

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

Trestleboard

July 2024

Jim Russell, editor



Serving Seattle since 1860

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FROM THE EAST

[Eric Koteles](#), Master



Eric Koteles
Worshipful Master

Brethren,
Masonry teaches us to look beyond the surface, to see the essence of our brothers, to recognize the divine spark within each of us. It is a path of self-discovery, of understanding our purpose in the grand design of the universe. It is about building, not just with stone and mortar, but with the bonds of friendship and the virtues of brotherhood.

As we reach the halfway point of the year, let us pause and reflect upon our Masonic journey. Are we truly embodying the principles that our fraternity stands for? Are we creating a sanctuary of friendship and virtue within our lodge?

Masonry is not merely a collection of rituals and symbols; it is a way of life. It challenges us to examine our actions and intentions, to strive for personal growth and moral integrity. We are tasked with the noble duty of building, not just in a physical sense, but in fostering a community bound by genuine friendship and shared values.

As we meditate on our Masonic obligations, let us consider whether we have truly taken the charge to heart. Have we been diligent in our efforts to support and uplift one another? Have we contributed to creating an environment where every brother feels valued and respected?

The essence of Masonry lies in the relationships we build and the virtues we uphold. It is about being there for our brothers in times of need, offering a listening ear, and extending a helping hand. It is about celebrating each other's successes and providing comfort during challenges. It is about creating a space where honesty, kindness, and mutual respect prevail.

In this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue, each of us has a role to play. Our collective strength comes from the commitment of each member to live by the principles we hold dear. Let us renew our dedication to these ideals and strive to be the best versions of ourselves, both within the lodge and in our daily lives.

As we continue our journey together, let us remember that our actions today lay the foundation for the legacy we leave behind. May we be guided by the light of Masonry, ever striving to create a better world for ourselves and future generations.

Fraternally,

Worshipful Master K. Eric Koteles

CALENDAR



- July 11 (6pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- July 17 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- July 29 (6-8pm): Greenwood Car Show & Seafair Parade
- August 3 (10am): Open Air Degree, Masonic Park
- August 3 (6pm): family night Everett AquaSox baseball
- August 14 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- August 15 (7pm): Officers meeting
- August 21 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated (*casual dress*)
- September 2: Labor Day
- September 4: Happy Birthday to us!
- September 12 (7pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- September 18 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- October 2 – 4: Rosh Hashanah (*Jewish New Year*)
- October 11-12 Yom Kippur (*Friday-Saturday*)
- October 9 (6pm): Board of Trustees 2025 Budget preparation
- October 10 (7pm): Officers meeting *teleconference*
- October 16 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- October 26 (10am): Quarterly meeting Masonic Service Bureau
- November 13 (6pm): Board of Trustees
- November 14 (7pm): Officers meeting
- November 20 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- November 28: Thanksgiving Day
- December 18 (6:15pm) 7:30pm: St. John's 9 (dinner) Stated
- December 25: Christmas
- December 27: Feast Day of St. John the Evangelist
- December 31: Deadline for payment of 2025 Lodge dues

ST. JOHN'S RELOCATION COMMITTEE VIEWS OPTIONS

In May, members of St. John's (present and voting) authorized the New Location Selection Committee to move forward in our plans to find space to lease for a St. John's Masonic Center, eventually moving from the Greenwood area where we have met since 2005. Last month (June) an amendment to the first resolution, that would provide an appropriation necessary to move forward, passed unanimously.



16 W. Harrison offers entire building (two floors) with underground parking.

. Committee members have engaged with a couple of realtors and have been shown a few properties from south Lake Union in Seattle and northward.

Promising sites have been found in the lower Queen Anne neighborhood, west and south of Key Arena.

With promising sites under consideration, including the Gem Plaza building, the committee has proposed another resolution, introduced in June, for action in July. This resolution would provide for furnishing, equipment and decorating funding. *See page eight for the resolution.*



Gem Plaza (lower Queen Anne) has space available on the top floor with awesome view of Elliot Bay and Olympics

Brothers are encouraged to come to our July stated communication to take action on this ammendment.



Please make your dinner reservations for our stated communication with the secretary at 206 623-0261 by Friday, July 11 prior to our July 17 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 bring him to Lodge.

