibility and are chosen to represent the Grand Master because they exhibit knowledge of the standard work, understanding of the Washington Masonic Code, tact in handling delicate situations, courtesy, and willingness to carry out orders issued by the Grand Master.

The Deputies are invaluable in their many assignments on investigations, reports as to the condition of the Lodges in their districts, and the general assistance to the Grand Master in carrying out his program.

### Visit Our District Brethren

District 5 Lodges	Next Meeting	Time
St. John’s 9	Wednesday, May 15, 2019	7:30pm
Eureka 20	Monday, June 3, 2019	7:30pm
University 141	Monday, June 3, 2019	7:30pm
Daylight 232	Saturday, May 18, 2019	10am
Lafayette 241	Thursday, September 5, 2019	7pm
Queen Anne 242	Thursday, June 13, 2019	7:30pm
Esoterika 316	Tuesday, July 23, 2019	7:30pm



\* You can also stay home, not worry about parking, just take the WA State ferry (about an hour), or the Kitsap Fast Ferry (about half that but needs reservations). Kitsap Convention Center is a short walk from the ferry terminal. Almost all the METRO and Sound Transit busses use either 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, have a stop at or near Columbia Street. Then it is a short walk down the hill to the Colman Dock Ferry Terminal. To Bremerton, they start before 7am; the last ferry back to Seattle is about 11:35pm.

## Stated Communication May 15

Please make your dinner reservations with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, May 10, prior to the meeting. If you need a ride, the secretary will be happy to find one for you. Do you know of a brother who has not attended Lodge in a while? Call him and ask if you can pick him up and bring him to Lodge.

## Emerald Downs Replaces Family Picnic

Our St. John’s Lodge summer picnic this year will be replaced by a day of horseracing and a family buffet at Emerald Downs, Sunday, August 4. As a summer Lodge event each member and guest will be asked to contribute \$10 each and the Lodge will pick up the balance. This will replace the family picnic traditionally held at the Nile Shrine.



A \$50 per person value, this will include admission, buffet meal, official program, tip sheet, and reserved seating. On that date, there will be additional fun attractions with Corky dogs competing between races. The track opens at 9am, the room at 1pm, races start at 2pm, and the buffet opens at 2:30pm.

Play your favorite table games in the Clubhouse Casino located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor!

[Make your reservations](#) with Secretary VWBro. Jim Russell.

# You Think We're Kidding?

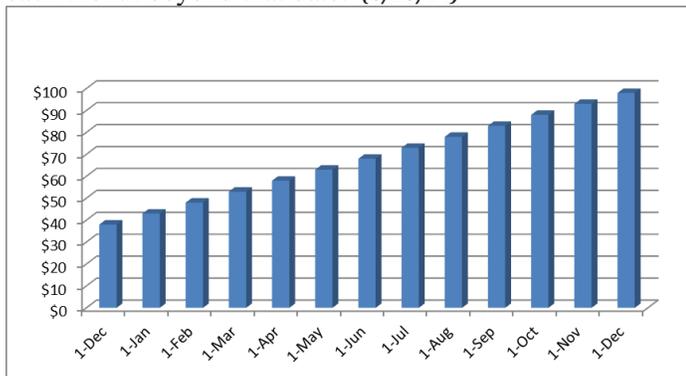
That dues card in your wallet may be current or it may not. Only the "QR" code on the back or the Tyler knows for sure. If you've been receiving timely reminders to pay your dues, believe me its w-a-a-y past time to send that check! Or – if you receive a printed copy of this May Trestleboard – check your address label to see if there's a small \$ sign in the upper corner of your address label.



***This year's dues for those who were members prior to June 2014 were only \$38, but if you missed the December 31 deadline, they've gone up five times already to \$63. Want to miss again in May? Sorry, that'll be \$68 in June! Mail your check today to PO Box 30069, Seattle 98113.***

St. John's bylaws: Section 4. The annual dues of members of the Lodge shall be payable in advance of the first day of January of each year for the calendar year.

a) Any member who has not paid his dues by the first day of January shall be assessed an additional \$5 for each month beyond that date. (6/18/14)



## University District Street Fair

Mark your calendars!!! University Lodge No. 141 would love to see you and your family attend the University Street Fair (May 18th and 19th). It's full of fun vendors and good food. University Lodge will have a booth set up as well,



University Street Fair 2009 - photo by Franklin Donahoe

in front of the Lodge building. They will be selling water for donations to Ronald McDonald House.

