

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

Trestleboard



FEBRUARY 2021

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Serving Seattle since 1860

Look to the East

[S. Ashley Brinkley](#), Senior Warden



S. Ashley Brinkley
Senior Warden

While writing this article, it occurred to me that the article is not only for members, but also for widows of our late brothers and anyone who may receive the Trestleboard. Our Trestleboard always has great articles written by brothers on many Masonic topics and contains information and upcoming Masonic events. This month, however, I would like to focus on Valentine's Day as a tribute to all things *love* and our ladies and our families.

As many know Valentine's Day is February 14th and if you have a special someone, you better not forget it. Valentine's Day is a time to express love and affection for one another. The holiday origins date back to the Roman festival of Lupercalia in mid- February. The festival, which celebrated the coming of spring, included fertility rites and pairing off of women with men by lottery. At the end of the 5th century, Pope Gelasius I replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day. It came to be celebrated as a day of romance from about the 14th century.

Our wives, girlfriends and significant others have an important part in our Lodge and Masonic journey. They allow us the time to go to Lodge. They hopefully encourage us to be part of our Lodge. For me going to Lodge makes me a better man. I think this is what Lodge does for many of us. I can say from experience and I speak for my wife: she tells me to get out of the house and be involved with my Lodge. Lately we have not been able to go to Lodge. I'm not sure if my wife isn't excited about Lodge meetings hopefully starting back up soon more than I am. It's always a balance between personal lives and Lodge.

My 50-year high school reunion is coming up this year and many classmates have written a bio about themselves. It is interesting to see how their lives have turned out. Many have passed away and their families have written a bio for them. In all the bios I have read they express how much they loved and enjoyed their families. This is the way it should be. Lodge is family. When I was in the hospital around Christmas this year all I wanted to do was go home to my family. I could not stop thinking about the grand kids being at my house and the tree and decorations we enjoy so much. Being young they were so excited about the magic of Christmas. Do not tell my wife, but I would have said anything at the hospital like "I feel good" to get to go home to my family. In the world we now have, it's sad there is so much conflict and despair and hate against our fellow man. Family and Lodge can be our safe harbor for us.

The Shrine is part of our Masonic family. February's stated meeting will be our Shrine night and we will have a speaker, Rory Johnson from the Portland Shriners hospital. The Shrine hospital shows love and compassion for children who have debilitating disabilities. It really warms my heart, and those of all Shriners, to hear how these children are being healed or have been healed because of our hospitals. I thought this would be a good topic in February as expression of love and affection to our fellow man.

CALENDAR



- February 10 (6pm): Board of Trustees Zoom teleconference
- February 10 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- February 11 (7pm): Officers meeting
- February 17 (7pm): St. John's 9 Fellowship Zoom Shriners hospitals
- February 24 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- February 27 (5pm): District 4&5 Meeting with Grand Master teleconference (refer to Grand View site for access)
- March 3 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- March 10 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- March 11 (7pm): Officers meeting
- March 17 (7pm) St. John's 9 Fellowship teleconference Grand Master MWBro. Chris Coffman will join us with some Words of Wisdom
- March 24(7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- March 31(7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference

"3 TIMES 3"

In ancient times the Entered Apprentice Degree was alone prevalent amongst the generality of our Lodges; for no Brothers could be passed and raised except in the Grand Lodge, and few availed themselves of the privilege. Hence they had only one sign, one token, and one word, and these three constituted the honors. But the members of the Grand Lodge had three signs, three tokens, and three words, and therefore, three times three were appropriately termed "the Grand Honors."

- From the Bulletin of the Masonic Relief Association of the U.S. and Canada

SHRINERS HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN ZOOM SUBJECT

Senior Warden VWBro. Ashley Brinkley has arranged for Affifi Shriner Rory Johnson to be our principal speaker on this month's Zoom gathering February 17. **Shriners Hospitals for Children** is a network of 22 non-profit medical facilities across North America. Children with orthopedic conditions, burns, spinal cord injuries, and cleft lip and palate are eligible for care and receive all services in a family-centered environment, regardless of the patients' ability to pay. Care for children is usually provided until age 18, although, in some cases it may be extended to age 21.