PETITIONS: APPOINTMENT OF INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

The Master has announced the appointment of Bro. Jeff Hawley, Bro. Kemalcan Jimmerson and Bro. Louis Turner to investigate petitioner **Mr. David Kwan**. Members of St. John's should contact these brothers or the Master with any concerns or helpful information to include in a final report well before balloting.

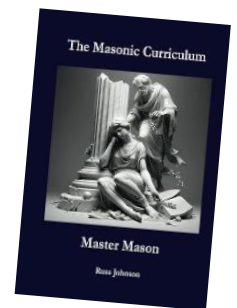
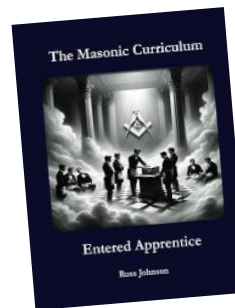
Table of Contents [linked](#)

From the East, Master's Message	page 1
Calendar of Events	1
St. John's Relocation Committee Views Options	2
Appointment of Investigating Committee	2
PM Johnson: The Masonic Curriculum	2
Wardens' Messages	3
July Birthday Celebrants	3
Norton Elected Grand Master; Ron Hubbard JGW	3
Everett AquaSox Yes, Mariners No	4
Washington Grand Lodge Business Hours Change	4
Masonic y Park Open Air Degree	4
Master Masons Raised in July.....	4
Northwest Junior Pipe Band Wins	5
Relocation Funding Resolution	5
Twenty Years a Mason	6
Does Your Lodge Add Meaning to Your Life?	8
A reflection on Micah 6:8 and Matthew 5	8

Past Master Russ Johnson – Author!

WBro. Russ Johnson, Past Master (2015) of St. John's No. 9, has authored three books on the Masonic curriculum, published in April. Each book is devoted to one of the degrees and extensively covers opening and closing ceremonies and the lessons learned in each of the three degrees.

They are available through Amazon: **The Masonic Curriculum: Entered Apprentice** <https://a.co/d/c6fJhS0>; **The Masonic Curriculum: Fellowcraft** <https://a.co/d/0fDkvCM>; and **The Masonic Curriculum: Master Mason** <https://a.co/d/btwlnaW>



These comprehensive treasures serve as a beacon for modern Masons, offering invaluable insights into moral and life lessons from our sacred rituals and symbols. One copy of each has been added to our St. John's library.

Summer Lodge Attire

Worshipful Master Koteles calls for more casual attire at St. John's July – August Communications Business Casual or “Business Smart.”

FROM THE WEST

WBro. John Murray Louderback



I'm very concerned about the social fabric of American Society and lack of civility.

If America doesn't have enough threats from other countries- we have threats from within our Country, to our freedom, democracy, our way of life, and to our very Constitution that many Freemasons had a strong role in creating. We do, however, have Masonry to turn to – to enrich our lives and to put things in perspective.

Hopefully, more and more men will come to understand the sanctuary within our Lodges, the brotherhood, and joy of fellowship within. We must continue to set the example.

Fortunately, we are able to meet together, to reestablish our commitment to each other, Freemasonry our Lodge and society.

As Past Master Blair Neumann had so eloquently stated, "We Masons stick together – one for all, all for one." We support each other because we know what is in each other's hearts.

Until we meet - together again, I would like to share some thoughts:

"Keep true, never be ashamed of doing right. Decide what you think is right and stick to it." - T. S. Eliot

"In all things, it is better to hope than despair." – Brother Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"There are three constants in life: change, choice and principles." – Stephan R. Covey

"The ultimate source of happiness is our mental attitude." – Dalai Lama

"Words may show a man's wit but actions his meaning." – Brother Benjamin Franklin

Finally, Brethren- be all of one mind, live in peace, and may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with you and bless you.

Stronger Together!



JULY BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

Day

- 3 Bernard G. Yperman
- 6 Aaron D. Holt
- 7 James R. Odom
- 15 Edgar H. Carthell, Jr.
- 22 Kurt W. Lavrinc
- 22 Allan B. Pinch
- 23 Kenneth C. Marable
- 24 Thomas R. Everts
- 29 George S. Serpanos



FROM THE SOUTH

WBro. David Flood



OBSTACLES

I was thinking of various obstacles and delays we might meet on our path to a new home for St John's Lodge. I remembered reading one of Paulo Coelho's essays and that prompted this message.

