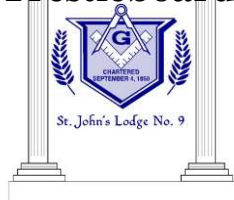


# St. John's Lodge No. 9, F. & A. M.

## Trestleboard

AUGUST 2020

*Jim Russell, editor*



Serving Seattle since 1860

meets: 7910 Greenwood Ave. N.

Lodge phone: (206) 623-0261

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<https://seattlemasons.org>

## FROM THE EAST

Blair Neumann, Master



Masonry sets reasonable expectations for how we conduct ourselves. While those expectations may feel lofty or unattainable at times, we're often given explicit permission to choose whether or not to reach for that lofty goal given our totality of considerations. For example, we might decide that our Brother's request lies outside the length of our cable tow, or that a risk to our own life may be too great.

But this phrase is unequivocal: "So far as the same shall come to my knowledge."

As Masons, once we become aware of something, we are expected to act upon that awareness with integrity. We're granted no affordance to ignore truths that we are aware of. We are to act in accord with what we know to be true as soon as we know it, including (it seems) an obligation that we change our course as new information comes to light.

One might observe that this phrase may be unequivocal in part because it is itself an equivocation for loftier passages; that it's used primarily to qualify actual knowledge of facts pertaining to Lodge management; that it shouldn't enjoin us more broadly.

But this phrase demands that we treat the Lodge by the standard of Truth, and how we treat the Lodge should be a model for our conduct toward all Mankind.

My Brothers, it comes to my knowledge that we should act on the Truth as best we know it. On this there should be no need for equivocation. We should not claim ignorance until such time as our actions have changed, having been made aware of those truths of which we were previously ignorant, but are no more.

The Truth is out there. None of us have its entirety ourselves, though each of us has it in part. Whether we strive for Truth or stumble upon it, we should be both humble to it and bound by it, and we should share not but that Truth with our Brethren, nor withhold it from all Mankind.

## Dog Days

1. The hottest period of the summer.
2. A period of stagnation, lethargy, inactivity, or decline.

A translation of Latin *dies caniculares* (puppy days), from Greek *kunades hemarai* (dog days), so called because Sirius, the Dog Star, rises and sets with the sun around this time of the year. The ancient Romans and Greeks considered this period unhealthy and unlucky. The star got its name from Greek *seirios* (scorching). Earliest documented use: 1538.

Due to precession (gradual shift in the Earth's axis of rotation), the dog days have shifted since the time of ancient Romans and Greeks. In about 10,000 years, dog days will fall in winter. Enjoy them while you can.

## CALENDAR



- August 12 (6pm): Board of Trustees *teleconference*
- August 12 (7pm): Fellowship *Zoom teleconference*
- August 13 (7pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- August 19 (7pm): St. John's 9 Fellowship *teleconference*
- August 26 (7pm): Fellowship *Zoom teleconference*
- August 29: 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration *canceled*
- September 2 (7pm): Fellowship *Zoom teleconference*
- September 4: Happy Birthday to us!
- September 7: Labor Day
- September 9 (7pm): Fellowship *Zoom teleconference*
- September 10 (7pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- September 16 (7pm): St. John's 9 Fellowship *teleconference*
- September 23 (7pm): Fellowship *Zoom teleconference*
- September 27 – 28: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)
- September 30 (7pm): Fellowship *Zoom teleconference*
- October 4 (10am): FABulous Family Brunch *Columbia Tower canceled*
- October 9-10: Yom Kippur (Tuesday-Wednesday)
- October 14 (6pm): Board of Trustees 2021 Budget preparation
- October 15 (7pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- October 21 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- October 31 (10am): Past Masters Brunch *Jimmy's on Broadway*
- November 11 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- November 12 (7pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- November 18 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated *Past Masters Night; Election of Officers*
- November 26: Thanksgiving Day

## WEEKLY 'ZOOM' MEETINGS KEEP LODGE BROTHERS IN TOUCH

The last time Brothers of St. John's actually met face-to-face in a stated meeting was February, but that hasn't kept us from keeping fellowship with one another or sharing a little Masonic Enlightenment along the way.