They'll also have literature there for people that are interested in what

Masons and members of University Lodge do. Additionally they'll incorporate free tours of the Lodge which generate a lot of interest.

It's a lot of fun and you can learn some history of University Lodge and Masons in the Seattle area.

## Masonic Enlightenment Continues at St. John's

This year Worshipful Master Seann Maria has placed special emphasis on Masonic Enlightenment at St. John's Lodge No. 9. Last month we were delighted with WBro. Adam Kendall's great talk about Masonic art. Following the discussion on Masonic art, many asked about WBro. Kendall's activities as a Masonic historian.



Piers Vaughan to speak at St. John's July 25

This July's speaker WBro. Piers Vaughan has not yet announced his topic of interest, but he is an interesting speaker on many topics to revitalize Masonry. His Masonic membership began in England in 1979, and he joined a number of Orders there, prior to joining St. John's Lodge No. 1 in New York, where he has served twice as its Master. He served as Grand High Priest of New York State in 2014. He is also a 33°

Mason in the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite (NMD), and First Grand Ancient of the *Societas Rosicruciana In Civitatibus Fœderatis* (SRICF). He has traveled extensively across the USA and in many countries abroad giving lectures on a number of topics, ranging from history to talks on the symbols and esotericism of Masonry. An interest in 18th Century French Masonic Ritual has led him to translate a number of important treatises and rituals into English.

## Table Lodge/Festive Board

### Right hand to arms. Ready! Aim! Fire!

Next month, we return to our annual Table Lodge at St. John's. Dinner will open at 6:15pm, Wednesday, June 19. Bring your firing cannon and appetite and prepare for an

evening of fun and entertainment.



The Table Lodge is a more jovial and relaxed opportunity to enjoy the comradeship of our fraternity. A toast at the

festive board of an English Lodge can take many forms. It can be short, long, poetic, or prosaic, humorous or serious – but always in good taste. Rounds of toasts executed with military precision salute our brethren and revered leaders.

They're not always executed with precision, however, and that's part of the fun associated with this annual festive event. If you haven't a cannon, one will be provided or you may purchase an engraved cannon for your own collection.

Worshipful Master Seann Maria promises to do a little "pre-festive board" firing practice during our May 15 dinner.



## Senior Warden Message

[Bro. Blair Neumann](#)



(Message not received this month)

### Travelin' Man.....



WBro. Seann Maria notes: "I will be traveling to Scotland and England the last week of April, and will be attending a meeting of a research Lodge in London, Quatuor Coronati, that has twice confirmed that I don't need a letter of introduction. That being said, there are also plans for me to possibly meet The

Grand Curator of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and visit Lodge #1, Edinburgh Lodge. No tiled meetings will be attended on my trip, but I think it would be both polite and a token of gratitude if I presented a letter of introduction to make my meetings better met on the level."

### WASHINGTON'S MASONIC TRIBUNE

Candidates for Junior Grand Warden have submitted articles in each issue of the Masonic Tribune. You may access these and other news of interest in the spring edition of the Masonic Tribune on line, by clicking here:



### PM JOE OATES PRESENTED 50 YEAR PIN

At our April communication WBro. Seann Maria welcomed our guests and called upon MWBro. Gale Kenney to lead the ceremony of recognition of an honored Brother. MWBro. Kenney invited Past Master WBro. Joseph Oates to rise and directed the Senior Deacon to escort WBro. Oates through the ceremony of recognition as a Mason in good standing for fifty years.

Following his journey to the South and West, WBro. Oates was escorted to the Altar where the Master presented him with his certificate and pin. WBro. Oates was then escorted to the East and received the warm regards of the assembled brethren and guests.

MWBro. Kenney gave a short biographical sketch on WBro. Oates' Masonic travels and invited him to say a few words to the assembled brethren and guests. WBro. Oates thanked the Lodge for the warm greetings, introduced his wife and two daughters, and briefly spoke about his time in Masonry.

### GRIP

Grip, grope, grab, grasp, gripe come of the same roots. The Anglo Saxon gripe meant to clutch, to lay hold of, to seize, to grasp strongly. A grip means to clasp another's hand firmly; it differs from a mere hand. clasp, which may be a meaningless formality. in that it is done earnestly, and for a purpose – for what purpose in our fraternal system every Mason knows. A grip should be given as if one meant it; half of its meaning lies in the way it is done.

## Junior Warden Message

[VWBro. Ashley Brinkley](#)



It's writing time again for the Junior Warden. Question.... Does anyone read the Trestleboard? Is it important for you, the reader, to receive this information?