Sometimes in climbing a mountain trail we find a boulder completely blocking our way forward. In life, too, we can encounter immovable obstacles. But we have to adapt to the circumstances. Famed writer, Paulo Coelho, author of the beloved fable *The Alchemist*, has some advice for us. He suggests that sometimes when there seems to be no way forward we can behave like water and flow *around* the obstacle.

Coelho reminds us that water has strength. We can strike a stream with a hammer or slice it with a sword but we cannot leave a mark or scar on its surface. He writes "The river adapts itself to whatever route proves possible, but the river never forgets its one objective, the sea. So fragile at its source, it gradually gathers the strength of the other rivers it encounters. And, after a certain point, its power is absolute."

This advice is found in Coelho's little volume, *Warrior of the Light: a manual*. A fellow warrior of the light, martial artist and philosopher Bruce Lee, encapsulated this wisdom telling us "Be water, my friend."

Grand Lodge of Washington Annual Communication Elects MW Norton

On June 13th through June 16th, 2024, the Grand Lodge of Washington held its Annual Communications at the Wenatchee Convention Center in Wenatchee.

The Members of St. John's Lodge take this time to congratulate MWB Steve Martin, PGM and his team of officers on a very successful Annual Communications.

St. John's would also like to take this time to congratulate our new Grand Line of the Grand Lodge of Washington, Free & Accepted Masons.

2024-2025:

MWB Jimmy Norton
Grand Master

RWB Roger Nelson
Deputy Grand Master

RWB Chris Haynes
Senior Grand Warden

RWB William Hubbard
Junior Grand Warden

RWB Clinton Brown, Jr.
Grand Secretary

We also welcome our newly appointed Deputy of the Grand Master for District 5, **VWBro. Doug Carr** of Esoterica Lodge 316.

Everett AquaSox Yes, Mariners No

Tickets (\$15) for St. John's annual family outing to the Everett AquaSox are still available through WBro. Terry Grove. Entry to the game food court, included in the price, will be at 6pm, Saturday, August 3. Fireworks will follow the game. Free parking.

Our proposed outing to the Seattle Mariners has been canceled due to an apparent low interest.



\$15 gets you a Picnic wristband, your seat at the game - Plus post-game fireworks. Family fun, friendship, fellowship and fraternalism.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

"Pre-admission" opens at 6pm into the Pepsi Food Pavilion offering hot dogs, hamburgers, salad, chips, baked beans, soft drinks, and your reserved seat. Great family entertainment. First come, first served. Free parking on site!

Here's a look at our future Seattle Mariners hopefuls vs. the Eugene Emeralds (San Francisco Giants farm club).

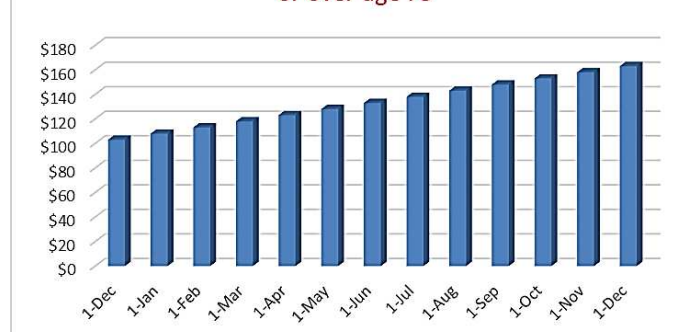
Our thirty (30) excellent game seats will be in section "I", the upper box seats, rows 9-10-11-12-13 (five rows of 6 seats) on the 3rd base side of the diamond (between home plate and the pitcher's mound). We're all together as a close block group. First pitch will be thrown at 7:05pm - fireworks following the game (around 9:30 or 10pm).

Organizer for this event is WBro. Terry Grove. Contact him at 425-610-4561 for tickets. Go get 'em AquaSox!

Lodge Dues Climb as Months Pass

\$5 penalty added each month delinquent

Dues Owed by month 50 miles from Lodge or over age 75



Visit Our District 5 Brethren

District 5 Lodges	Next Meeting	Time
St. John's 9	Wednesday, July 17, 2024	7:30pm
Eureka 20	Monday, Sep. 9, 2024	7 pm
University 141	Friday, September 6, 2024	7:30pm
Daylight 232	Saturday, July 20, 2024	10am
Queen Anne 242	Thursday, Oct 10, 2024	6:30pm
Esoterika 316	Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024	7:30pm

Washington Grand Lodge Business Hours Change

Beginning Monday, July 1, 2024, the Grand Lodge hours of operations will change. The Grand Lodge office will be open from 8am through 4pm Monday through Thursday and from 8am through 2:30pm on Friday. The office will continue to be open during the lunch hour. This is not a reduction in the number of hours the Grand Lodge is open. We are simply moving our hours of operation up by half an hour each day.