Worshipful Master Blair Nuemann has been hosting Zoom sessions every Wednesday at 7pm for all Brothers – members and Mason guests – to keep the Masonic communication alive and well. In between these meetings we've kept the telephone lines burning to be sure everyone is healthy and not going in need.

(This hasn't kept us from reaching out to Brothers in need. If you or a loved one needs a little help during this coronavirus time, let us know.)

Meanwhile, we've had to cancel a number of planned social events that include not only our monthly stated communications, but our FABulous Family Appreciation Brunch (twice) at the Columbia Tower Club, two Past Masters brunches, a planned evening at the Everett AquaSox, a family brunch and day of horse racing at Emerald Downs, and our 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at Ivar's Salmon House.

For the time being, all activities within our Craft are halted. There are no more meetings, social events, or degrees. And this includes our great dinners before our stated communications. The officers of the Lodge have been Zooming, as well, so the routine business is well under control.

The real business of Freemasonry continues. Fellowship, Education, Caring, making ourselves – good men – better! So, if you aren't one of the 20-25 who get together each week, please join the fun.



St. John's Lodge room stands empty since February

### BRO. HON. JOHN LEWIS – PASSES WITH HONORS

Illus. Brother John Robert Lewis 33° passed to the Celestial Lodge on July 17, following a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 80 years old. The Hon. John Lewis served as the U.S. Representative for the 5th District of Atlanta more than three decades, from 1987 until his death, and he was one of the last living 'leading lights' of the 1960s civil rights movement.

John Lewis was the last surviving speaker from the famous civil rights 'March on Washington' in 1963 (the occasion of Dr. Martin Luther King's celebrated "[I Have a Dream](#)" speech) — at the age of 23, Lewis was the youngest person to give a speech that day.



Illustrious John Lewis, 33°

John Lewis was made a Prince Hall Mason 'at sight' in 1999 at H. R. Butler Lodge 23 in Atlanta, Georgia, by then-Grand Master Benjamin Barksdale of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F&AM of Georgia.

In addition to his Lodge, Brother Lewis was a Scottish Rite Mason in Atlanta Consistory No. 24-A, Orient of Georgia (PHA). He was coroneted a 33° SGIG in 2011 at the United Supreme Council Session in Atlanta. And he was a Shriner in the Prince Hall-associated Khedive Temple No. 16, and later in Mecca Temple No. 10, in the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.

See Bro. Lewis' essay of farewell on page 5.

*"If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it."*

—John Lewis

Join us

**Teleconferencing Fellowship**  
**every Wednesday**

**at 7pm**

*We're having a great time exchanging ideas and  
Masonic enlightenment*

If using your computer or smartphone:

- Download the Zoom app from <https://zoom.us/download>
- Use that app with Meeting ID **981 655 9198** to join our Fellowships

If you are using your telephone:

- Dial **(253) 215-8782** to reach Zoom
- Use Meeting ID **981 655 9198** to join our Fellowships

**Here's more information about how to use Zoom Meetings:** <https://www.context.org/help/zoom-quickguide/>

Do you know a Mason, Masonic widow, or member of our Masonic family who needs assistance due to age, illness, disability, or hardship? Maybe you could use a little help yourself? Masonic Outreach Services' Care Coordinators and Certified Senior Advisors spend time visiting with our clients to tailor solutions that help them lead dignified and meaningful lives by remaining independent or finding the right solution for their daily needs.

Please, if you know someone who can use our assistance, help them connect with us by calling, toll free, **(844) 288-3531** or [outreach@masonscare.org](mailto:outreach@masonscare.org)



## Senior Warden Message

VWBro. Ashley Brinkley



Another month is here, and we are still in pandemic mode and it does not seem to be getting much better. I have been doing some reading on the effect that “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” has on our mental well-being. Some of our experts are recommending things like listening to music, gardening and even baking will help give mental peace of mind.

As Masons, we are social people. We like to get together, talk, and have meals together. We like going to Lodge and hearing the ritual work performed. We like seeing a degree and thinking about the principle it is teaching us.