**Shriners Hospitals
for Children®**
Love to the rescue.™

Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, the hospitals are owned and operated by [Shriners International](#), formerly known as the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. The nearest Shriners Hospitals to Seattle area are in Portland and Spokane. St. John's members VWBro. Carl Alexander and MWBro. Sat Tashiro, have served on the Portland Board of Directors. MWBro. Gale Kenney still serves on the Board.

Shriners Hospitals for Children has a mission to:

- Provide the highest quality care to children with neuromusculoskeletal conditions, burn injuries and other special healthcare needs within a compassionate, family-centered and collaborative care environment.
- Provide for the education of physicians and other healthcare professionals.
- Conduct research to discover new knowledge that improves the quality of care and quality of life of children and families.

This mission is carried out without regard to race, color, creed, sex or sect, disability, national origin, or ability of a patient or family to pay.

WBro. Johnson became a member of Afifi Shriners in Tacoma in 2008. Immediately after, he assisted in reestablishing the Afifi Oriental Band and has served as its director since 2010. In 2014 he was elected to the Board of Governors of the Shriners Hospital for Children Portland and recently served as the Board Chairman in 2019 and 2020. Rory was installed as Oriental Guide of Afifi Shrine in 2017 and was elected Potentate for 2021.

Since 2000, four members of St. John's have served as Potentates of the Nile Shrine: Carl Alexander 2001, George Wohlleben 2005, Sat Tashiro 2010, Gale Kenney 2017.

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Join us on Zoom
Teleconferencing Fellowship
every Wednesday

at 7pm

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

Coming dates:

February 10, 2021

February 17, 2021 (stated meeting night)

February 24, 2021

March 3, 2021

Sessions open promptly at 7pm

*** Fellowship**

*** Check on our brothers and widows**

*** Masonic Enlightenment & Education**

- Use Meeting ID **981 655 9198** to join our Fellowships

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

DISTRICT 4 & 5 MEETING, FEBRUARY 27

Meet your District 5 (and 4) brethren and the Grand Lodge Team Officers, Saturday, February 27. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the meeting restrictions that are currently in place, the District No. 4 & 5 meetings will be held this year virtually through Zoom. This event is open, so everyone is welcome to attend. Please make sure to mark your calendars and join us for the District No. 4 & 5 meetings!

February 27, 2021 – 5pm - District 4 & 5 Meeting - Zoom Teleconference. Links to the meeting are on the Seminar page on GL website GrandView.

St. John's Lodge #9

Journey to Where it all Began – Boston, Massachusetts

TUESDAY, September 21 through MONDAY, September 27, 2021

You May Leave Early or Stay Longer

All itineraries and price subject to change; depends on COVID-19 outlook

BEFORE YOU GO

TSA KNOWN TRAVELER – PRE--CHECK \$85.00

- Allows swift access to boarding gate
- NW Airlift – UW Medicine
- Consider purchasing air med service
- Bring a list of all your medications
- Bring your health care directives and power of attorney

JET BLUE – MINT – Non Stop

Lv. SeaTac - September 21 – 10:30am. Arr. Boston – 7:03pm (3 hour time difference)

Lv. BOS - September 27 – 7:20pm. Arr. SeaTac – 10:47pm.

Approx. \$1,776.20 per person, round trip

Those wanting to stay longer may be booked on later flight or left open. There are obviously much cheaper flights; you may book yourself on your favorite airline. If you do not arrive with the group you may have to pay transport to hotel.

Before and/or after flight Hotel

Garden Hilton Hotel & Suites – 28th Ave SeaTac \$68 - \$84 per night

Sleep Inn Hotel, International Blvd, SeaTac – Park, sleep fly – inexpensive

POSSIBLE HOTELS

- Boston Marriott \$127.00
- Boston Marriott Copley Place \$102.00
- Boston Park Plaza \$181.00

POSSIBLE LODGE VISITS

- Grand Lodge, 186 Tremont Street, Boston
- The Harvard Lodge – Meets 3rd Thursday
- St. John's Lodge #1 – Providence, RI Meets 3rd Wednesday (almost like being at home – dinner and all)
- King Solomon Lodge AF & AM, Somerville MA (15 minutes from hotel)
- Corinthian Lodge AF&AM, Concord Massachusetts (Formed by Paul Revere in 1797)