Masonic Family Park Open Air Degree, August 3rd, 2024

Summertime is once again upon us. That means many of our Lodges are Dark. But that does not end the search for Light due to a lack of Masonic events to attend.

Where can you find that Light over the summer with Brothers from around Western Washington? Simply put, the Open-Air Third-Degree event at the Masonic Family Park in Granite Falls.

On August 3rd Shoreline Lodge No. 248 will be conferring the Third Degree at the Masonic Family Park in Granite Falls. The Lodge opens at 10am, so please allow enough time to be parked and sign in the Tyler's



Typical campsite at Masonic Park

Register. The cost of entry for the Park is \$7.50 at the gate (\$15 for campsite with electricity).

Prior to the Open-Air Degree, Damascus No. 199 hosts their annual Pancake Breakfast fundraiser at their Lodge building in Granite Falls

Lunch will be available for all and can be purchased afterward. Crystal Lodge No. 122 is bringing their renown BBQ back to the park this summer.

Break out a lawn chair and come out to enjoy a summer day with your Masonic Brothers.

MASTER MASONS RAISED IN JULY

Date Raised:

7/27/1957	Charles B. Claus, Jr.
7/30/1983	Jarrold 'Jerry' Schuh
7/24/1999	Jason R. Moore
7/15/2010	K. Eric Koteles
7/15/2010	Ronald A. Woodall, Jr.
7/30/2016	Kenneth Woo



Northwest Junior Pipe Band Kicks Off Outdoor Competition Season with a Win



NWJPB kicked off the outdoor competition season with an aggregate win at the Bellingham Scottish Gathering in 'Blaine by the Sea' earning first place in both the MSR and the Medley competitions. The band tied with Portland Metro Youth for best drum corps.

The weather was quintessentially Scottish with rain, wind, sun and mist off of the water as 10 bands and nearly 70 soloist competed at Blain Marine Park overlooking beautiful Semiahmoo Bay.

Several band members took top prizes on the solo field. Everyone who competed performed well. Nice work everyone!

Congratulations to all of the band members for their practice, preparation, dedication, and teamwork.

The following resolution was presented at our June stated communication for action in July. This enables the New Location Committee to acquire furnishings, equipment, and decorations for a new Masonic Center.

St John's Relocation New Facility Furnishing, Equipment and Decorating Funding Resolution

Purpose	This motion provides the Relocation Committee with the authority to proceed with the contracting for modifications and acquisition of the facility decorations and additional furniture to customize the selected property to meet St John's requirements.
Scope	<p>This motion authorizes the Relocation Committee to execute contracts and purchase agreements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Furnishings,• Masonic Furnishings,• Equipment,• Decorations, and• Contingency funds for potential improvements not performed by Landlord.
Motion	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Authorize the creation of a \$750,000 fund to pay for the furnishing, equipping and decorating of the new facility based on the project budget is defined in St John's Relocation New Facility Furnishing, Equipment and Decorating Budget 2024, Rev New. The budget is approved as a total sum and allows funds to be moved between categories without further approval.2. The budget and spending to date will be reported to the Lodge at each stated meeting until project completion.3. This will be a separate budget from the Lodge Operating Budget.4. Authorize the Relocation Committee to research, select and execute contracts on behalf of the corporation with the various contractors and suppliers required to furnish, equip and decorate the new facility.5. Provide consent to the Worshipful Master to authorize payment for the various contractors and purchases required to furnish, equip and decorate the new facility as recommended by the Relocation Committee.6. Funds allocated for this purpose will be deposited in a separate bank account at HomeStreet Bank entitled "St. John's Lodge #9 Relocation Fund."7. Until needed, all funds will remain in our accounts at Oppenheimer & Co. The Treasurer will have the authority to draw funds as needed in accordance with the financial control procedures listed in the Lodge Bylaws.