Zoom meetings are a great way to stay connected with the Lodge and our brothers and can also provide us with some of the mental stimulation and Masonic education we are craving more than ever during this time. Many Districts have started Masonic Education via Zoom and I believe the St John’s brothers want this, too. Our last Zoom meeting in July had an outstanding speaker (WBro. Richard Jones) and I hope we will be able to have more speakers to stimulate our thinking in the future. Do not miss our weekly Wednesday 7pm Zoom meetings to catch up with the brothers or maybe even learn something new. Our Zoom meetings are ever evolving, and we are looking forward to seeing you there!



Clipped from Tri-City Herald. July 5 1973

## Junior Warden Message

WBro. John Murray Louderback



Several people have asked me recently about books that I would recommend or titles that they have heard about through our Lodge Zoom meetings every Wednesday at 7pm. Therefore I have decided that in this message I would include some of my favorites.

A book that I thoroughly enjoyed from front cover to back is WB John Bizzack’s of Lexington Lodge # 1 and The Rubicon Society in Lexington Kentucky: ***How and Why Freemasonry Came To Kentucky – The Back Story.***

In another of Brother Bizzack’s books, ***Island Freemasonry – The Final Bastion Of The Observant Lodge***, he points out that as Americans moved west across the Appalachian Mountains and into (then) Kentucky Territory from Virginia, Freemasons and those aligned with George Washington understood that “the west” was also being sought by Spain through the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Because of the influence of these Masons, and others, the Spanish gave up.

The Lexington Lodge was the first Masonic Lodge West of the Appalachians. The other Masonic Lodges west then followed the ways of Lexington. As Bizzack points out, this was unfortunately the beginning of the slow erosion of Observant Masonry.

I believe another “must read” for the Observant Mason is also by Brother Bizzack: ***For The Good Of The Order – Examining the Shifting Paradigm Within Freemasonry.***

Others are ***The Origins Of Freemasonry*** by David Stevenson, a non-Mason PH.D. Emeritus, St. Andrew’s University, Edinburgh, Scotland, Cambridge Press.

And Brother Robert Cooper’s books ***The Red Triangle – The History Of Anti-Masonry***, and ***The Rosslyn Hoax? – Viewing the Rosslyn Chapel from a New Perspective***, Lewis Press.

## MASTER MASONS RAISED IN AUGUST

### Date Raised:

8/24/1965	George H. Bechtel, Jr.
8/31/1966	Charles R. Brockway
8/23/1980	Carl L. Alexander
8/24/2002	Nicholas J. Mitchell
8/2/2008	John R. Samudio
8/2/2008	William A. Feldner
8/2/2010	John Murray Louderback
8/3/2011	Russell A. Johnson



If you know of anyone who is ill, in a nursing home or hospital, please contact VWBro. Jim Russell, chair for visitation to the ill or infirm, as soon as possible so we can send them a card or pay them a visit. May God bless each and every one of you. VWBro. Jim can be reached either by phone at 206 623-0261 or email at:

[jimrussell58@frontier.com](mailto:jimrussell58@frontier.com).



*The following is from WBro. Bryan Hopkins, a member of St. John's, who now lives in Seoul, South Korea*

## Life In Korea During the Corona Virus Pandemic

Like the rest of the world, things have changed in Korea. The entertainment, hospitality, sports and travel industries have been greatly affected. Many people work out of their homes if they can, and many gyms are closed. Most stay home instead of going out or socializing. Younger Korean who started going back out to clubs are now more cautious. It will obviously take a while before things return to normal- if they return to normal. However, we all must be grateful that the mortality rate in Korea is very low compared to other countries. The hospitals have functioned very well and there has been enough hospital beds for those in need. Unlike some countries, Korea's healthcare system responded very effectively during the pandemic. As the cost of healthcare is very low, Koreans have no problem going to the hospital for the slightest reason. They were willing to get tested at the beginning of the pandemic which helped stop the spread of the virus. All in all, though people are more cautious, wear masks and don't socialize as much as they used to, life goes on. Schools are re-opening and more and more people are starting to go outside.