I personally feel we are lucky as a Lodge to have both a printed copy and an online copy to read and look at. I would hope if you cannot attend Lodge that it would give you pleasure to be able to keep in touch with our Lodge and all its news and events by reading the Trestleboard. I hope it would make you feel part of the Lodge even if you could not be there in person.

When I first started my business, I would go out in person to a client's place of business or home. We would have face to face contact and even share a meal together. I watched their lives progress and their children grow up. As time passes, things change and now most of my clients are only a voice on the phone and I am not even sure what they look like.

I received an invitation to the wedding of one of my long-time client's daughter. One of those who I used to make house calls. The wedding was in Las Vegas and I thought it was nice of them to invite me even though I am sure they did not expect me to make the trip. The invitation was not the traditional paper invitation but rather a link to the wedding where I could go on line and view the whole ceremony just like I was there. I thought it was great to see their special day in the comfort of my own home when traveling to the venue was not possible.

My childhood best friend had a stroke a few years ago and was unable to travel to his son's wedding and his family did the same thing for him. He was able to watch the whole ceremony via video conferencing and he said he felt like he had a front row seat.

What I want to ask you, the reader is, how can we make the Trestleboard better so that if you cannot attend Lodge, you still feel connected like you have that front row seat? How can we make the Trestleboard better so if you cannot attend Lodge that you still stay connected and feel part of the Lodge? I think we can always improve but you as the reader need to let us know what you want and how we can do it better. I look forward to hearing all your suggestions.

### MAY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Day

- 6 Morton B. Blager
- 7 Skott A. Young
- 7 Gary L. Keeler
- 12 Blair J. Neumann
- 12 Anthony K. Porter
- 21 Nicholas J. Mitchell
- 24 Brian J. Downie
- 26 Donald W. Bartholomew
- 29 John O. Nance



# LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER



*The Working Tools of a Fellowcraft Mason are the Plumb, Square and Level.*

*The Plumb is an instrument used by operative masons to raise perpendiculars; the Square, to square their work; and the Level, to lay horizontals; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of them for more noble and glorious purposes. The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly in our several stations before God and man, squaring our actions by the Square of Virtue, and remembering that we are traveling upon the Level of Time to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.*

## Contemplating the Level

by *Midnight Freemason Contributor*

**Brian L. Pettice, 33°**

Last month Brother R J Budler, posted a Masonic Challenge on the Grand Lodge of Illinois Facebook group page. He challenged all to pick a specific working tool to ponder the meaning of and attempt to apply to our lives for one month and then share our thoughts and results. The Worshipful Master of Olive Branch Lodge No. 38, after learning of this challenge, charged each of us Lodge members to do this exercise and report back to the Lodge. I chose the level. Here are my reflections on the symbolism of the level and how I attempted to apply it to my life.

When the level is introduced to us as a working tool, in the second degree, we are told that it is an instrument used by operative Masons to prove horizontals and that it reminds us as speculative Masons that, “We are traveling upon the level of time, to that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns.” This is not the first we have heard of it though. If we were paying attention at the close of the first degree we learned that Masons should, “meet on the level.” I think the symbolism of the level in these two instances hints that the level has something significant to teach us about both life and death.

First, anyone familiar with the works of William Shakespeare recognizes the phrase, “that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns” from Hamlet where one of its interpretations is that it means death. From this we are reminded that we all are going to die. We all have the same destination. We are equal in this regard. Texts from ritual we use in our public ceremonies further bear this out. In our Funeral ritual we are charged to learn, “from the level, equality.” We also meditate on this passage, “What are all the externals of human dignity, the power of wealth, or the charms of beauty when nature has paid her just debt? View life stripped of its ornaments, and exposed in its natural weakness, and we see the vanity of all earthly things save those which go to the growth and perfection of individual character. In the grave all fallacies are detected, all ranks are leveled, all distinctions are done away. Here the scepter of the prince and the of the beggar lie side by side.”



We also learn when the Senior Warden is invested with the level as the jewel of his office at installation that, “a time will come – and the wisest knows not how soon – when all distinction but that of goodness shall cease, and Death, the grand leveler of human greatness, reduce us to the same state.” We are all, indeed, equal in Death.

But what does the level teach us about Life? Again from the Senior Warden’s installation ritual, “The level demonstrates that we are descended from the same stock, partake of the same nature, and share the same hope; and though distinctions among men are necessary to preserve subordination, yet no eminence of station should make us forget that we are brethren; for he who is placed on the lowest spoke of Fortune’s wheel may be entitled to our regard.” Recognizing that we are all equal in Death, we should also recognize that we are equal in Life. This recognition should change the way we live. It should change how we treat each other.

