

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

Trestleboard

JANUARY 2020

Jim Russell, editor



Serving Seattle since 1860

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FROM THE EAST

[Blair Neumann](#), Master



The admonition to “do good unto all” is one of my favorite passages in Masonry. I feel like it captures the essence of our Craft in four simple words, summarizing our work without giving away too much while offering vast opportunities for self-reflection.

Good men do good work, and we work diligently toward good ends, but we are not admonished to extend good work beyond the length of our cable tow. Indeed, we often do our most good when we focus

first on ourselves and then on our families and communities.

It is not selfish to take care of one’s own needs before those of others. A man who treats himself with genuine kindness is better able to treat others with equal or greater kindness. It’s rare that we’re able to sustain offering more for others than we have ourselves.

Taking care of one’s self creates opportunities to help take care of others. If I can offer my son three square meals a day then it’s because I know how to provide three square meals a day for myself and scaling up for somebody who I care about is a joy; if the oxygen masks fell during flight, I’d like to think that I would follow protocol and put on my mask first.

For some of us, it may feel easier to love our family members in some ways more than it is to love ourselves, while for others, a natural expansion of love from the self to share with those around us may feel just right. Either way, the truth that true love for others begins with true love of self cannot be understated.

We provide for our families through our vocations which often create one or more of our other primary communities. The work that we pour ourselves into cannot help but reflect our true inner selves, and give credit to the people that we serve.

Many of us are members of any number of communities including the Brotherhood of Masonry, while for others, family, work, and Lodge may nearly complete the list. Freemasonry can be our third place after the home and work. It can also be one of many.

We each have Brothers that we haven’t yet met, and our patriotism unites us as a nation. Extending the concept of community to include those that we don’t personally know allows us to extend good work beyond our usual communities. It’s okay to focus the majority of one’s goodwill on people that we actually know and have reciprocal relationships with, and we should extend genuine goodwill to those who we don’t know personally except where doing so might violate ourselves, our families, or our communities.

CALENDAR



- January 6 (7:30pm): University 141
- January 6 (7:30pm): Eureka 20
- Jan. 8 (7:30pm): Greenwood 253
- January 9 (7pm): Officers meeting
- Jan. 9 (7:30pm): Queen Anne 242
- January 10 (7:30pm): Rainier 189
- January 15 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- January 20: Martin Luther King Day
- January 20 (7pm): Fellowship Night Greenwood
- January 25 (10am): Past Masters Brunch Jimmy's on Broadway
- February 1 (4pm): Dist. 4&5 Reception for the Grand Master University Lodge
- February 2: Super Bowl LIV
- February 12 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- February 13 (7pm): Officers meet
- February 15 (10am): Daylight Lodge 232
- February 15 (2pm): Wardens Ritual Competition University Temple
- February 19 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- February 27 (7:30pm): Walter F. Meier Lodge 281
- February 29 (10am): Masonic Service Bureau
- March 5 (7:30pm): Lafayette Lodge 241
- March 18 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- March 20 – 22: Lodge Leadership Retreat Wenatchee
- April 9 (7pm): Officers meeting
- April 9 (7:30pm): Queen Anne Lodge 242
- April 12: Easter Sunday
- April 15 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- April 27(10am): Masonic Service Bureau Kirkland Lodge 150
- April 27 (10am): Past Masters Brunch Jimmy's on Broadway
- May 3 (10am): FABulous Family Brunch Columbia Tower

EVERY DAY IS A NEW BEGINNING . . . SO LET'S GET STARTED

St. John's will kick off the new year with its **Wednesday January 15** stated communication. Our new year tells us it's time to refresh and restart our journey of Masonic enlightenment. Throughout antiquity, civilizations around the world developed calendars, typically pinning the first day of the year to an agricultural or astronomical event. In Egypt, for instance, the year began with the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius. The first day of the Chinese new year occurred with the second new moon after the winter solstice.

The early Roman calendar consisted of 10 months and 304 days, with each new year beginning at the vernal equinox; according to tradition, it was created by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in the eighth century B.C. A later king, [Numa Pompilius](#), is credited with adding the months of *Januarius* and *Februarius*. Over the centuries, the calendar fell out of sync with the sun, and in 46 B.C. the emperor [Julius Caesar](#) decided to solve the problem by consulting with the most prominent astronomers and mathematicians of his time. He introduced the Julian calendar, which closely resembles the more modern Gregorian calendar that most countries around the world use today.