Regarding Masonry in Korea, things have slowed down a little. Several Lodges in Korea have been greatly impacted because their members are primarily US military or DOD personnel. When the pandemic started the US bases in Korea went into lockdown (for 2 months) and only just started to open again. The Truman and McArthur Lodges are located near or in the US Army base - Camp Humphreys near Pyeongteck. Both are affected by the US military lockdown which closed the base for a while. Military and DOD personnel from Humphreys are still not allowed to travel to Seoul. The Lodge in Busan has started meetings again. Because of the COVID 19 virus, flights to and from Korea have greatly decreased. As a result, it is possible that the District Grand Lodge of Scotland based in Hong Kong may not be able to come to Korea in the fall for the Installation of new offices. The District Grand Lodge travels to Japan and Korea every year to conduct the installation of new officers.

Though things have indeed slowed down, we at Hanyang Lodge are continuing with our degrees. In the last month we have held a MM degree, an EA degree and most recently a FC degree. Recent events have certainly taught us that to continue as a Lodge based in Seoul we need more Korean brothers. We are doing our best to grow Masonry in Seoul and Masonry in Korea.

Bryan Hopkins  
RWM  
Lodge Hanyang No 1048  
Seoul, Korea

## THE GAVEL

The common gavel is one of the working tools of an Entered Apprentice. It is made use of by the Operative Mason to break off the corners of the rough ashlar, and thus fit it the better for the builder's use, and is therefore adopted as a symbol in Speculative Freemasonry, to admonish us of the duty of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and impurities of life, thereby fitting our bodies as living stones for that spiritual building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It borrows its name from its shape, being that of the gable or gavel end of a house; and this word again comes from the German gipfel, a summit, top, or peak the idea of a pointed extremity being common to all.



The true form of the gavel is that of the stonemasons hammer. It is to be made with a cutting edge, as in the engraving, that it may be used to break off the corners of rough stones, an operation which could never be effected by the common hammer or mallet. The gavel thus shaped will give, when looked at in front, the exact representation of the gavel or gable end of a house, whence, as has been already said, the name is derived.

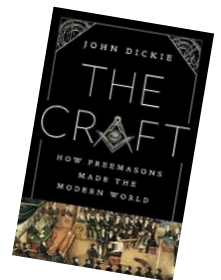
The gavel of the Master is also called a Hiram, because, like that architect, it governs the Craft and keeps order in the Lodge, as he did in the Temple.

- Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry

### book of the week

**The Craft** by John Dickie — *How the Freemasons Made the Modern World*

To many, Freemasonry is mysterious and suspect. Yet its story is peopled by some of the most distinguished men of the last three centuries: Winston Churchill and Walt Disney; Wolfgang Mozart and Shaquille O'Neal; Benjamin Franklin and Buzz Aldrin; Rudyard Kipling and 'Buffalo Bill' Cody; Duke Ellington and the Duke of Wellington.



Founded in London in 1717 as a set of character-forming ideals and a way of binding men in fellowship, Freemasonry proved so addictive that within two decades it had spread across the globe. Masonic influence became pervasive. Under George Washington, the Craft became a creed for the new American nation. Masonic networks held the British empire together. Under Napoleon, the Craft became a tool of authoritarianism and then a cover for revolutionary conspiracy. Both the Mormon Church and the Sicilian mafia owe their origins to Freemasonry.

The Masons were as feared as they were influential. In the eyes of the Catholic Church, Freemasonry has always been a den of devil-worshippers. For Hitler, Mussolini and Franco the Lodges spread the diseases of pacifism, socialism and Jewish influence, so had to be crushed.



# Rights vs. Responsibility

“My rights, my rights, my rights.”

People, are you tired of hearing about your rights and rarely if ever a word about your, and our, responsibilities during a global health emergency (or at any other time, for that matter)?