CHURCH SERVICE ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 - on Zoom if Covid Safety in force

MARSH CHAPEL (Methodist), Boston University 735 Commonwealth Ave., Boston

PARK STREET CHURCH (Congregational), Tremont Street, Boston

TRINITY CHURCH BOSTON (Episcopal), Clarendon Street, Boston

POSSIBLE VENUES

Concord, Massachusetts

- Possible luncheon at Officer's Club, Hanscom AFBF
- Freedom Trail 2.5 mile tour; 16 destinations; \$20 walking; \$99 guided tour
- USS Constitution
- Old North Church

- Old South Church
- Boston Tea Party
- Paul Revere's Shop
- Hanover Street (Italian food and pastries)
- Famous Pi Alley in Boston's Financial District)

- Swan Paddle Boat – Boston Public Garden
- Grave Site of Benjamin Franklin
- Group photo at State House on Beacon Street in front of General Hooker's Statue

- Lunch and/or dinner at Union Oyster House or Faneuil Hall
- Mystic Seaport – JP Morgan, Mystic Connecticut

Newport, RI

10-mile Drive, Mansions

Possible luncheon at Officers' Club, Newport Naval Base

Harbor Tours - \$18 up;

continues **JOURNEY TO BOSTON** page 4

JOURNEY TO BOSTON from page 3
Plimouth Plantations, Plymouth, MA
Prince Hall Grave
Providence, RI – St. John’s Lodge #1, first in RI
Agawam County Club, East Providence, RI (private club)

OTHER

Bro. Fred will look into group travel insurance. Those participating in the Journey to Where it all Began need to meet to discuss what is most important for each person. Every Weary Traveler will receive special matching COMPLIMENTARY luggage tags and a Travel Tote.

16 people on trip – 468.75 per person credit from Lodge
12 people on trip – 625.00 per person credit from Lodge
10 people on trip – \$750.00 per person credit from Lodge

Better pricing for 15 people or more

Perhaps we could use the \$7500 to apply for plane tickets since the tickets need to be purchased first and early

This is a simple, preliminary plan—one that may get you to thinking about joining the group. We need input as to what venues you might like to visit. With current Covid restrictions, it is impossible to know what venues will be open, including Lodges, and what hotels will be offering.

Contact: Rev. WBro. Fred Hutchinson – 206-719-4979 – pialley@jps.net



St. John’s 2021 Scholarships

Again St. John’s will be awarding scholarships to assist those who will be attending college or trade school. This year we have set aside \$30,000 to be distributed.

Chairman WBro. Eric Koteles asks for brethren to recommend worthy student applicants.

In accordance with Masonic values, St. John’s supports hard working individuals of good character and high moral standards who are involved in their community.

Furthermore, we encourage students with clearly defined career paths.

The last day to submit an application form is April 30th. Applications should be submitted to our scholarship email address sjl9scholarship@gmail.com. If applicants don’t hear back within 48 hours, please contact chairman Eric Koteles directly. eric.koteles@gmail.com.



Other members of the scholarship committee this year are WBro. Blair Neumann, Brother Kemal Alaeddinoglu, and Brother Louis Turner.

Didja Know?

When the first Grand Lodge was formed in 1717, it had no jurisdiction, ritual, constitution or laws. There were only two degrees... The third degree was first reported in 1725 and came into being without sanction of the Grand Lodge. The practice of issuing Warrants to Lodges began in 1757. There were no investigating committees for new candidates. Instead, the Master took a voice vote.

Grand Lodge of WA Gets New Website

If you have not heard, the Grand Lodge of Washington has a brand new website. The address is still freemason-wa.org. However, the website is completely new. Everyone is encouraged to visit and check it out. If you have the old website bookmarked, you may need to update your bookmark even though the web address has not change.

Thanks go to RWBro. Ed Woods, VWBro. Roger Nelson and Lynne Blaylock for their hard work in helping to get the website completed.

COVID-19 Hardship Relief Available

Masonic Outreach Services case managers are available to help.

Masons, Masonic widows, or members of our Masonic family who are experiencing hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic may contact Masonic Outreach Services for assistance. We can help in a couple of ways.

* Help you find and apply for available local, state, and federal resources depending on your need.