Here at St. John's, the New Year is represented by a changing of the guard – a change in the East, West, and South. Newly installed Master Blair Neumann invites all brothers to our monthly stated communication. ***Please make your [dinner reservations](#) with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, January 10***, prior to the meeting. If you need a ride, the secretary will be happy to find one for you.

District 5 Annual Meeting

The District 5 Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 1, opening at 4pm followed by dinner at the University Masonic Center. So why should you attend? Well, this meeting offers an informal session



providing:

- Social interaction with other brethren within our own District.
- Forum to meet and converse with the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge team.
- Presentations of awards and recognition to well-deserving Masons in our District.
- District Worshipful Masters detailing what their Lodges are doing, including special community and education programs, degrees, and fellowship and fraternalism opportunities.
- An opportunity to meet the candidates for next year's Junior Grand Warden and Trustees.
- Grand Lodge committee reports to educate all.

All brothers ***and their ladies*** are invited to meet our Grand Master, MWBro. Charles E. Wood. Dress is business casual (collared shirts, tie, etc.) Dinner provided at no cost.

Past Masters Brunch

All Past Masters of St. John's are invited to attend our quarterly brunches not only for a good time but also to keep up with how things are going at St. John's. Brunches start at 10am and close shortly after noon at Jimmy's On Broadway - just north of Madison at the Silver Cloud Hotel. See you Saturday, January 31. *Free parking.*

Start Earning your 2021 Wages Now!

If you haven't paid your 2020 annual dues (\$44 for most members) by now, they've already increased by \$5. ***Payments postmarked after December 31 are assessed an additional \$5 per month.***

Members may pay their dues by cash, check, Certificates of Masonic Labor, or a combination of these. Certificates of Labor (valued at \$20 each) are issued at each stated or special communication (degree or officer installation). So – come to Lodge and receive your Certificate of Masonic Labor good toward the payment of ***next year's*** (2021) dues.

PAY YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES

Grand Master Approves Latest St. John's Bylaw Amendment



Following review by the Grand Lodge bylaws committee, Most Worshipful Grand Master Charles Wood has approved the recent amendment to our Lodge bylaws.

By unanimous affirmative vote in October, the brethren of St. John's approved an amendment to our bylaws to set the value of its Certificates of Labor. Article 4, Section 3, (h) was amended to state that the Certificates of Labor will have a value "that is set annually by the Lodge."

The original language established the value of each Certificate at \$20. The effect of the change is to allow the Lodge to adjust the value of earned Certificates as the state minimum wage increases. St. John's dues are tied to the minimum wage by a factor of 26 x wage per hour plus the annual Grand Lodge member assessment.

As the Senior Warden is charged "to pay the Craft their wages if ought be due," he issues a Certificate to each member at the close of a stated or special communication.

BROCKWAY

OPERATION KID SMILE

Operation Kid Smile went well on Sunday, December 14. The season was made a little brighter as we provided nearly 350 items of clothes and toys to twenty-two



Family gathers around Santa
(John Louderback)

“if it were not for this (event), our children probably wouldn’t experience Christmas this year.”

Operation Kids Smile was started in 2004 as a St. John’s Lodge No. 9 charity by VWBro. Charles (Chuck) Brockway Lt. Col. Army Ret. and wife Sherla.

Recently renamed Brockway Operation Kids Smile in his honor, the program works with referrals from the Veterans Affairs to provide Christmas gifts to children of financially impacted veterans.

First held at Fort Lewis for many years, for security reasons the Christmas party has recently been shifted to the Tacoma Scottish Rite.

children and gift cards to seven military families to provide for a complete Christmas dinner. Santa was joined by members of the Tacoma Fire Department who gave everyone a thrill with a demonstration of firefighting techniques.

