

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

## Trestleboard

AUGUST 2021

Jim Russell, editor



Serving Seattle since 1860

meets: 7910 Greenwood Ave. N.

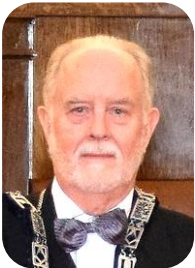
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## FROM THE EAST

S. Ashley Brinkley, Master



S. Ashley Brinkley  
Master

I am beyond amazed at the turnout at our most recent Stated Meeting. If you were absent from this meeting, I feel you missed out on a moment that will help mold the history for St. John's Lodge. Not only did we have a huge turnout, but our Grand Master was also present accompanied by most of the Grand Lodge elected and appointed officers as well. I enjoyed being in-person with all of my Brothers at St. John's Lodge.

During the time of the pandemic where we could not meet in person, we kept going forward. We Zoomed together many times. I know, some had fears that once allowed to return to "normal" that some would not want to return, that the comfort of home and not having to be fully dressed or travel would deter brothers from coming back; or simply that without the in-person commitment, that new hobbies would take priority. Well, if our last Stated Meeting was any indication, that won't be happening at St. John's Lodge! We are BACK! In full force and we have set a precedent for what is to come.

I have also attended a few other Lodge meetings over the past few weeks. I had the pleasure to sit next to a couple of brothers that moved to our area shortly before the pandemic started. Both had not had the opportunity to have personal contact with their "own" Lodges for quite some time, but said the same thing: *We have missed the fellowship. We miss going to Lodge. We cannot wait to return to having FUN again with all our new brothers.* For social people like ourselves, getting together and having our meetings is something that can NOT be replaced by Zoom.



Twenty-three members and nineteen visitors attended our July stated communication (not all pictured).

## CALENDAR



- August 7 (10am): Open Air Degree, Masonic Park
- August 11 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- August 11 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- August 12 (7pm): Officers meeting teleconference
- August 14 (6pm): Everett AquaSox
- August 18 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated – at Scottish Rite (casual dress)
- August 20-22: Family Campout and Picnic Masonic Park
- August 25 (7pm): Fellowship Zoom teleconference
- August 28 (5pm social hour): 161<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Celebration Ivar's Salmon House
- September 4: Happy Birthday to us!
- September 6: Labor Day
- September 6 – 8: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)
- September 9 (7pm): Officers meeting teleconference
- September 15 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated Return to Greenwood
- September 15-16: Yom Kippur (Wednesday-Thursday)
- September 21-27: St. John's Boston Tour
- October 13 (6pm): Board of Trustees 2022 Budget preparation
- October 14 (7pm): Officers meeting teleconference
- October 20 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- October 22-23-24: District 5 Leadership Retreat Masonic Park Dream Camp
- November 10 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- November 11 (7pm): Officers meeting
- November 17 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated Past Masters Night; Election of Officers

## AUGUST MEET AGAIN AT SCOTTISH RITE; CASUAL ATTIRE

St. John's brothers will return to the Scottish Rite facility in Shoreline this month for our August 18 communication. Our Greenwood Temple home is still unavailable for use, as the Temple Board has elected to keep the building closed until Greenwood Lodge returns from its summer darkness.

***Ditch the coat and red bowtie this month. We're going "casual." (No shorts, please.)***

While the Scottish Rite building is not our home, it offers ample off-street parking, a nice kitchen and a choice of Lodge rooms. It also holds the Lodge furniture many of our "old-timers" remember when we were Raised or served in the East.

During the dinner hour, WBro. Adam Creighton will present a biographical sketch of our honored brother MWBro. Sat Tashiro. Adam has researched and interviewed MWBro. Tashiro extensively, and this will be a wonderful opportunity to get better acquainted with one of our former Trustees and Past Grand Masters.

With the rise in reported coronavirus cases, we encourage any St. John's Brothers who have NOT received the vaccines to consider staying home for the next few weeks. There have been no reported outbreaks following our meeting last month, so apparently – knock on wood – our vulnerable Brothers remain free of the virus. For added safety, feel free to wear your St. John's masks.



MW Sat Tashiro and Lady Lorna share smiles during a previous summer St. John's Herb's Night.



St. John's will again offer dinner to all comers including guests and visitors at this month's stated communication August 18.