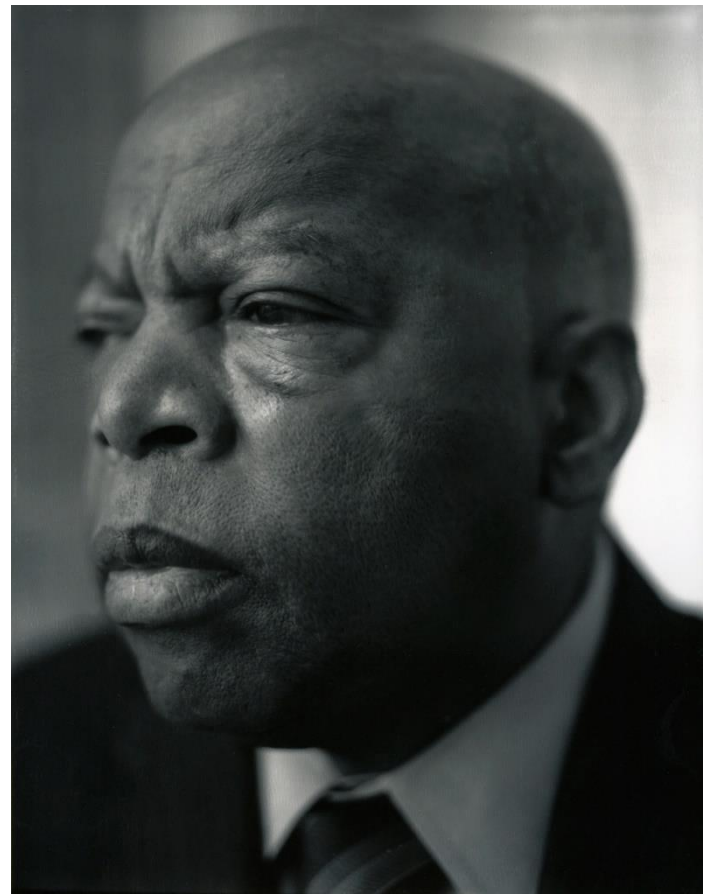
The right to not wear protective masks clashes with the responsibility to protect ourselves and others. The civil protests and marches began under the theme of rights for Black Americans. However, it quickly turned into property destruction, looting of businesses, and assaults.

As society emerges from this current crisis, haltingly and unevenly and in fits and starts that are likely to plague us for some time to come, we need to act on what we have learned about ourselves during the ordeal — and come out better than before.

We need to institute a new age: an age of responsibility.

The immature and out-of-context fixation on “my rights” has been operative in this country for a long time, of course. But our culture of irresponsibility, as has happened with many pre-existing conditions, is being preyed on by the coronavirus and revealed in the clearest, harshest light. The pandemic is showing that a rights-obsessed society with insufficient regard for members’ mutual responsibilities is on its way to conflict, chaos, and dysfunction, as ours has been for some time. Not to mention a lot of inanity.

I implore you to [read further](#) on this issue of “rights” vs. “responsibility.”



## Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

By John Lewis

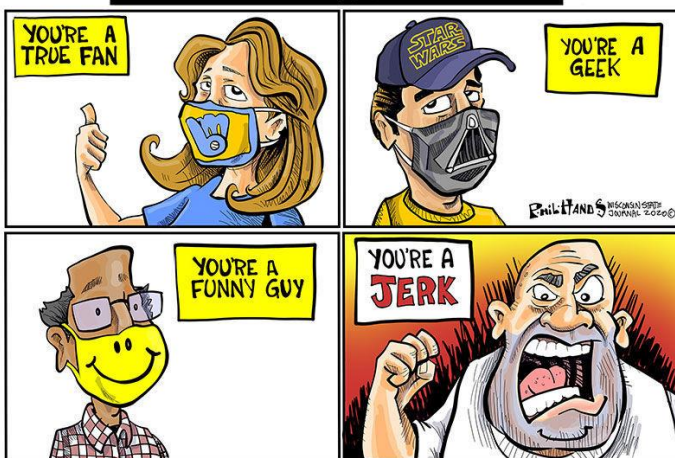
*Mr. Lewis, the civil rights leader who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death, to be published upon the day of his funeral.*

While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language and nationality to demand respect for human dignity.

That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he could easily have been me. In those days, fear constrained us like an imaginary prison,

### WHAT YOUR FACE MASK SAYS ABOUT YOU



## Vandal spray paints racist slur on Richland Masonic Lodge

RICHLAND, Wash. -- Authorities are investigating a possible hate crime after finding a racist message spray painted on the side of the Masonic Lodge in Richland.

Investigators learned of the vandalism after receiving an anonymous tip.

Officers say they do not have surveillance video that captured the awful act.

and troubling thoughts of potential brutality committed for no understandable reason were the bars.