At least one family expressed an opinion that



Fireman and child dousing "fired up" participants



Brockway Operation Kid Smile elves from left: Bro. Blair Neumann, WBro. (Santa) John Murray Louderback, John’s wife Mary in green, Sherla Brockway. Second Row: VWBro. Chuck Brockway, MWBro. Al Jorgenson with Lady Nancy in front, Brother Charles Hopper with wife Aisha. Back Row: Brother Kemal Alaeddinoğlu. Other helpers not pictured: VWBro. John Adamson, (then-WM) Seann Maria

2020

Lodge Leadership Retreat

(formerly the Wardens Conference)

Friday thru Sunday

March 20-21

Wenatchee Convention Center

While the primary focus is for Wardens and Senior Deacons, any Master Mason may attend including Masters or Past Masters

Wardens Roles, Membership Retention, Ritual and Masonic Education, Running a Meeting, Civility, Lead & Motivate Volunteers, Public Relations, Conflict Management, Our Responsibility to the Craft, Installation Planning and more!!!!

St. John’s will sponsor up to four brothers to attend.

For registration information including a class list and RW Chris Coffman’s letter in its entirety [CLICK HERE](#).

LODGE LEADERSHIP RETREAT MOVES TO WENATCHEE

Details have been received regarding the March 20-22, 2020 Leadership Retreat in Wenatchee.

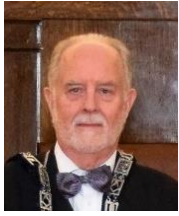
Throughout our Jurisdiction, Lodges have been or are selecting members into leadership roles. These Brethren elected and appointed are now being looked upon for their leadership and guidance in setting the direction of their Lodge and its members. Our Grand Lodge is committed to providing education to Lodge leaders so that they will thrive. Each Lodge is asked to encourage and support the program by electing to pay or assist in the payment of the registration expenses for the selected members to attend.



While the primary focus of the Lodge Leadership Retreat is for Lodge Wardens and Deacons, any Master Mason, including Current Masters or Past Masters, may attend based on first come and space available basis. The Lodge Leadership Retreat Committee has been hard at work reviewing classes in order to meet the current needs of our Grand Jurisdiction. A variety of courses will be offered, including; Six Steps to Initiation, Long Range Planning for Lodges, Lodge and Temple Board finances, and others. Many more classes have been added. Ladies programs and co-ed courses are available, so Ladies are invited and encouraged to attend.

Senior Warden Message

VWBro. Ashley Brinkley



I want to start his new year by saying congratulations to all the new officers for the 2020 Lodge year and say thank you to a job well done to the outgoing officers for 2019. I thoroughly enjoyed having our installation on our stated meeting night since it falls in

December during the busy holiday season. I hope we will continue this in the future.

The holiday season is now over, people have gone back home, all the good food has been eaten and the new year is upon us. As we start this new decade, I believe it's a time to be thankful for what we have and remember to keep those that we hold dear close to our hearts. I am truly saddened by the loss of our Deputy Grand Master's wife, Lynn Coffman. She was an amazing person with a kind soul and will truly be missed.

I was reminded of the quote, "Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future but today is a gift, that's why it's called the present"

I am looking forward to what this year will bring for me and to our Lodge.

JANUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Day

- 1 Mark A. Lentz
- 2 Scott A. Pence
- 4 Egil J. Pedersen
- 5 Stephen F. Weiss
- 8 Charles R. Brockway
- 11 James F. Russell
- 11 Richard 'Ric' Delarose
- 11 Felix Ngoussou
- 12 Michael M. Adams
- 14 Storrs L. "Skip" Albertson
- 17 Loudon H. Fraser
- 18 Alex A. Skistimas
- 24 Thomas H. Fredrickson
- 25 Vaibhav Vijay (Vince) Kodikal
- 26 Kenneth M. Lane, Sr.
- 28 Craig R. Messett
- 29 Bernard B. Gordon



Let's Go Out And Sell Freemasonry!

We don't really need advertising. What we need to do is **sell Freemasonry to our own members**. Should all members become active in the ritualistic work of the Lodge? No, I am proposing that each and every member know enough about the fraternity that he can intelligently discuss Freemasonry with anyone who might ask him about the order. A man who knows nothing about the orders to which he belongs is a man who, through ignorance and apathy, casts a negative rather than a positive vote toward the survival of Freemasonry.

Junior Warden Message

WBro. John Murray Louderback



From my prospective, Masonry seems to be doing very well indeed. At least St. John's is doing very well. If we look at the number of new members that have joined our Lodge in the last couple of years, and the quality of men that have become Brothers, I believe we are establishing a

very strong foundation for the future.