* Provide limited cash assistance for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, utilities, medicine or transportation if the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a direct loss of income due to work stoppage, lay-off, etc.

If you are experiencing hardship unrelated to COVID-19 we can help with that too. Just call (844) 281-3531 and ask to speak with one of our case managers.

To contact anyone at Washington Masonic Charities by email or phone visit our contacts page on our website. Just click [here](#).



Master's Message

[WBro. Blair Neumann](#)



Junior Warden's Message

[WBro. John Murray Louderback](#)



I've been thinking a lot about the Truth recently, Brothers, and I noticed that it's a foundation upon which Masonry rests from labor that is required when Truth is broken.

Our first degree tells us that Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. That's strong language even for Masonry! I read that as including, "God is Truth," and because the Truth is the foundation of every virtue, the last words of every meeting, even through COVID, are a prayer to the Supreme Architect himself, for the Truth to cement us with Brotherly Love.

Cracks in our foundation of Truth are directly at odds with the spirit of Masonry and may undermine the integrity of our very temples! It is the Truth that bonds us in fellowship. Can there be true Brotherhood without it?

To be a good man and true is the first lesson taught in Masonry. We are directed to contemplate the Truth, and to regulate our conduct thereby.

Hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us; sincerity and plain-dealing distinguish us. A Brother Mason is not a liar and does not weasel around the Truth! While I'll concede that his circumstances may necessitate occasional transgression, I trust my Brother to circumscribe such necessity well within due bounds.

Masonic Outreach Services - Upcoming Webinars

Tuesday February 16th - Provide & Protect - Part 2 Webinar 7pm

If you're a Mason and responsible for ensuring your families well-being, this workshop is for you. Part 2 progresses from Accumulation of wealth to Conservation of funds in preparation for retirement. (This workshop is a stand-alone and does not require participation in Part 1.)

[Click here](#). Meeting ID: 840 8638 3011 Passcode: 813813 Phone: 1-253-215-8782

Friday March 12th - How We Help - Masonic Outreach Services Webinar 11:00 AM

Learn how Masonic Outreach Services can help you, your wife, and your older Brethren and Masonic Widows. Hear from our case manager the many ways we work with you through age related hurdles and challenges so you can stay in your home longer, safely.

[Click here](#). Meeting ID: 853 7121 3615 Passcode: 556113 Phone: 1-253-215-8782

Wednesday April 7th - Minor Home Repairs Assistance - Webinar 2:00 PM

Learn how Masonic Outreach Services can help you, your wife, and your older Brethren and Masonic Widows with home repairs. Hear from our case manager the many ways we can assist with needed home repairs so you can stay in your home longer, safely.

[Click here](#). Meeting ID: 849 4462 0953 Passcode: 018701 Phone: 1-253-215-8782

I have long been fascinated since childhood with the concept of infinity. Something that goes on forever, the concept of something without end. More recently I have been studying quantum physics. Well, how does this apply to Masonry? What do we know about light? Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. It takes light eight minutes 20 seconds to travel from the sun to earth. If you were a photon of light, since you are traveling at the speed of light, you travel the 91 million miles instantly. Time has no relevance to photons. Time is relative.

Light is the giver of life. All life on earth is dependent on light with possibly the only exception being geothermal anaerobic bacteria. Energy from the sun is converted into chlorophyll by plants which are consumed by herbivores, which in turn are consumed by carnivores. This is energy conversion. If it were not for the light from the sun we and other life on earth would not be here.

Quantum entanglement or "spooky action" at a distance. What is this? Ever observe a school of fish or flock of birds turn together at the same time? Be of one mind? We Masons believe that light gives us enlightenment and understanding. What does this say about reality? Why do photons change their behavior when we try to measure them? Is light a wave or a particle? Does our mere observation create disturbances that create variation of behavior?

If any Master Mason would like to contribute to the Trestleboard, I'm quite sure that if space is available and the message appropriate, the editor would consider your article for publication. Please consider making your contribution. What do you have to say about Light?

Let there be light.