Though I was surrounded by two loving parents, plenty of brothers, sisters and cousins, their love could not protect me from the unholy oppression waiting just outside that family circle. Unchecked, unrestrained violence and government-sanctioned terror had the power to turn a simple stroll to the store for some Skittles or an innocent morning jog down a lonesome country road into a nightmare. If we are to survive as one unified nation, we must discover what so readily takes root in our hearts that could rob Mother Emanuel Church in South Carolina of her brightest and best, shoot unwitting concertgoers in Las Vegas and choke to death the hopes and dreams of a gifted violinist like Elijah McClain.

Like so many young people today, I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time. Continue to build union between movements stretching across the globe because we must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others.

Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.

## A NO COST WAY TO BENEFIT The Christmas People

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FRED HUTCHINSON, Co-Founder  
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*Temperance Fortitude Prudence Justice*

### AUGUST BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Day

- |    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| 1  | Petros N. Farmasonis   |
| 3  | Richard D. Hawley      |
| 5  | Aren Hakobyan          |
| 8  | Tom Horace H. Sawyer   |
| 9  | Robert L. Johnson      |
| 10 | Roger A. Barnstead     |
| 12 | Terry A. Grove         |
| 13 | Thomas G. Eastman      |
| 22 | Brad D. Wolford        |
| 28 | Ronald A. Woodall, Jr. |







Front page, *The Seattle Times*, October 5, 1918

## 1918 SPANISH FLU HITS WORLD-WIDE

The misnamed “Spanish Flu” pandemic peaked in late 1918 and remains the most widespread and lethal outbreak of disease to afflict humankind worldwide in recorded history. Small mutations in a flu virus created an extraordinarily lethal variant that killed healthy young adults as readily it did more vulnerable age groups.

The pathogen’s place of origin is still debated, but the role of World War I in its rapid spread is undisputed. Even so Washington, despite a heavy military presence, fared better than any other state in the union except Oregon.

While the death toll was highest in the state’s most populous cities, the pandemic touched nearly every community. Attempts to control the outbreak were largely futile, and from late September 1918 through the end of that year it killed nearly 5,000 Washingtonians. More than half the victims were between the ages of 20 and 49.

As U.S. troops deployed en masse for the war effort in Europe, they carried the Spanish flu with them. Throughout April and May of 1918, the virus spread like wildfire through England, France, Spain and Italy. An estimated three-quarters of the French military was infected in the spring of 1918 and as many as half of British troops. Yet the first wave of the virus didn’t appear to be particularly deadly, with symptoms like high fever and malaise usually lasting only three days.

# OFFICIAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all persons concerned that by reason of the appearance in epidemic form of Spanish Influenza in the City of Pullman, for civic reasons of public health protection, all public places where people assemble are

## CLOSED

This includes schools, all places of amusement, dance halls, pool rooms, churches, Sunday Schools, lodges, conventions, etc.

This order to become effective at noon, Thursday, October 10, 1918. When all danger of epidemic has passed this order will be raised.

Dr. J. L. GILLELAND,  
City Health Officer.

THE PULLMAN HERALD, PULLMAN, WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1918

Announcement closing public places during flu



pandemic, *The Pullman Herald*, October 11, 1918

A lioness and her cub were crossing the Savannah but the heat was excessive and the Cub was in great difficulty walking. An elephant realized that the cub would die and carried him in his trunk to a pool of water walking beside his mother. And we call them wild animals! It's a great lesson for mankind who are fighting and dying for no reason.

WBro. Ian Hyde will lead our Masonic  
Education on August 19 via Zoom

# LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER

*While all Masons are sworn to withstand cowans and eavesdroppers from entering into our Lodge rooms, the Tyler is assigned the final duty to resist unlawful entry. Just who are these cowans and eavesdroppers?*



## The Cowan

by Norm McEvoy

It seems that the word has come to us from the Scottish operative masonry of long ago.

In Scotland, the word "Cowan" denoted "Dry-dyker" - a man who built walls of stones held in position by their own weight and not by mortar. As he did not use mortar or prepared stones in his trade, he was looked upon as an inferior type of artisan by the operative mason, and as such was denied admittance to a mason's "Lodge," which in those days probably meant a group of operative masons engaged in some building project.