Pause for a moment and reflect on the accomplishments of St. John's over the last year. If you have been paying any attention at all – I do not have to list them. We should ALL be very proud. Or can we?

We now have a little under 200 members in the Lodge. Having said that, we see the same forty to sometimes sixty members. I understand that not all can come to Lodge. Some may live too far away, some may be infirm. I believe that is the reality to which the Lodge must live with.

I feel so much stronger and empowered by my association with the Brothers in Lodge. I come home after Lodge feeling great. You too will feel that way if you would just come to Lodge and take part in Lodge activities. Please understand that we are only as strong as the contribution of each Brother – that means YOU.

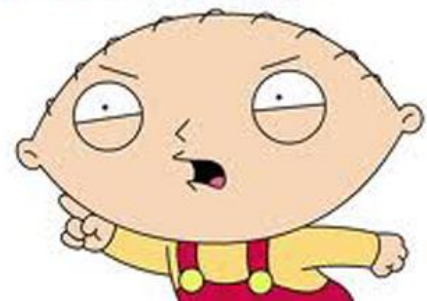
The reality is that if you are not known – and if you have not contributed to the labor of the Lodge – then YOU are missing out on the great joy and enrichment found in that Labor. Masonry is putting into practice on a daily basis the Masonic principles you have promised to uphold – ever to walk and act as such.

What have you done for your Lodge this past year? Get involved and get busy – and if you haven't already – lend a hand. Do not leave the labor of the Lodge to the same ten Brothers year after year. This is your Lodge – do our part. The more hands means less work for the few.

We are stronger together. Please do your part in Masonic labor for your Lodge and for yourself. Live the Masonic Life. Love is within you – pass it on! Get to work, come to Lodge, and feel the joy and enrichment that is found in that labor. Make this your new year resolution.

Cheers and happy new year!

**WHERE IS MY MONEY MAN?!!
WHERE IS MY MONEY?!!**



Don't forget to pay your 2020 Lodge dues!!!!

ROUGH AND PERFECT ASHLARS

Masons hear much about rough and perfect ashlar. They are described in the lecture of the Entered Apprentice degree. We know what use was made of rough and perfect ashlar in the old operative days; but in Speculative Masonry we often refer to our Lodge Brothers figuratively as rough and perfect ashlar, although we never had anyone who would fully qualify for the latter description.

A rough ashlar is not a physically faulty stone. In Freemasonry it is as substantial as the perfect ashlar, necessarily so, for from it the perfect ashlar is fashioned. Used as a part of a structure, it owes no apology to the perfectly shaped and sometimes polished stone. In structures of stone there may be more rough ashlar than finished stones, just as in Speculative Freemasonry there are a lesser number of informed Brethren who are qualified to give freely of wisdom to the many eager to learn.

We can have in our membership few, if any, approaching the perfection of a perfect ashlar. We are fortunate to have so many to whom we may fondly refer as faithful rough ashlar who are the support of the Lodges.



Visit Our District Brethren

District 5 Lodges	Next Meeting	Time
St. John's 9	Wednesday, January 15, 2020	7:30pm
Eureka 20	Monday, January 6, 2020	7:30pm
University 141	Monday, January 6, 2020	7:30pm
Daylight 232	Saturday, January 18, 2020	10am
Lafayette 241	Thursday, March 5, 2020	7pm
Queen Anne 242	Thursday, January 9, 2020	7:30pm
Esoterika 316	Tuesday, January 21, 2020	7:30pm



Officers to serve in 2020 (l-r): T. Grove, Tyler; J. Schuh, Chaplain; J. Russell, Secretary; E. Koteles, SD; A. Brinkley, SW; B. Neumann, Master; J. Louderback, JW; K. Alaeddinoglu, JD; J. Maher, Treasurer; N. Quinn, Marshal. Not pictured: A. Creighton, Musician

2020 JUNIOR GRAND WARDEN CANDIDATE

Only one candidate has expressed his intent to run for Junior Grand Warden at June's annual communication of Grand Lodge. As is the custom, between now and then, certain questions are posed to JGW candidates. The following question (with his answer) was published in a recent edition of the Masonic Tribune:

Question: *Given the widespread use of social media today and the implications it can have on how the fraternity is viewed please share some thoughts how Washington Masons should conduct themselves when using social media.*

Response: When it comes to social media, how one conducts themselves should be no different than how they would conduct themselves when sitting in an open Lodge meeting. The anonymity of sitting behind a keyboard and monitor does not remove our responsibility to "do good unto all." While we cannot enforce a person's behavior, we can "remind a brother in the most friendly manner of his fault."