***Please make your dinner reservations with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, August 12,*** prior to the meeting. If you need a ride, the secretary will be happy to find one for you. Do you know of a brother who has not attended Lodge in a while? Call him and ask if you can pick him up and bring him to Lodge.

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### RSVP required

## St. John's Family Camp-out and Picnic

St. John's has reserved a covered facility at the Masonic Park near Granite Falls the weekend of August 20-21-22. On Saturday we will provide a catered lunch at 1pm. A Ruffian Degree will be performed Friday evening and a twilight Fellowcraft degree Saturday evening.

***All are welcome for lunch, but we NEED a headcount*** and know if you have any food

allergies. RSVP's to Jim Russell and let us know if you will be a camper ***or lunch only***. **Do not delay – RV spaces are limited; tents not so much.**



That weekend the Grand

Lodge is scheduled to offer degrees in the open air Lodge room at the Park. These will be additions to the traditional open-air Master Mason degree the first Saturday of August.

For those who enjoy the comfort of your own bed, make it a daytime outing, enjoy the company and lunch with an easy drive back home that evening.

### Open-Air Lodge Needs Bench Replacements

The Master Masons Club of Snohomish and Island Counties is conducting a fundraiser for new benches in the Open-Air Lodge at the Masonic Family Park in Granite Falls. Time and damage from weather have made these benches unsafe for further use.



For a donation of \$150, Lodges or individuals can provide a new bench for the Open-Air

Lodge. A new bench will have a label plate to commemorate the person or Lodge for which this was donated.

St. John's has purchased three – including one honoring our late Past Master Bill Collison.



*It's coming!!*  
**St. John's**  
**161st Anniversary Celebration**  
**Ivar's Salmon House**

Potlatch Room

Social hour – 5pm     Dinner 6pm

Saturday, August 28

*Make your reservations, today*

*Specify entrée choice: top sirloin, halibut, pasta*

206 623-0261

## Saturday night at the AquaSox

Thirty members and guests of St. John's are heading to the Everett AquaSox baseball game Saturday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. With the exception of last year's canceled minor league games, this has become an anticipated annual tradition for our Lodge brethren.



"Pre-admission" opens at 6pm into the Pepsi Food Pavilion BBQ with hot dogs, hamburgers, fruit salad, baked beans, soft drinks and your reserved seat.

Free parking on site.

Here's a look at our future Seattle Mariners vs. the Vancouver Canadians (Toronto Blue Jays farm club). The Everett ballclub has been leading in the standings for much of this season.

WBro. Terry Grove has again arranged for excellent seating in the upper rows on the 3rd base side of the diamond (between home plate and the pitcher's mound).



First pitch will be thrown at 7:05pm - fireworks following the game (around 9:30 or 10pm).

## Past Master Neumann presented Apron

It was a little delayed because of COVID-19, but not forgotten.

In the tradition of St. John's and with the assistance of Grand Master MWBro. Cameron Bailey. VWBro. Ashley Brinkley presented WBro. Blair Neumann his embossed Past Master's apron and case last month.

We were pleased to host almost the entire elected team of Grand Lodge officers as well as several of the appointed officers.

The meeting was held in Shoreline at the home of the Seattle Valley of the Scottish Rite.



Master Brinkley, assisted by Grand Master MW Cameron Bailey (L), presents WB Blair Neumann (R) his PM apron

## Cuban churches, Freemasons urge government to listen, not repress

Cuba's churches have defended those who participated in unprecedented protests and even set up a hotline to advise the families of detainees, a sign of increasing boldness from spiritual leaders on the Communist-run island.

The government blamed counter-revolutionaries it said were exploiting hardships caused by decades-old U.S. sanctions.

In the days following the protests, the dominant Roman Catholic church, other religions, and Freemasons issued statements in favor of free expression. After decades of repression following the 1959 revolution, an expansion of religious freedoms in the 1990s has given religious groups greater autonomy than any other organization not affiliated with the Communist Party.

Protestant denominations also backed the protesters' right to express themselves. All urged both protesters and authorities to avoid violence in favor of dialogue.

The Catholic Church in particular has played an important role in Cuban society in recent years, negotiating the release of political prisoners and fomenting the 2014 detente with old Cold War foe the United States.

Meanwhile, Cuba's Grand Lodge of Freemasons – a "secretive" society that also has a broad reach – said in a statement it was "concerned by the excessive use of force" by authorities.