Reach Us Here

- [Master Blair Neumann](#) 425 466-8358
blairn@outlook.com
- SW Ashley Brinkley 206 621-5118
- JW John Louderback 206 999-0484

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Date

- 5 Morrey Eskenazi
- 9 Daryl E. Anguish
- 10 Brian P. West
- 15 Jason R. Moore
- 16 Kenton J. Curtis
- 16 Morgan Owain Morgan-Jones
- 17 Hans U. Wehl
- 19 Charles R. "Dick" Grimm
- 19 Seann P. Maria
- 24 Tyler W. Urbigit
- 25 Mathew S. La Croix
- 26 Richard "Dick" Loeb
- 26 Jerome N. Alhadeff



Brothers who have made themselves available for Junior Grand Warden 2021-2022

“How has my Masonic life prepared me for the duties and responsibilities of serving as Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons?”

Brother available for Junior Grand Warden VW Richard M. Kovak.

To answer this question, one must first recall what the duties and responsibilities of the Grand Master are. GL Code Sec. 3.02 sets out the Duties of a Grand Master: To Preside, to approve annual minutes, to constitute Lodges, to report on or cause to be reported the operating budget, to discharge all necessary executive functions, and to exercise a general supervision over the Craft.

In my official Masonic life as the executive leader of several Masonic York Rite, Scottish Rite and Shrine groups, I have been called upon to perform exactly these same duties and have always striven to execute these duties faithfully and punctually. As Potentate of Nile Shrine Center in 2008 we had a stunningly successful year resulting in over 50 new members and many well attended events, especially the year-end joint celebration of 150 years of Grand Lodge Masonry in Washington and 100 years of Nile with Grand Master Doug Tucker and Imperial Potentate Doug Maxwell in attendance which I planned and orchestrated with the help of many brethren and my dear Lady Carol.

As Grand High Priest in 2015-16, we instituted a Grand Master's Class which brought in 56 new York Rite Sir Knights including, Grand Master Don Munks. This program was so well liked that it was continued by my successors across the next two years. All the while, these organizations ran smoothly and cleanly with my committees and myself in command.

GL Code Sec. 301.1 lists the powers of the Grand Master and within these powers come many of his responsibilities. Appointments, discipline of members, approvals, authorizations, dispensations, selling /conveying real property and managing assets, and **KOVAK** page 7

Brother available for Junior Grand Warden VW Jimmy Norton

Short answer is everything about my Masonic life-journey has been preparing me for each new opportunity to serve our gentle craft and provided a solid foundation or corner stone to fulfill the duties and responsibilities to serve you as Grand Master.

From the moment I stepped off with my left foot I've understood that what we are all a part of is about serving others, leading by example and teaching others so all can see what it really means to be a Mason. That passion and hands on experience has been honed and refined over the last 22 years of serving our craft.

My journey to becoming Master the first time started as Junior Steward, watching each officer in their position and applying what worked for each station, looked for

ways to improve and at the same time memorialized event recaps and provided planning sheets to be passed on for the next officer. The entire team of officers created a succession plan that supported each and every officer along the way to serving the Lodge as Master.

As District Deputy the challenges and opportunities facing the District helped refine the skills necessary to think outside of the box for the overall good of the District. Understanding that it is up to each Lodge to be successful but ensuring they knew that we are here to support them in their efforts and assist with providing tools to help them be successful.

As a trainer for the District No. 2 Education team it solidified my passion to not only teach but provide the why we do what we do, the how to do it and the support so the Brethren knew they had the tools to be successful.

Serving on the Code Committee was amazing and provided a great opportunity to work **NORTON** page 7

Brother available for Junior Grand Warden VW Darel Maxfield Sr.

How has my Masonic life prepared me for the duties and responsibilities of serving as Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington? I started my Masonic life at a very young age. My Dad was a Mason and my mother and dad were both in the Eastern Star. I would always go help them set up the chapter room for OES meetings. I was only 13 years old. I would see what they did and also help them deliver fruit to the Masonic Home. I would see the charitable things that the Masons and Eastern Star would do for their brothers and sisters plus other people in the community.

Later I joined the DeMolay and then the Masonic Lodge. I have been a Mason for 48 years and have been Master 5 times, deputy 5 times, special Deputy 2 times. I have been on Grand Lodge committees and appointed a Grand Lodge officer twice.