As with most situations though, praise in public, admonish in private. Do not add fuel to the social media fire by calling a brother out on social media! We are making good men better and in my opinion, good men don't spew hatred and discontent in public or on social media. As with most things, I always try and go back to the lessons taught to us from our Standard Work. At the close of every meeting we hear the words I quoted above, we need to not just hear the words, but listen to them, understand them, and live them.

The Worshipful Master is charged at his installation to encourage the brethren of his Lodge to practice out of the Lodge, those duties which they have been taught in it. I would ask the brethren that when you are commenting and reacting in Social Media be conscious of the fact that people will see what you post and know that you are a Mason, don't fall prey to the internet "trolls" and always be respectful. If what you type is something you may not say to a person's face, don't post it. "Be temperate, prudent, and discreet" and just step away from social media for a few minutes and reflect on the conversation and remember your obligations.

Fraternally, VWB Steve Martin Grand Lecturer JGW Candidate 2020

St. John's supports youth in 2019

Last year St. John's provided financial assistance to the following youth causes:

Masonic Youth

DeMolay	\$3,000
Rainbow	\$3,000
Job's Daughters	\$3,000
Northwest Little League	\$1,400
Seattle Youth Symphony	\$2,500
Taproot Theatre (school tours)	\$1,000
Northwest Junior Pipe Band	\$1,000

LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER

'WE NEED TO FILL THE SEATS.' This has all the markings of being "politically incorrect," we don't want to "recruit" men to Masonry just to fill seats, but I say "au contraire," if you're already a Mason, support your Lodge.



Be A Warm Body

by Midnight Freemason Contributor

Steven L. Harrison, 33°, FMLR



JOHN H. DOE
WARM BODY

Attendance... just like the Old Gray Mare, it ain't what it used to be.

As much as ever, maybe more, family and job pressures continue to demand the part of our time we might otherwise be able to devote to outside activities like going to Lodge. Even more than that, we have become a society of non-participants. It's easier to stay at home and watch the latest on Netflix than to go out; and drooling into cell phones on anti-social media has replaced real group interaction. This phenomenon isn't limited just to the Freemasons. Nearly all fraternal organizations, churches, clubs, even once-popular sporting events are seeing an attendance decline. Organizations like these now lack something they used to have plenty of... warm bodies.

There's not much I can do to change society's juggernaut of non-participation. But I've decided to do what little I can. I've declared myself to be a warm body. I'm making every effort to show up where I can, when I can. That's my warm body motto: "... *where I can, when I can.*"

Of course, being a warm body carries with it certain responsibilities. You show up at a meeting these days, you're probably going to be asked to do more. That's OK. I have no intention of going through the officer's line again, but you need a Marshal... I'll be your Marshal. And that's exactly what I am in my Lodge this year. In my Commandery, I've been Junior Warden seven years in a row. I've taken on other similar roles in other groups for one simple reason: so the head of that group has one less officer's chair to worry about filling. Still, the word "no" hasn't left my vocabulary. It doesn't have to for me to be a responsible warm body. You know... "*where I can, when I can.*"

I'm pretty comfortable in my role as a warm body. It gets me out the door and to some meetings where I have a great time, learn something and would be sorry to have missed.

Just showing up is a prerequisite to active participation. Looking at it in that light, we really do need more warm bodies. Try it. Next time you just don't feel like going to a Lodge meeting, put down the TV remote, silence your cell phone and head out. The guys you see there will be glad you did and I'm betting so will you. Be a warm body. It sounds trivial, but it's one of the most important things you can do for the fraternity.