Jose Ramon Vinas, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Republic of Cuba, went a step further, writing a letter to President Miguel Diaz-Canel accusing the government of always justifying the country's problems through the U.S. trade embargo rather than recognizing its own responsibility.

He wrote that he had been summoned to a police station where three officials questioned him over the letter. In a show of the growing sense of defiance in Cuban society, he said he suggested they come to visit the Masons instead where they could speak on an equal footing.

"As I left, there was a cluster of brothers waiting for me, defying the curfew about to start – Masonic pride... thank you, thank you!"

### From August 31, 1991 Minutes of St. John's 9:

"The Worshipful Master (WBro. Russell) informed the Lodge that the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Dinner had to be rescheduled from September 7 to September 20 as the speaker, the Grand Lecturer of Prince Hall Grand Lodge of F. and A.M. of WA, would be unable to be present on the 7<sup>th</sup>. (Instead) the Master has engaged the services of Dr. Steve Hanson, a Political Science Professor at the University of Washington, who is an expert on current Soviet Russian political affairs."

**(In those days our anniversary dinners were only open to members of the fraternity and featured educational speakers.)**

## Senior Warden Message

WBro. Blair Neumann



Brothers, Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue.

Truth is what is left when all superfluities have been removed. It is the rock upon which we build our Temples. It can neither be created nor destroyed except by the divine Creator Himself.

The Truth does not fear a challenge. The Truth endures all that is said or made against it.

We may fight the Truth, but the Truth is bigger than any of us and, in the long run, the Truth will always prevail. The Truth must prevail because all else is human creation and temporary.

My Brothers, seek the Truth for your own betterment, build your temples upon it even as you tear down any that you've found yourself to have built elsewhere.

You will become a better man and improve yourself in Masonry when you do.

**Deadlines have come and gone to join your St. John's Brothers on our trip to Boston – cradle of American Freemasonry – Sept. 21-27. St. John's will pick up a share of the expenses for those on the tour.**

## ***Becoming a Mason Starts With a Conversation. Let's Talk.***

We believe men are first made Masons in their hearts, then they ask to join our Fraternity. Freemasonry will take these men — already good men in our community — and help make them better men.

Each man brings something different into the Fraternity — as different as the types of men who become Masons. However, each shares a core of common beliefs and dreams; each brother believes that, even in a small way, by every one of his actions he helps make his world, his community and himself better.

Freemasonry accepts no one for membership unless he comes of his own free will and accord, having already obtained a favorable impression of our Fraternity.

There are few other requirements. You must:

- Be a man aged 18 or older (although women & younger people can join related groups),
- Believe in a Supreme Being,
- A belief in the immortality of the soul,
- Live an ethical life, and
- Have a strong interest in the Fraternity with a desire to participate in our charities and activities.

An application fee is also required, followed by a background investigation on all applicants.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Fraternity of Freemasonry, we'd love to speak with you.

## Junior Warden's Message

WBro. John Murray Louderback



Over the many years that I have been writing Messages for St. John's Trestleboard, I have often struggled with what to say. World and civic affairs has often given me great pause. How can I say what I'm feeling in my heart. The stuff that makes you cry. That, please God - give us forgiveness for what we humans do to each other and to your planet! Yet, there also needs for be a Masonic Message.

As I look out my window, I see two tug boats heading out the Hoquiam River to meet a ship in Grays Harbor - coming to load grain in Aberdeen. A train sounds its horn at an intersection carrying several rail cars of lumber. I am reminded of two of my favorite childhood stories: *Little Toot* and *The Little Engine That Could*. Both seemed to be born with character. They were alive with the power to transform themselves – if they tried their best. Despite all obstacles that at first seemed impossible, they were able to overcome and achieve their dreams and goals.

Why were they successful? They never gave up on what was right and important to them – more importantly, they never gave up on themselves.

This character trait is not dependent upon age.

No matter if you're a "young toot" or an "old toot" – keep striving for more knowledge. Keep striving to be better. Engage your character, your heart, your energy in Lodge Labor. Dust off that Apron. Get involved! Oh ... and don't forget to – "whistle while you work."