It is intimately connected with Justice, not in the sense of retribution for a wrong done, but in treating each other with that, “just due without distinction.” We are to love each other. We are to serve each other. We are to treat each other better than we deserve – everyone, not just the person you like, not just the person you agree with, not just the person who treats you well, but everyone. For as we are equal in death, we are equal in life. We all are endued with that divine spark; with a soul; with that “immortal part which survives the grave and bears the nearest affinity to that Supreme Intelligence which pervades and animates all nature, and which can never, no never, die.”

I am reminded of a scene in lecture in the upcoming Feast of the Paschal Lamb portrayed by the Scottish Rite. On the evening of the Last Supper, Christ’s disciples argued about which among them was the greatest. Just as we often are – as I often am – they were concerned with matters of ego and of passions that have no importance. Jesus responded by giving them a lesson in sacrifice and humility as he washed their feet. It is that kind of humility, that kind of sacrifice, that kind of selflessness that the level challenges us to strive for. These are the things I thought of as I contemplated the level this month. These are the things I tried to remember and apply to my interactions with my fellow human beings.

**Brian L. Pettice, 33°** is a Past Master of Anchor Lodge No. 980 and plural member of Olive Branch Lodge No. 38 in Danville, IL. He is also an active member of both the York and Scottish Rites. He is employed as an electrician at the University of Illinois and lives near Alvin, IL with his wife Janet and their son Aidan. His email address is [aasrMason@gmail.com](mailto:aasrMason@gmail.com).

## MP Armouti asks government to explain Masonic presence in Jordan

MP Saleh Al-Armouti addressed several questions to the government about what he called Masonic clubs and their activities in Jordan.

This came in an internal memorandum submitted by MP Armouti to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, which included questions to the Minister of the Interior Samir Moubaidin, on the *activities of Masonic clubs, sources of their foreign funding, and called on the government to disclose the names of the institutions and ministers who have ties or links to these entities.*

The MP pointed out that the law of associations and social associations prohibits the establishment of Masonic clubs in Jordan, adding that these clubs organize forums under the name “Governorate of Jordan”, and asked the government how can a conference like this be legally organized under the official patronage of the state.

### STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE



WBro. Nicholas Franz, Master of King Solomon Lodge No. 60, invites the brethren of St. John’s to attend the King Solomon annual **all-you-can-eat** strawberry feed, Monday, June 17. Shortcake will be served at 6:30pm, followed by a welcome and entertainment for the men and ladies.

This will be the first appearance following the close of Grand Lodge for our new Grand Master and newly elected Senior and Junior Grand Wardens. Several brethren from St. John’s will be smacking their lips all the way to Auburn!

### SHOW ME!

I would rather see a Mason, than hear one any day,  
I would rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.

The eye’s a better pupil and more willing than the ear,  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example’s always clear.  
And the best of all the Masons are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.

I can soon learn how to do it if you’ll let me see it done,  
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.

And the lectures you deliver may be wise and true,  
But I’d rather get my lesson by observing what you do.  
For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,  
But there’s no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Bro. [Edgar Albert Guest](#)

## Proud To Be A Mason

By MW Thomas H. Galyen, Past Grand Master, Oklahoma

How proud are you to be a Mason? I know that you are proud to be a Mason because of your involvement over the years in your Lodge. I know that you are proud to be a Mason because of your involvement in the education of our brethren in the teachings of Freemasonry. I know that you are proud to be a Mason because you live the type of life that is a good example to our brethren.

Pride is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as “A sense of personal dignity; a feeling of pleasure because of something achieved, done or owned.” In our daily lives we strive to show pride in everything we do. We are proud of our professional work. We are proud of our family. We are proud of our home. As a Mason, we are proud of what Freemasonry stands for and the great history of our unique fraternity. Now, we need to show the world that we are Proud to be a Mason and why we are Proud to be a Mason.

As an individual you can show that you are Proud to be a Mason by living your life in such a way that any one you come in contact with would want to be your friend and follow your example. This can be exemplified by helping your neighbor in a time of need or helping your colleagues whenever necessary, but mostly this can be exemplified by being a humanitarian every day.

As a leader in your Lodge, you can show that you are Proud to be a Mason by living your life that would be in conformity to the teachings you received when you became a Master Mason.