LET'S LOOK AT THAT A LITTLE CLOSER

"The rest of the night is pretty much a blur. All I remember is walking around a quiet room, with only the sounds of overhead fans and the occasional sound of a bang that startled me. At some point, I remember my eyes adjusting to the light and someone giving me my glasses. Once it was over I was reconducted to that small hot box of a room and told to wait there until I was summoned."



Twenty Years a Mason

by Midnight Freemason Contributor
Bill Hosler, PM

As a child, my mother used to say. "Time flies once you turn twenty-one." At the time it was hard for me to believe, considering every minute I spent in my classroom felt like an eternity. But as with most things I have experienced in life, she was exactly right. With the age of majority far behind me in my rearview mirror, it seems every memory of an event that comes through my mind can be now measured in decades instead of just a couple of months like it feels.

One thing I can remember my mother talking about all those years ago has led me on a journey of a lifetime I never expected to be on. As a child, I can remember several of my parent's friends would visit the house and they would all sit at the table, drink coffee and pass the time of the day. One thing I saw is several of them wore rings. Some were just wedding bands which I knew the significance of these, but others wore a gold ring with a funny logo on it.

I asked my mother why they wore those rings and what did they mean. She said "They are Masons. You got to be rich to join that group." She then said, "Your Great Uncle Don was a thirty-second degree Mason!" The way she explained Don's rank in the Masons you could tell it meant something to her. The admiration in her voice and the look in her eyes made it clear being a thirty-second degree Mason was quite an achievement in her mind. I decided if there was any way I could become a Mason I would do it. If for nothing more than to make my mother proud. As things go, time marches on and life keeps moving on. Years after this conversation in 1991 my mother succumbed to cancer unexpectedly. She never had the opportunity to see me join.

Fast forward eleven years and I was talking with a friend's father who I knew was a Mason. The talk brought up the promise to my Mom and my unfinished business. I decided I needed to investigate the process further. The internet was still in its infancy in 2002 and after a Yahoo! (Yeah it was Yahoo back then) search I found only one in my Lodge had a website. I visited the website and in the photos section of the site, I saw the photograph of two men I had been friends with and coworkers many years before. That sealed it. I had to join that Lodge! (Or at least try to).

I'm not sure if it was pure dumb luck or by the design of the Grand Architect of the Universe but two nights later, I was walking into a restaurant and as I was walking in one of the men was walking out! We greeted each other and before He could leave, or I lost the nerve, I blurted "I am asking for a petition to become a Mason" (I did know enough that I had to ask to join.) He followed me back in and we exchanged numbers and agreed to get together. Easter Sunday, I visited his house, and over breakfast, I filled out my petition. After what seemed like an eternity, I received word from my friend my petition had been accepted. I was given a date to show up at the downtown Masonic temple in June 2002.

That night in June was an unusually warm night. I was greeted as I walked through the unairconditioned temple and shown into a small windowless room. The heat was unbearable. I wasn't sure at that point the bead of sweat I felt run down my back was from the temperature of my terror and fear of the unknown which was about to come.

As the Brethren prepared me for the ceremony, it had been a few years since the Lodge had had a new candidate so they couldn't remember the differences in preparing a candidate for the Entered Apprentice degree and one who was being passed to a Fellowcraft. After a few minutes, it was like they flipped a coin. I guess they figured they had a 50-50 chance of getting it right. After the ceremony began, as I entered the Lodge room and was stopped, I felt a group of hands pulling off my shoe and rearranging the regalia I was wearing. You could hear the muffled swear words as they went about their work.

The rest of the night is pretty much a blur. All I remember is walking around a quiet room, with only the sounds of overhead fans and the occasional sound of a bang that startled me. At some point, I remember my eyes adjusting to the light and someone giving me my glasses. Once it was over I was reconducted to that small hot box of a room and told to wait there until I was summoned. Once I was able to reenter the Lodge room, I was able to admire the room's beauty. As I was placed in a chair on the [Northeast] side of the altar and the show that was being performed especially for me was to begin.

I was in awe of the parade of my friends who I now discovered to be Brothers begin to recite things from memory. Watching these Brothers performing the ritual kind of scared me a bit. Self-doubt in my own abilities brought on the fear that I would never have the ability to commit things like this to memory. "I am going to make a



terrible Mason.” I thought to myself. (Something a lot of Brethren still would agree with until this very day.)