Join us on Zoom

**Teleconferencing Fellowship**  
**Wednesdays**

**at 7pm**

*We're having a wonderful time exchanging ideas and  
Masonic Enlightenment*

### ***Coming dates:***

*August 11, 2021*

**August 18, 2021 (stated meeting night – no Zoom)**

*August 25, 2021*

*September 1, 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
- Enter passcode **1776**

***Here's more about how to use Zoom Meetings:***

**[https://zoom.us/download#client\\_4meeting](https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting)**

# LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER



*So, what is Freemasonry? "The 'work' of freemasonry in modern times is the effort to live our lives by incorporating the ritual into everything we do. That is how we make good men better and improve ourselves in Masonry. You cannot align with the great rank and title of Freemason if you do not know the work."*

## Answering the Question

by Midnight Freemason Contributor

### Bro. Ken JP Stuczynski

How many times have you been asked, "What is Freemasonry?" What do you tell them? We spend a lot of time telling them what it's not — it's not a religion (though religious), not a charity (though we are extremely philanthropic), and not a social club (though we are copiously social). We use the term Brotherhood, but even that is vague or highly subjective. For one person, it means sitting around a campfire with other men. For others, it means dropping everything to come to the aid of another. But when people start to peek behind the veil and see our rituals and traditions and etiquette, the question is fine-tuned into not so much "what" as "why."

What is the point of Freemasonry? What is it supposed to do for people and the world? As much as it is dear to many of us, the honest truth is that we honestly don't know what it's for beyond the platitude of "making good men better." If we ask if we've succeeded in our mission of making the world better because of us, we have to dig farther and farther back to historical Masons of fame and import. In other words, not much these days, beyond impressive charity stats, of course, and perhaps local good works.

If we adhere to the bumper sticker of "making good men better," we immediately come up against the next question, "How?" The intellectuals among us then borrow the much older description of Masonry as a "system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." Well, okay then. Is the mystery solved or just beginning? We may call it "a moral science," but that has more a tone of research and abstraction. We could talk of its alchemical roots in the refinement of matter of spirit, but that diatribe falls on deaf ears more concerned with getting ready for the next degree or feeding one's family.

In other words, the answers we tend to give are more smoke than fire, and certainly inadequate in terms of Light. In New York, we have started encouraging the deployment of banners developed by Grand Lodge that read, "A brotherhood of upstanding men continuing a tradition of making a difference," followed by a well-worded call-to-action and link to [DiscoverMasonry.Com](http://DiscoverMasonry.Com). I recognize the arduous thought that went into what I would admit is a million-dollar, finely-tuned marketing slogan. If the question is, "how do we get more members?" then we're on the right track. It gives high moral status to those who associate with our Brand. It

says we give a damn and are willing to work with integrity to make the world better — an answer I've given many times to the question at hand.

But does that tell us anything about Masonry itself, regarding moral improvement or otherwise? If it can be summed up with a value statement that fits on a banner, then why do we have ritual? Why have countless books been written on Masonic philosophy? But then there are Masons with 50-year aprons and above who haven't cracked a single book on the subject. There must be a simpler answer — one that cuts through book-based esotericism and speaks to the heart.

Well, I found that yesterday.

RW Richard Friedman is a Marine, practicing psychologist, the current Grand Lecturer for my jurisdiction, and most importantly to me, a Brother of which I have the highest admiration. He is tough but

loving, strict but encouraging, humble yet highly respected. And his response to discovering how common it was that Brothers were reading rather than truly knowing the ritual gave me the best-fitting key to unlock this most important of questions.

Masonry is a continuous improvement program for our brains, heart, and soul.

Masonry is supposed to be a way of life that teaches us that living within the guidelines of the ritual, we can get the most out of the gifts that the Great Architect has imbued in all of us.

It is supposed to be a daily challenge to get better in your life, a daily reminder that self-improvement never ends, and that life is what you make it.

We all should have been aware that when we took our obligations, we were promising to live a life that is a cut above normal society.

We commit ourselves to a Masonic way of life that includes brotherly love, relief, and truth. Items that are always in short supply in the profane world.

One of the first things any Entered Apprentice learns is the need to subdue his passions and improve himself in Masonry. It does not say let's pull to the lowest common denominator, let's be average, let's not ever be a cut above in society. In fact, it urges us to bid men come to *our* level but refuse to descend a single step to them.

If our goal is to become average, then do we really need Freemasonry or the ritual at all? Why be selective in membership when anyone can be average? We would have to change the ritual dramatically if average is the goal!