By participating in community projects, local school projects and humanitarian projects we can “strut our stuff” and lead by example. We must let our friends and neighbors know that Freemasonry is something to be proud of and we are letting our light shine. Participation can take several forms. Contribution of your time is essential but financial contributions also can be extremely beneficial to spreading our light and telling the world that we are part of the community and are Proud to be a Mason.

Let’s show our pride to everyone we encounter each and every day. Let’s show our pride by getting involved in our community and schools. Let’s show the world that we are Proud to be a Mason!

*Sinko de Mayo*



## PRINCE HALL'S RETURN

### Why an African American Freemasons group “returned” to one of slave trade’s darkest places

By [Joy Notoma](#) in Cotonou, Benin

When a group of Prince Hall Masons from North Carolina arrived in Cotonou, Benin for the inauguration of a new Grand Lodge in Cotonou, the cultural significance wasn't lost on the Masons from Benin.

After The American Revolutionary War (1775-83), a formerly enslaved man from Massachusetts who had fought in the war for independence, was attracted to Freemason ideals like brotherly love, justice, and liberty, but the exclusively white group wouldn't allow a black man in its ranks. The man, [Prince Hall](#), wasn't one to take no for an answer, though. With all the traditional tenets of Masonry, he decided to start his own group of Masons.

The group was granted a full charter in 1784 by the Grand Lodge of England and now has Lodges all over the world, including in West African nations besides Benin, like Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Liberia. Prince Hall Masons in West Africa number into the hundreds.

The inauguration of a Prince Hall Lodge in Benin, where more than a million Africans, sold into slavery, departed the African coast, made the Masons from Benin emotional at the mention of it. But it wasn't just the building. It was the fact that a delegation of African Americans had made the trip for the event. A sect of Freemasons born out of the type of discrimination that had never been seen in Benin, yet which the Kingdom of Dahomey (now Benin) had indirectly sanctioned by way of its participation in the slave trade was now welcoming black Americans to Benin. To the Beninese Masons, it was like a rare moment to right the wrongs of history.

“We have to welcome our brothers back. We want to say that we're sorry for what happened all those years ago,” said Ismael Ogon, a French-speaking Prince Hall Mason from Cotonou. At the inauguration, sentiments like these were echoed over and over by the Beninese Prince Hall Masons.



Milton Fitch a Prince Hall Mason from North Carolina visits the Slave Route in Ouidah with Beninese Masons

In the United States, Prince Hall Masons have been a part of several landmark struggles for black civil rights, according to Milton Fitch, a state Senator from North Carolina, who presided over the inauguration. “Anywhere there has been achievement for black folks, Prince Hall Masons have been a part of it,” he said.

A day before the inauguration event, the black American and Beninese Prince Hall Masons took a guided tour of the Slave Route in Ouidah (Route d'esclavages), a UNESCO-sponsored site of stops along the road where enslaved people walked to the port to be taken abroad in chains. The tour includes stops at sites like Place Chacha, where Africans were auctioned and branded with markers of sale before making the arduous walk to the ocean. At one stop, The Memorial of Remembrance, the group took a moment of silence for the enslaved people who died even before boarding the ships.

Cosmo Kenton, an American Mason, was moved by the gravity of the tour, but he didn't entertain any illusion about the significance of his trip. “It's significant for me, but I can't speak for anyone else,” he said while standing at the [Door of No Return](#), a monument to the site where slave ships left port on the shores of the Atlantic in Ouidah.



For Kenton, the beauty is in the symbolism of his “return” as a member of a group of black men that values freedom, integrity, and social service. But he's not sure that outside of the circle of Masons, the question of reconciliation for the evils of slavery between African Americans and Africans carries much weight to the average person on either continent.

With the rise of heritage tourism in places like Ghana, Benin, and Liberia, people of the [diaspora](#) who come to Africa seeking a genuine connection with the region of their ancestry sometimes encounter the reality that many people on the continent do not feel the connectedness of shared ancestry that people of the diaspora envision.

It is true that without a DNA test, diasporans can't be sure of exactly where they are from in Africa. Enslaved people in the United States mostly came from Senegambia and The Gold Coast (Ghana), while enslaved people from the Bight of Benin mostly went to the French Caribbean, Cuba, Trinidad, and Brazil. Centuries of cultural diffusion and genetic intermingling have shifted the people's kinship so that Africans and black Americans are more like distant cousins than brothers.

Towards the end of the evening, the state senator Milton Fitch led the gathering in a rendition of “Amazing Grace,” a Christian hymn [written by a former slave trader](#) that's a staple African American spiritual.