~SLH

Bro. Steve Harrison, 33°, is Past Master of Liberty Lodge #31, Liberty, Missouri. He is also a Fellow and Past Master of the Missouri Lodge of Research. Among his other Masonic memberships are the St. Joseph Missouri Valley of the Scottish Rite, Liberty York Rite bodies, and Moila Shrine. He is also a member and Past Dean of the DeMolay Legion of Honor. Brother Harrison is a regular contributor to the Midnight Freemasons blog as well as several other Masonic publications. Brother Steve was Editor of the Missouri Freemason magazine for a decade and is a regular contributor to the Whence Came You podcast. Born in Indiana, he has a Master's Degree from Indiana University and is retired from a 35 year career in information technology. Steve and his wife Carolyn reside in northwest Missouri. He is the author of dozens of magazine articles and three books: Freemasonry Crosses the Mississippi, Freemasons — Tales From the Craft and Freemasons at Oak Island.

Oregon Freemasons to donate \$1K for vandalized gravestones

FOREST GROVE, Ore. — A group of Oregon Freemasons have agreed to donate \$1,000 to repair cemetery headstones that were vandalized in Forest Grove.

Twenty headstones and marker were destroyed IN December, officials said. Some of them dated back as far as the 1800s.

A neighbor originally spotted children destroying flowers and flags then called officers. Two children now face felony charges.

Many of the headstones were knocked over, some of which broke when they fell.

The total cost of the repair is estimated to be up to \$5,000 due in part to the rare materials with which the headstones were created.



Washington Masonic Charities

(Dec. 2019 report)

Washington Masonic Charities is the 501 c 3 public charitable arm of the Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Washington.

Scholarships - A New Approach Supporting our Masonic Family

WB Aaron Simon, Scholarship Committee Chairman

Do you know a child, grandchild or dependent of a Washington Mason who wants to pursue higher education? Do you know of a worthy member of our Masonic Youth Orders who deserves a college or vocational scholarship? This is your chance to let them know that Washington Masonic Charities has scholarships to award.

To provide better support and assistance for our Masonic family, Washington Masonic Charities Scholarship Committee has made changes in our scholarship awards focus. Washington Masonic Charities will provide post-secondary scholarships exclusively for deserving members of our Masonic family to pursue college, university, or vocational/technical education after high school. ***This does not replace or affect Lodge scholarships, which are awarded independently by local Lodges.***

Scholarships Available in 2019-2020

Masonic Legacy Scholarship - \$3,750 each - Washington Masonic Charities is proud to offer four \$3,750 scholarships for graduating high school senior-aged children, grandchildren or dependents of a Washington Mason in Good Standing.

Masonic Youth Order Scholarships - \$3,000 each - Supporting our Masonic Youth is a priority. We are pleased to provide one Washington state member from Rainbow, Jobs Daughters, and DeMolay. With a scholarship opportunity. The Masonic Youth must be a *graduating high school senior-aged, and active, Washington resident youth member of Rainbow, Job's Daughters, or DeMolay.*

Local Lodge scholarship programs are independent of Washington Masonic Charities, so this change will not affect your local Lodge scholarship awards and decisions.

This replaces the prior scholarships program where Washington Masonic Charities asked Lodges to assist in reaching out to public schools. This is no longer necessary for the Washington Masonic Charities scholarship.

How to Apply

- Go to www.washboard.org
- Sign up for a washboard.org account
- Enter *Washington Masonic Charities* in the search bar
- Select either ***Legacy or DeMolay, Rainbow, Job's Daughter application***
- Complete the application
- Upload your transcript, letters of recommendation, and work history.

Application Timeline

- Open: November 20, 2019
- Close: February 28, 2020
- Review: 3/25/20 — 4/28/20
- Notification of award: June 1, 2020

Masonic Legacy Scholarship awards will be made regionally - regional awards will be made for SW Washington, SE Washington, Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula, and Central/NE Washington.

Children & Youth Programs Update

Kurt Miller, Children & Youth Programs Coordinator

We are very excited this year to report on the progress of our On the Level Student Success program. With more than 40,000 young people in Washington experiencing homelessness each year, and with upwards of 13,000 of those having no parents or guardians to look after them, the need is great. Our goal is to help these latter young people stay in school and succeed in school. The best outcome is that, with our help, these young people have a sense of hope and complete high school.

Lodges around the state are getting involved and are making a difference. Just this week we have received grants from the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the Tulalip Tribe of Indians, because they see the good work that local Lodges are doing and have chosen to partner with us. We have received generous support from Order of Eastern Star chapters - most recently from Alma Chapter in Kennewick, and from DeMolay - Tacoma Chapter. We've received generous support from many Lodges and individuals.