As we no longer build in the operative sense as a Craft, the "work" of freemasonry in modern times is the





effort to live our lives by incorporating the ritual into everything we do. That is how we make good men better and improve ourselves in Masonry. You cannot align with the great rank and title of Freemason if you do not know the work.

I truly feel nothing I will say or write will be but clanging cymbals or philosophical babbling bordering on pedantry compared to these words. They come from a place of Love and action, not cold rationalizations and a haphazard journey of life while incidentally wearing an Apron. Of course, even these words aren't the answer itself, as no such thing can be truly laid out in words. But they take us by the hand, ask us to rise, and fear no danger. We are all conducting each other toward the East, generation after generation, with or without expounding on metaphysics, with or without raising money for charity. The ritual is the path laid out for our ambulations of the world, and with the aid of a Brother, these questions give up their own answers freely.

**Bro. Ken JP Stuczynski** is a member of West Seneca Lodge No. 1111 and recently served as Master of Ken-Ton Lodge No. 1186. As webmaster for NYMasons.Org he is on the Communications and Technology Committees for the Grand Lodge of the State of New York. He is also a Royal Arch Mason and 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, serving his second term as Sovereign Prince of Palmoni Council in the Valley of Buffalo, NMJ. He also coordinates a Downtown Square Club monthly lunch in Buffalo, NY. He and his wife served as Patron and Matron of Pond Chapter No. 853 Order of the Eastern Star.

## 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



***And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.***  
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

## AUGUST BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

### Day

1 Petros N. Farmasonis  
3 Richard D. Hawley  
5 Aren Hakobyan  
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.



## “Freeborn”: What Does It Mean Any More?

In MSA's *Bible Quotations for Masonic Speakers* comes John 8:32-33, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be of Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

From a past *Short Talk Bulletin*, "Well-Informed Brethren" (November, 1949), a definition: "Freeborn. Masonically used in the old Roman sense of being born without slave ancestry. Probably no human being alive has not some slave ancestor. In twenty generations, five hundred years, every man has had nearly two million, two hundred thousand ancestors; carry it back a thousand, two thousand years and the ancestors exceed the population of the earth. In the Masonic sense, *freeborn* means without *traceable* slave ancestry."

[By the late 20th century, nearly all Grand Lodges utterly rejected this definition.]

From "One Hundred 'Lost Words'" (February 1947): "Freeborn. Necessary condition for a Masonic initiate. Denotes one not slave-born." [An earlier interpretation was "one with no known slave ancestry."]

An MSA survey in January 1938 found this term on the petitions of Delaware, Maryland, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. From *Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* edited and expanded by Robert Ingham Clegg, 1929, "After the abolition of slavery in the West Indies by the British Parliament, the Grand Lodge of England on September 21, 1847, changed the word *free-born* into *free man*, but the ancient landmark has never been removed in America."

Most would agree the term today means under no restraint of liberty, either by confinement, arrest, or bailment. Again from *Mackey*, "... as Freemasonry involves a solemn contract, no one can legally bind himself to its performance who is not a free agent and the master of his own actions."

From the April 2019 issue of the *Masonic Service Association* "Emessay Notes"

## FAITH

In the theological ladder, the explanation of which forms a part of the instruction of the First Degree of Masonry, faith is said to typify the lowest round. Faith, here, is synonymous with confidence or trust, and hence we find merely a repetition of the lesson which had been previously taught that the first, the essential qualification of a candidate for initiation, is that he should trust in God.

In the lecture of the same Degree, it is said that "Faith may be lost in sight; Hope ends in fruition; but Charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity. And this is said, because as faith is "the evidence of things not seen," when we see we no longer believe by faith but through demonstration; and as hope lives only in the expectation of possession, it ceases to exist when the object once hoped for is at length enjoyed, but charity, exercised on earth in acts of mutual kindness and forbearance, is still found in the world to come, in the sublime form of mercy from God to his erring creatures.

**Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry**

## Is there but one path leading to God?



Here are some beautiful lines on the subject by the late Past Grand Master of Masons in Mississippi, MWBro. Tom Quitman Ellis.