What I have done to prepare me to be Grand Master was my years in working as a manager or supervisor in private businesses. I managed a restaurant in my 20s and 30s that had 82 employees. This included running the whole business from managing the business and helping the employees with their personal problems. And how to deal with so many different personalities while working with the public in a bar setting.

I worked for the Department of Corrections for 20 years before my retirement. MY budget was 3 million dollars and year. I had to make sure I did not overspend. In fact my department was one of the departments that was in the black the whole time I was there. I had 28 inmate employee at all times in the **MAXFIELD** page 7



KOVAK drawing down from the Charity Fund for the relief of worthy applicants and for emergency relief during calamities.

Many of these responsibilities are handled through the Grand Master's appointed committees and Deputies. My ten years on the Grand Lodge Grievance and Appeals Committee have given me profound insight into the problems which beset Masons and their Lodges and this experience has provided me the know-how to deal with them.

My four years on the Grand Lodge Temple Board have given me the knowledge to deal with real estate, rental, repair and maintenance issues. I have been very fortunate to have had many very good appointments during my Masonic career to help me deliver on these responsibilities: my District Deputies and committees in Grand Chapter, my executive aides and committeemen in Shrine and now my District Instructors and committeemen in Grand Commandery.

But a Grand Master is more than the sum of printed powers and duties. He is, at least for that year, the face of Freemasonry to the constituent members and to the greater world. He is the cheer leader for his craft, the servant of all who call upon him for assistance and encouragement, the spark that lights the flames of renewed interest in Freemasonry to beget new members and re-enlistment from those members who may have faded into inactivity and ennui.

Most of all, he must be a brother to all regardless of race, color, creed or political disposition. As has been said before, we are a Brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God. This I have been and always will be - there for my brothers. VWB Richard M. Kovak Deputy of the Grand Master in District 4

NORTON with the Jurisprudence Committee that is mostly made up of Past Grand Masters. This provided a solid understanding of our Code but more especially a hands-on example of how a collaborative effort that is based on Masonic values can blend a diverse group of Brethren together to better our craft. Past Grand Masters really can be great teachers.

As part of the Research and Education Committee I understood "seek and you shall find" because part of the journey is also part of the education process. Our past provides us with a guide for the future and sharing our past preserves it for generations to come. And as Chairman for our Youth Committee I am committed for the team to work for more Lodge involvement, adult participation and review how our entire Masonic community can help support making a difference in the lives of our youth.

Reflect on what you do today, tomorrow and beyond and how it will empower, enlighten, and uplift those around you. VWB Jimmy Norton Chairman, Youth Committee

MAXFIELD laundry at a time over the 9 years I managed it. This taught me how to deal with different

kind of personalities in a prison that has over 900 different personalities and crimes.

In my years of being Deputy, I learned how to listen and help the different brothers in the problems or questions in my district. You learn how to listen to each and every one on a different level, as each person has a different personality than the other. Also while being deputy and appointed officer, I traveled all over the state and learned about the different ways the Lodges do their work and their problems.

I also learned a lot about the way the Grand Lodge does its business and what some of the problems they have to attend to and how they work with the Lodges to find a remedy to bring the problem to a good conclusion. The Grand Lodge is not just a Masonic Lodge any longer. We are a multimillion dollar business. That is what we have to take care of. As I said earlier, I had a budget and know how to stay within the guidelines of the Finance committee. VW Darel Maxfield Sr.

"It's not those who write #%&* on the walls of the Federal buildings that get things done, it's those who are the workers inside." – Bill Maher, 2021

Bro. Paul Doak Speaks Out on One of The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences – Rhetoric

Worshipful Master and Brothers All,

The Wednesday, January 13th Zoom meeting was different than any Lodge or Virtual Lodge meeting I had ever attended in my nine years in the Craft. As a result, thoughts have been swimming through my head and I thought I'd share some of them here.

I commend the Worshipful Master Blair for bringing up the hot topic of January 6, 2021.

Destruction, trespass and deaths that occurred in and around the US Capital building one week after it happened. It was bold and needed as we as a country need to start healing the division that is among us.

Two things became apparent to me in the frank discourse during that meeting of brothers. Speech and Rhetoric: how did these two things, or the abuse thereof, contribute to the events on January 6th, 2021.

"Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities."

-Voltaire

Speech

The First Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees among other things the right of Free Speech And the right of the people to peacefully assemble.