One hundred percent of gifts given in support of youth experiencing homelessness go directly to help those young people. Washington Masonic Charities does not charge overhead to these funds, nor do we give the fund directly to schools or allow them to charge overhead.

If your Lodge is interested in helping out, please give me a call or send me an email. (253.442.2505 X 108 or kurt@wa-masoniccharities.org).

Masonry: No Hiding Place for Criminals or Shelter for Crime

by Midnight Freemason Contributor

Robert H. Johnson

“In this connection permit me to say that Masonry is no hiding place for criminals or shelter for crime. If a Mason should be a good man and true, and should strictly obey the moral law, then we have no room in our Lodges for criminals and deliberate violators of the laws of the land, nor have we any use for Lodges which harbor offenders against the peace and security of society. The idea that a Mason is to shield a brother guilty of crime, or screen him from just punishment, is a portion of the anti-Masonic code, and is in no sense justified by any Masonic teachings or practice.” -
Grand Master - Harmon G. Reynolds, 1870

It goes without saying – doesn’t it? That within the craft, there would be no tolerance for anyone who is a criminal or who engages in acts that benefit a criminal organization or outfit. We take good men, and make them **even better**.

In our fraternity, we often use terminology like, “*Guarding the West Gate*” when referring to making sure we select the right men to join our organization. And, for the most part we do. But as all Masons know, and maybe the public would have some clue to this as well – from time to time, we make a mistake.

Becoming a Freemason involves a petitioning process in which much about a man’s character is revealed; his faith is proclaimed (sometimes disclosed), his residential address, place of employment, marital status, where he’s resided, if he has a felony, if he can afford the fraternal costs and much more depending on your grand jurisdiction.

When I first started writing for *The Midnight Freemasons*, I penned a piece titled, “**The Brothers that Failed**.” It was a crudely put together piece in which I outlined some of the most egregious men to have joined our ranks. Our founder (editor at that time), Todd E. Creason actually did some research on the members I mentioned in the piece before he decided to publish it. Making accusations is no small thing and is in fact, a very serious matter--especially considering the results. You could deprive a man of his membership.

Yes, we sometimes make a mistake and let someone in who is not the caliber of man we were told or lead to believe they were. Other times though, a man commits a crime after becoming a Freemason. Our fraternity deals with these instances, likely more times than we’d like to admit. But what can we expect? Mistakes happen.

From jurisdiction to jurisdiction the rules vary. A felony conviction in some jurisdiction bars a man from entering **ever**, while in others like Illinois, it’s the

discretion of the Lodge whether to accept a man who has a felony or not. In many jurisdictions, there are mandatory background checks, and where it is not mandatory, some Lodges [e.g. St. John’s 9] take that into their own hands and run these checks as a part of their universal process. **The investigating committee is paramount, whether the background checks are done or not.**

The Past Grand Master of Illinois, Greg Clark (Illinois) recently addressed this, albeit briefly in his outgoing address in October of 2019. Paraphrasing, he urged Lodges to think about background checks and to use them in the petitioning process. Some of you reading this might be thinking that’s too far, while your brothers in other jurisdictions know this to be standard practice, e.g. Pennsylvania, where the Grand Lodge runs the background check, and **ANY** felony at all, bars that man for life at the Grand Lodge level. No Lodge can overturn it. And let’s remember, Pennsylvania has the highest number of Masons in any state (97,822 in 2017 - MSA North America Membership Statistics).

Earlier when I said, “mistakes happen,” it’s important to understand the options we as Freemasons have and to understand fully the **repercussions** in the event **that we do nothing** when these men are found within our organization. To be a just and upright Mason, concerned for the welfare of the craft over titles and accolades is the prudent path. Principals matter.

Our Past Grand Master, in his 1870 address was no doubt dealing with many of the same things we deal with today in the craft, world-wide. His remarks are timeless and yet one can barely believe that he had to address this concept at all, given who we are and what we stand for. The full text of his address can be found in the (Illinois) *Grand Lodge Proceedings, 1870*. For our Illinois Brothers with access to MORI, you can find this document there, and for those who have access to the Members Section of the ILoR Website, you can search them there as well.

May we ever be just and upright Masons.

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