Once it was all over, I was given a small gray pamphlet having a bunch of symbols. “This is the EA lecture you just saw. Study it. Someday you will be reciting it,” the secretary said. The little sarcastic man inside me laughed as I nervously reached out for the book. With that, the Lodge went dark, and wouldn’t meet again until September. During that break, I studied that book until I knew both the questions and answers inside and out.

When the cooler breezes of September rolled around my next degree date was scheduled. I came into the Lodge, and I was asked to perform the work I learned to another EA for a friend who was coming in. I was asked whether I wanted to “Pitch or catch.” “Catch,” I said with a tremendous amount of apprehension down in the pit of my stomach.

After it was over, I was shocked at how well I did. It wasn’t letter-perfect like I was striving for, but it was pretty close. Everyone cheered and I got a lot of pats on the back that night. My friend leaned over and whispered into my ear. “Now you have gone and done it. Once again your big brain has gotten you into trouble.”

Once I was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason on October 15, 2002.,I became very active within the Lodge. I had never thought about being a Lodge officer but somehow on my first meeting as a Master Mason, I sat in the Junior Stewards chair. I started to protest; I had no clue what to do. “Just stand up when the Senior Steward stands and grab that stick next to you. You will be fine. Thus started my journey to the East several years later.

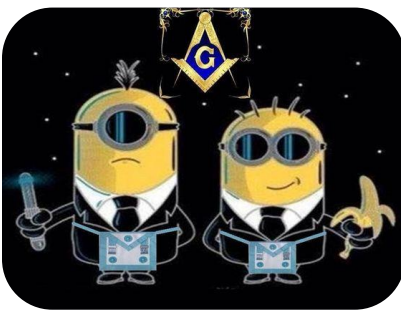
Some of the best times I have had as an adult was spending time with the Brethren of that Lodge in the bar of the Mizpah Shrine Center. We would all sit around telling jokes and laughing over dinner. Eventually, the local Scottish Rite Valley would close their meeting and come in and join us. The entire room was filled with laughter and many nights it was so much fun it was hard to say goodnight. Like the toast in English Lodges goes “So happy to meet. So sorry to part.” It’s hard to believe so many of those Brethren have laid down their working tools and advance to the Grand Lodge above. Sometimes I feel like they are still with me because the memory of those days still lives in my heart. There isn’t a day I don’t think about them and smile.

One thing that has troubled me through the years is the constant beating of the drum with the mantra “Freemasonry is dying.” On my first visit to my future Lodge as a petitioner, I attended a wonderful dinner of Hoosier-style beef and noodles with the Lodge celebrating

the visit of our sister Lodge who made the journey from London Ontario Canada. During that visit, an elderly Past Master who through the years I learned to love came up to me and said “I don’t know why the #&^ you are joining Masonry. It is going to be dead in five years.” Needless to say, I was taken aback by this statement. In my mind, I decided if it was really dying, I would ride it out until the end.

Since then, I have seen many people trying to write the Craft’s obituary. Each one of them was dead wrong about their prediction. I have come to believe such declarations are akin to some wacky preacher trying to tell us the world will end in three days. In fact, I believe Masonry is much stronger than it was when I joined.

When I joined there were things many of us said were holding Masonry back, such as Lodges only being allowed to meet on the Master Mason degree, lack of Masonic education in Lodges, and dues at bargain-basement prices. So many things were holding me back from succeeding. Many of these things were spelled out in a paper written by several of my fellow Knights of the North which became known to the world as “Laudable pursuit.”



Since then, many of these issues have been rectified and we have more men who are joining, and many progressive Lodges are thriving. National and international events such as the various Masoniccons have been great successes. Add to that independent Masonic magazines and podcasts get the Brethren thinking and discussing Masonic topics in their own Lodges and virtually over the internet. The best part is these are just the tip of the iceberg. Add to these the various Zoom meetings of Brethren have helped strengthen the bonds of Brotherhood when you can’t physically make it to Lodge. Sure, we still have a long way to go but I am totally impressed and very pleased with the advancement that has taken in such a short time. In my mind only one thing can slow or stop advancement. That is us.

Sadly, over the years I have seen many good, dedicated Brethren who have quit the Craft in disgust and a feeling of hopelessness because we still completely turned around American Freemasonry. I get it. In the age of microwaved Salisbury steak and green dinners some feel we aren’t achieving our goals fast enough, so they quit. I’m not the sharpest knife in the drawer but I see this is our major problem.