As Voltaire has been attributed as saying, "I may object to what you say, but will defend you to the death for your right to say it." Even if he did not say or write those words it has been accepted that it reflects his attitudes towards speech.

In the 1969 Supreme Court case Brandenburg vs Ohio, speech "is protected under the First Amendment, unless the speech "is directed to inciting or producing

imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action”

Speech has limits

A person is welcome to advocate for their points of view, provided it does not threaten others, their property or cause others to inflict harm or violence on others. When it does that, it crosses a line and there are consequences.

Some forms of advocacy, often called “in your face,” where people are yelling and or in close proximity and often rapidly making their points is not my preferred way of discussing topics. I tend to tune out these people and walk away. Again, it is their right to say it, does not mean I have to listen.

During the January 6th event free speech and peaceful assembly clearly crossed the line and became the above mentioned lawless action, which then turned into the criminal activities including violence, destruction and death. Those that committed such acts and compelled them to do the events should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Rhetoric

It is defined as “The art of effective persuasive writing or speech...often lacking meaningful content”
Merriman Webster.

There is a lot of Rhetoric out there most has turned to vitriol and very divisive.. filled with outlandish claims, many outright lies, and absurdities that people believe. (And have acted on) How did we get here?

At least two things have been impacting the public rhetoric over the past 40 years – which I believe has contributed to the events of January 6, 2021.

FCC Fairness Doctrine

1987, the repeal of the FCC Fairness Doctrine, a rule that had been in place since 1927. This rule mandated broadcasters “to Free and Fair competition of opposing views.” At the time it was instituted, only radio stations existed. In 1934 it was expanded to cover all broadcasters. As a result radio stations, especially the AM frequencies from the 1970s onward, mainly played music, or offered cooking or dramas programs. If a viewpoint was aired, an opposing view would have to be given equal time to provide people a balanced view of the issues.

And TV broadcasts would have to use equal and similar airtime for the opposing side. As a child, I remember one TV News broadcast where the opposing side was very inarticulate and said he just opposed it – and for 5 minutes of the nightly news, it was mostly the camera looking at this guy literally saying nothing at all. Because of incidents like this, broadcasters hated the rule. It was not attracting viewers or advertisers.

Once repealed in 1987, the airwaves, especially AM radio dial, transformed to “talk radio” and national syndication of talk radio personalities starting in 1988. And a sense of balanced reporting and viewpoints took a back seat to “infotainment.”

It was mentioned that people listened to the shock jock Howard Stern because they wondered what he would say next.

Programs managers learned that the more outrageous something is the more it will get noticed. During the Vietnam war era the phrase, “If it bleeds, it leads” had reporters trying to get that type of camera shot to not only help report the news but also to promote their own careers.

It became all about more people listening or watching leading to more advertising and more money. The algorithms for the social media outlets are set to this as well – the more outrageous or violent it is, the more it is suggested and promoted.

With more social media channels available now including; YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook this has been magnified over 1000-fold. Anyone with a smart phone can create a podcast or YouTube channel.

So the more radical or outrageous you are, the more you get noticed and possibly generate revenue. And the cycle keeps going.

This has consequences for society, to reiterate Voltaire “Those who can make you believe absurdities, can make you commit atrocities.”

Cameras in Congress

Second thing is the installation of video cameras in the US Senate in 1986 and the House of Representatives in 1979. Prior to this, we relied on sketches and a summary provided by a reporter. Or a sound bite from an elected official when things happened. This allowed members of congress to work together, get more done and be more civil with each other – it was often described as collegial, especially in the Senate.

It was often the case that a candidate had a persona in their state or elected district and a more practical approach when they got to Washington D.C.

Constituents started watching C-Span – calling out their elected – “hey, you said X or you did not do Y”. Now, the elected officials pander to the camera to keep up the persona they cultivated in their districts.

And again, they have to go more and more extreme, more absolute and the more coverage they get on TV.

If you recall in 1982, President Regan said to a GOP Congressional Candidate Gary Arnold “Shut up.” And that was news. The past few years, we have all seen via Twitter and video recordings that the decorum has fallen greatly from 1982.

Look where we are today with what the many elected officials say about each other and the institutions they serve. We have been speeding along a dark road with civility left behind in the driveway.