Ten thousand paths may lead to God;  
what right is mine to say  
That he who fails to walk with me  
has missed the only way?  
What right is mine to arrogate such  
grasp of finite mind  
And boast while others vainly seek  
the God I see and find?  
How could the God I live and trust  
point out to only me  
The way which travel all men must,  
or die eternally?  
I'm not so wise that He denies the  
light to all save me,  
While other souls as true as mine  
He loves with less degree.  
No, though the path we tread may  
lead where bright cathedrals rise,  
Or wayside church or rustic shrine  
point upward to the skies,  
The God-led trav'ler will arrive  
where lights of welcome shine,  
And myriads will be there who  
walked a different path than mine.



Chef Jed Lutge and staff prepare dinner before July's stated communication

Have you paid  
your 2021  
membership  
dues?



## When It All Goes Symbolic

by Midnight Freemason Contributor

Robert H. Johnson

*Candidate: "So where do I go to study the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences?"*

*Lodge Officer: "Oh, you misunderstand. You don't really have to do those things."*

As we move through the degrees in Freemasonry, there's a lot to unpack. The language is old, antiquated and generally hard to understand.

We tend to take everything we hear and read, and apply a passive attitude toward what's mentioned within. Did you study the seven liberal arts and sciences? Do you reflect on your behaviors and apply the working tools?

Passively sure. But being conscious of the lessons, is not enough. Knowing something exists does not mean you've done the work. One needs to actually apply the teachings in order to truly be "Masonic."

Much like the Penalties of the craft, I cannot write, suffice to say, that these have been relegated to symbolic status only. I'm not making a case to make them real, just using the common example. In more than one jurisdiction additional verbiage has been added to make sure the initiate knows he doesn't actually have to worry about anything at all.

But what of the rest? To divest yourselves of the vices? Have you done this? Did you quit biting your nails? Quit smoking? Or, did you just keep on doing it, and say, "Man, that was cool."?

Did you apply yourself to the study of the craft with freedom, fervency and zeal? Or are the teachings of Freemasonry and everything contained therein regard to **actionable** items, just a symbolic ask?

Is the point to make you aware only? Or to actually do the things the Craft asks us to do? We cannot be workmen if we're about nothing more than a handshake and honor. How are you flawed? How can masonry help? Using the working tools of Freemasonry, we can identify these things within ourselves and with the lessons contained within ritual, we can conquer them.

Let's get down to business and do some Freemasonry--make some good men...better.

*"It is absurd to think that a vast organization like Masonry was ordained merely to teach to grown-up men of the world the symbolical meaning of a few simple builders' tools." ~W.L. Wilmshurst*

**RWB, Robert Johnson** is the Managing Editor of the Midnight Freemasons blog. He is a Freemason out of the 1st N.E. District of Illinois. He currently serves as the Secretary of Spes Novum Lodge No. 1183 UD. He is a Past Master of Waukegan Lodge 78 and a Past District Deputy Grand Master for the 1st N.E. District of Illinois. Brother Johnson currently produces and hosts weekly Podcasts (internet radio programs) *Whence Came You?* & *Masonic Radio Theatre* which focus on topics relating to Freemasonry. He is also a co-host of *The Masonic Roundtable*, a Masonic talk show. He is a husband and father of four, works full time in the executive medical industry. He is the co-author of *"It's Business Time - Adapting a Corporate Path for Freemasonry"* and is currently working on a book of Masonic essays and one on Occult Anatomy to be released soon.

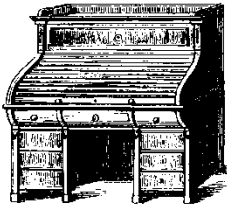
### St. John's Commits to Masonic Enlightenment

If the covid-19 pandemic did anything positive for St. John's, it was to show that Masonic Education or Enlightenment is of paramount importance to our members. We met weekly over Zoom for instruction from Brothers who provided their thoughts and research into a variety of subjects of interest.



VW Neil Quinn addresses the Brethren with Masonic Enlightenment to lead off the July stated communication.





## From The Secretary's Desk

### Are You Current in Your Dues?

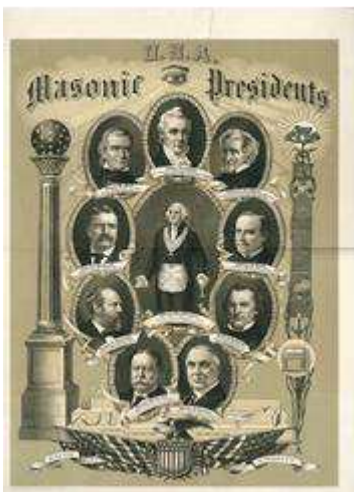
Do you want to visit another Lodge in our Jurisdiction? Can't find your membership card to prove your admission status? There's a way.