Each Brother who throws his hand up in the air and takes his apron and goes home is one less worker in the quarry. One less mentor for a new Brother, one less vote at the grand Lodge we could use to make changes. One less Masonic leader who could someday be able to make Masonry better. If you think about how many Brothers, each set of lost set hands impedes us from furthering the

designs we have on our trestle boards and is depriving us of the talents we need to succeed. I encourage you to help bring these men back to the door of the Lodge and make them a part of our future success.

It has been a great twenty years. I can't wait to see how we had grown in the next twenty years. Thank you all for what you do and thank you all for your Brotherhood.

WB Bill Hosler was made a Master Mason in 2002 in Three Rivers Lodge #733 in Indiana. He served as Worshipful Master in 2007 and became a member of the internet committee for Indiana's Grand Lodge. Bill is currently a member of Roff Lodge No. 169 in Roff Oklahoma and Lebanon Lodge No. 837 in Frisco, Texas. Bill is also a member of the Valley of Fort Wayne Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite in Indiana. A typical active Freemason, Bill also served as the High Priest of Fort Wayne's Chapter of the York Rite No. 19 and was commander of the Fort Wayne Commandery No. 4 of the Knight Templar. During all this, he also served as the webmaster and magazine editor for the Mizpah Shrine in Fort Wayne Indiana.

Does your Lodge add meaning to your life?

Freemasonry has no age, and there are no limits on imagination.

But if the Lodge has to mean something to its members, it has to remain part of their lives every day, every week, every month.

Once it's more fun (or less hassle) to stay at home, scrolling social media than it is to go to Lodge...

That is the beginning of the end.

No one would ever voluntarily join a memorization club.

And no one wants to join "the oldest fraternal organization in the world" only to be sentenced to a lifetime of stale sandwiches and monthly meetings of nothing but minute-reading, bill-paying, and complaining over why no one comes to meetings anymore.

Let's be honest here...

What rational human being wants to go to the trouble of leaving home after a stressful day to go and listen to someone reporting that nothing happened at last month's meeting either?

It will be the Lodges that provide engaging activities for their active members - whatever their age may be - that will survive and prosper into the future.

Those that stubbornly stick to the notion that Lodge is no event, those are the Lodges that will bore themselves to death.

Those are the Lodges that will slip silently away in the night.

A reflection on Micah 6:8 and Matthew 5

In all the acrimony to be found in our world today, who is right and who is wrong? These struggles are not new. Sixty years ago I was a senior in high school and a member of a youth organization called DeMolay. It is sponsored by the Masonic Lodge. I was to be installed as the Master Counselor. An honor that would include friends and family to be present at the ceremony. Tradition was that a young lady would be asked to place the robe of office on the person to be installed. I asked my girlfriend. She politely declined. When I inquired as to why she turned me down, she said she was advised by her priest that she should not participate in anything that was Masonic. This reflects an age-old difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the Masonic Lodge. Neither she nor I knew the basis for this difference.

An issue of this political season is the desire on the part of some that the United States of America be a "Christian" nation by legislative act. There are so many ways of Christian worship that it is unclear as to which Christian doctrine would become the national norm. I would suggest the direction provided by the prophet Micah. "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God" (*Micah 6:8*). However, that sentiment is not unique to Christianity. In fact, that sentiment can be found in all of the major religions of the world.

We are a "United" States and the history of religion is not one of unity. However, we are united in the commitment that all people are free to exercise their own faith journey without the interruption and participation of the governing body.

I am not without a sympathetic heart for those conservative folks who long for a government that embraces the moral conduct to be found in teachings of Jesus in his sermon on the mount. (*Matthew 5*) There are other teachings of moral conduct to be found in scriptures embraced by other religions such as Islam, Buddhism and Judaism. To make us a "Christian" nation will serve to divide us and cause further conflict. I consider Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics and others as my brothers and sisters in Christ. I hold my Presbyterian and Lutheran friends especially dear. Friends from the Jewish community in Portland were very important to my education and development. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide organization that is not limited to Christianity.

So what is the common thread that we can use that bonds us and does not divide us? How about "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind" And Love your neighbor as yourself"? If we want to nationalize a code of moral conduct, how about LOVE. We could become a nation founded on Love and Caring. We could be committed to overcoming anger and divisions. It would be hard work no doubt. But if we committed to it as a nation, who knows what heights we could reach?

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