I hope that the events of January 6, 2021 are never repeated. It was abhorrent, violent, troubling, scary, and a disgusting event. One I thought could never happen in the United States of America.

All of us, especially as Freemasons, but society as a whole, need to step back, try to understand each other, where we are coming from and try to find common ground.

Bro. Paul Doak

Hate Has No Place In Civil Society

RWBro. Cameron M. Bailey Deputy Grand Master
The MW Grand Lodge F&AM of Washington

January 11, 2021

Like millions of Americans I watched in horror last week as the institutions of our nation were attacked. The United States Capitol was stormed by a mob, and while receiving much less attention, the fence surrounding our own Governor's home was broken down.

As Freemasons, as members of the greatest Peace Society this world has ever known, we must stand against this. This post stands against this.

I know that at least half of the people who read these words will be from the political right. In this day and age, far too many of us disregard anything said by anyone on the other side.

Before those of you on the right dismiss this post out of hand, please allow me to remind you that I also stood, in a public way, against the political left's riots that shook our nation this past summer. If desired, that post can be read at: [The Unsparring Ravages Of Barbarous Force.](#)

I agree with the famous words of Senator Barry Goldwater:

"Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice."

What we are seeing in the political landscape of 2020, and now 2021, is not extremism in the way Senator Goldwater used the word, rather it is hate.

The active political left, in large numbers, actually now hates those who disagree with their positions. Likewise, the active political right, in equally large numbers, actually now hates those who disagree with their positions.

This hatred is on full display, each and every day, all across social media platforms.

Unfortunately, far too many men who claim to be Freemasons have embraced this hatred of their fellow man.

I hear, each and every day, about some new political fight between those who are supposed to be Brothers breaking out on Facebook. I'm sorry to have to say it, but this nonsense is completely un-Masonic, as pointed out in our own ritual:

"Among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree."

Not to mention the fact that it destroys any hope our Ancient Fraternity has of communicating our true principals to the public at large.

Consider our ritual:

"Where were you first made a Mason?"

If you are a member of our Fraternity, then you know the answer to that question. If you know the answer to that question, then you also know that you cannot hate your Brother on social media, and have truly become a Freemason. The profound lessons of our institution clearly didn't make the impression that they should have.

Let us be clear.



Each of us has an absolute right to hold whatever political beliefs we want to hold.

Each of us equally have an absolute right to express these political beliefs as we desire to express them, provided that in doing so we don't trample upon the rights of others.

These rights are granted, not by man, or government, but by God himself.

That is indeed the very founding principal of the United States.

God did not however grant us the right to hate those who disagree with our political beliefs, especially for no other reason than that disagreement.

As Freemasons in this time of political hatred, we would do well to consider the lessons of those Masons who were enemies during our Civil War, yet took the opportunity to assist each other when needed most.

As I close, I would just like to remind all of the Freemasons of this great Jurisdiction that Civility, Civil Society, and Civil Discourse are sacred principals to our Gentle Craft.

"We are now about to quit this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue, to mingle again with the outer world. Amid its concerns and employments forget not the duties which you have heard so frequently inculcated and so forcefully recommended in this Lodge."

[#CivilSociety](#) [#CivilDebate](#) [#SocialMedia](#)

- Cameron

WBro. Fred Hutchinson opens our Wednesday Zoom sessions with a call to prayer. He offered this invocation in a previous week.

**Great Architect of the Universe
and guide over all time: past, present and future:**

**We come once again to ask your blessing upon us this night
and reverently invoke your presence among us.**

**As we open our meeting, we celebrate our coming together
....we celebrate a year of meeting on Zoom
...we celebrate the richness of our fellowship.**

**We pause to remember the dark night of a year past
And look to a new day of renewed light.....**

**We are thankful for all the blessings we have received and
Remember that the gifts of our God are not all past,
But that good things are yet to be.**

**Help us to continue to stand tall and be instruments of good in
our sphere
And to be a beacon of hope to all we meet..**

**Thank you for this opportunity to be together...
to work together...
and to make a difference
in world in need of harmony peace and love.**

AMEN

Written by Rev. Bro. Fred Hutchinson, M.Div., MSHS, BCC
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