I want to bring your attention to a couple of new items that we are going to utilize on Grand View. First, for some time Grand View has had the option of using a Virtual Dues Card. After much discussion and testing, the Grand Master has approved the use of the Grand View virtual dues card. To use this feature, a member must log into Grand View and go to the My Portal Section. Click on the tab that says Virtual Card and a Virtual Dues Card will appear on the screen. This dues card has the members full name, his status as of the current date and his Member Number. Additionally, below the virtual card is a QR Code. Anyone with a QR Reader on their phone or tablet can scan this code and it will bring up the Brothers profile on Grand View. This is a great tool that will give the Lodge an up-to-date status of a Brother. However, to use this feature, the Brother must be a registered user of Grand View.

### A Little Pixie Dust

by Midnight Freemason Contributor  
**WB Scott Dueball**

I was recently approached by the newest Master Mason in our lodge who asked how we could update one of the 'Famous Mason' posters we are all familiar with. I must admit that in my mind there was a flash of grown up Peter Pan looking back at how he had grown up and lost his sense of freedom and wonder. I too used to wonder



things like, "How can we make the fraternity seem more relevant to great young men who could benefit greatly from our philosophy?" I had once believed this was necessary to, "save our Gentle Craft." I wondered if I had grown cynical and allowed boring, mature thought to become engrained in my outlook.

It turns out that it's not that I think that updating our lists of great men is unnecessary. There may be nothing more necessary than that. We simply no longer count men of this type of greatness among our rolls. Taking fame out of the equation, do you personally

know a Brother who has such conviction in his purpose that he might stand up to the greatest government the world has ever known? How about a Brother who's earned the Medal of Honor? Or a Brother who will one day compose a literary work so great that young adults read it not just once but maybe 2 or 3 times during their schooling?

I have seen Masonry in a lot of different places and it's rare that I observe the onboarding of a man with potential for true greatness. More often we find ourselves taking the men who have the time, who have nothing better to do, or who we don't fear will ridicule us when we approach them about the Craft. This serves an important mechanism. We must bring in men who can cook the dinners, prepare the education, and run the lodge meeting. All of which are great in their own right but not... Davy Crockett-great; not John Wayne-great; not Satchmo-great. We need these men too. Men like George Washington who left his mark on humanity but likely never presided over a lodge or delivered the Senior Deacon's Stair Lecture.

If we want to update the 'Famous Mason' posters, it's our responsibility to find great men. Not famous men but men with the honest-to-God potential to excel in their lives. Find men who not only believe that humanity can improve but who spend every breathing moment spreading that Masonic Justice which many of us just talk about in our degrees. Find these men and flood our Lodges with them.

**WB Scott S. Dueball** is the Worshipful Master of D.C. Cregier Lodge No. 81 in Wheeling, IL and holds a dual membership in Denver Lodge No. 5 in Denver, CO. He currently serves the Grand Lodge of Illinois as the State Education Officer. Scott is also a member of the Palatine York Rite bodies and the Valley of Chicago A.A.S.R.-N.M.J.

### How Do You Counter People's Assertion that the Masons and Shriners are Cults?

According to the dictionary, a cult is a form of a religion. Neither Masonry nor the Shrine are religions. We don't do the things a religion does. We do not offer a plan of salvation; we do not make statements about the nature of God (other than to say that He is a kind and loving father) and we do not prescribe a form of worship. Masonry in all its branches is focused on this life, not the next. Our purpose is to help men lead ethical and moral lives based on integrity and self-development. As a part of that, we teach charity toward others. Masonry is a fraternity, not a religion.

### Masonic Excuses – Escaping the Cable Tow?

Lodges in the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth inflicted fines for nonattendance at Lodge meetings, and of course excuses were then required to avoid the penalty. But this has now grown out of use. Freemasonry being considered a voluntary institution, fines for absence are not inflicted, and excuses are therefore not now required. The infliction of a fine would, it is supposed, detract from the solemnity of the obligation which makes attendance a duty.