From all indications, each Mason present was rapt with the emotion. Judging from the warmth in the room, the symbolism of their bond was enough.

## THE THINGS THEY CARRIED

They carried P-38 can openers and heat tabs, watches and dog tags, insect repellent, gum, cigarettes, Zippo lighters, salt tablets, compress bandages, ponchos, Kool-Aid, two or three canteens of water, iodine tablets, sterno, LRRP-rations, and C-rations stuffed in socks.

They carried standard fatigues, jungle boots, bush hats, flak jackets, and steel pots.

They carried the M-16 assault rifle.

They carried trip flares and Claymore mines, M-60 machine guns, the M-70 grenade launcher, M-14's, CR-15s, Stoners, Swedish K's, 66 mm Laws, shotguns, 45 caliber pistols, silencers, the sound of bullets, rockets, and choppers, and sometimes the sound of silence.

They carried C-4 plastic explosives, an assortment of hand grenades, PRC-25 radios, knives and machetes.

Some carried napalm, CBU's, and large bombs; some risked their lives to rescue others.

Some escaped the fear, but dealt with the death and damages.

Some made very hard decisions, and some just tried to survive.



They carried malaria, dysentery, ringworms, and leaches. They carried the land itself as it hardened on their boots.

They carried stationery, pencils, and pictures of their loved ones real and imagined.

They carried love for people in the real world, and love for one another. And sometimes they disguised that love: "Don't mean nothin'!"

They carried memories!

For the most part, they carried themselves with poise and a kind of dignity. Now and then, there were times when panic set in, and people squealed, or wanted to, but couldn't; when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and said, "Dear God," and hugged the earth and fired their weapons blindly, and cringed and begged for the noise to stop, and went wild and made stupid promises to themselves and God and their parents, hoping not to die.

They carried the traditions of the United States military, and memories and images of those who served before them.

They carried grief, terror, longing, and their reputations.

They carried the soldier's greatest fear, the embarrassment of dishonor.

They crawled into tunnels, walked point, and advanced or flew into fire, so as not to die of embarrassment.

They were afraid of dying, but too afraid to show it.

They carried the emotional baggage of men and women who might die at any moment.

They carried the weight of the world, and the weight of every free citizen of America.

**THEY CARRIED EACH OTHER.**

~ Author Unknown

## Stated Communication Wednesday, May 15

On this date in history:

**1869** National Woman Suffrage Association forms in New York, founded by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

**1918** Washington Senator Walter Johnson pitches 1-0, 18 inning game

**1928** Mickey Mouse makes his 1st ever appearance in silent film "Plane Crazy"

**1940** McDonald's opens its first restaurant in San Bernardino, California

### **St. John's Little League – Let's Go!**

*This Saturday afternoon May 4, (3:30pm)* the St. John's Little League team will be playing a game at Soundview Playfield No. 3. Several brothers of the Lodge hope to attend and root the team to victory. Our AAA Northwest Little League team will be the home team vs. Fisher Plumbing on Soundview Field 3, 1590 NW 90<sup>th</sup> St., in the Crown Hill neighborhood of North Seattle, just north of Holman Road & 15<sup>th</sup> NW. Last year this team won it all!

This park features two baseball fields with backstops, a soccer field, a playground for the kids featuring slides, swings (and baby swings!) and climbing features, walking trails, and plenty of open space for tossing a Frisbee. Bring the family.

### **MASTER MASONS RAISED IN MAY**

*Date Raised:*

5/3/1955	Morton B. Blager
5/31/1956	Harry L. Arthur
5/16/1962	Eugene V. Kashpureff
5/26/1965	Morrey Eskenazi
55/29/1971	Alex A. Skistimas
5/29/1971	J. Michael Wilderman
55/10/1973	Vincent Di Giulio
55/29/1974	George S. Serpanos
5/29/1974	Charles S. Tine
5/8/1978	Darrel R. Schrader
5/19/1978	Serco S. Tokatlian
55/26/1979	Edgar H. Carthell, Jr.
5/23/1983	John R. Adamson
5/17/1984	Bryan E. Hopkins
5/13/1987	Helmuth
5/29/1993	J. Joseph Duwors
5/11/2002	Kenneth D. Wehl
5/22/2012	Jeffrey L. Pullen
5/22/2012	Paul N. Bernal
5/22/2012	David J. Holdsworth
5/20/2013	Kenton J. Curtis



**A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.**