So conscious were the operative masons of the need to keep cowans out, that the early Tyler's - who, as their name suggests, were those who placed roofing tiles in position after the masons had completed the walls and the carpenters the rafters - from their lofty perch on the roof were charged with the additional task of reporting the imminent approach of cowans. This, presumably, was intended to give the masons time to band together to keep off the "cowans and intruders."

This was pure snobbery - the cowan was probably just as skilled as the mason. Nevertheless the distinction persisted, for the records of operative masons dated 1460 speak of cowans, while it was not until 1688 that there is any record of a cowan being admitted a member of a masons fraternity.

John Syme "an honest old man and a cowaner" was admitted to the Cannongate Lodge in that year. Over 100 years later a stone-dyker was admitted as an Entered Apprentice in the Stonehaven Lodge, which consisted of "operative masons, speculative Masons and one cowan."

Over the years the word "Cowan" seems to have undergone a change when used by our ancient brethren the operatives. Instead of referring only to "dry-dykers" it came to include:

- 1) those who had never served an apprenticeship to the mason trade and
  - 2) those who had not completed an apprenticeship
- It would appear that operative masons, jealous of their skill and status, had far more reasons to exclude such persons as those described in (1) and (2) than the true Cowan.

Finally, what has speculative Masonry made of the Cowan?

In the early 1700s there are records showing that the early speculatives were, if anything, more bitterly opposed to the admission of Cowans than even the operatives had been.

As early as 1738 the "Constitutions" laid down that "no free and accepted Mason shall work with, be employed by, or teach his trade to a cowan."

About this time the import of the word underwent a further change, for it came to include any person not a Brother. Before the end of the century it also applied to the "eavesdropper one who listened to conversations not intended for his ears."

The word comes from the practice of lurking between the eaves-drop (the line along which rain ran off the eaves) and the wall of the house while listening. An old catechism speaks of a "Cowan or listener" being punished "by being placed under the eaves till the water runs in at his shoulders and out of his shoes."

So it appears that speculative Masonry has dealt more harshly with the Cowan than ever operative masons did. The old operatives may have excluded him because of his lack of skill and training but at least they did not use the word as we do.

We could, with justice apply it to anyone not a Freemason, but we are on much more uncertain ground when we use it as a term of reproach.



There are literally thousands of miles of 3 to 4 foot high dry stone walls throughout Britain, and no doubt, further afield, some of which have been standing for a thousand years or more.

If a farmer wanted his land separated from his neighbor's, or divided into fields, he would employ the local Cowan or dry stone wall builder to do it, because that is what a Cowan was.

The reason for the inclusion of Cowans in the Masonic ritual begins to become apparent if not entirely obvious, as both Masons and Cowans worked in stone, and although they had entirely different methods of building with the same materials, they were both art forms with similarities.

So the Cowan, like the stonemason, was an artist in his own right.

No doubt when the local Cowan had no immediate work prospects, and as he was a stone worker, or a mason of sorts, why not seek work as a stonemason where there was a church, cathedral, or castle in the course of construction.

And who can blame him, after all, like everyone else he was obliged to earn a living any way he could.

However he was lacking in qualifications.

For instance, he didn't serve a recognized apprenticeship. He had never learned to cut and shape stone according to a prepared plan or drawing. He didn't have a registered journeyman's mark and above all, he didn't know the mason's word.

So the chance of his obtaining employment at any of these places was slim at best, but obviously, it didn't stop him from trying. His prospects of finding work as a stonemason were confounded even further around the end of the sixteenth century, when the Warden General of the Masons of Scotland, a Mr. William Schaw, introduced the first Masonic statutes or regulations governing all Scottish Masons, and at the same time, creating the first permanent Lodges in Scotland.

One of the regulations contained within the statute stated that no Mason shall work with a Cowan. Hence no Cowan was allowed on a work site where stonemasons were employed.

So the phrase "To keep off all Cowans and intruders" means literally to disbar any dry-stone wall builders or any other unqualified person from working with the stonemasons on any construction site.

This would also prevent the Cowan from joining a Mason's Lodge.

In today's world, with the demise of the stonemason's trade, as well as the dry stone building work of the Cowans, in practical terms the rule doesn't apply any more. However, as a part of that unique teaching tool that we refer to as the ritual, it remains an essential ingredient.

And so brethren, although we have nothing to fear from Cowans, we are still going to keep them out.