

From The East

Seven Blunders of the Masonic World

The workings of the Lodge entails many components to make it run smooth and efficiently. If any one of the vital parts is missing, or ineffective, then what happens? The machine breaks down. We put much focus on the esoteric work, philanthropic efforts, charity, etc. but let's look at some things that can hinder the success of the Lodge.

Ritual Without Meaning

Too many times, we are more concerned about performing the ritual perfectly without understanding what it means. I know many men that give great lectures, but will confide that they don't even know what something means. Ritual for the sake of tradition is worthless. Ritual for the sake of enlightenment is valuable. An understanding of the ritual's meaning is far more important than just memorizing it.

Fellowship Without Frivolity

Whenever Masons decide to hold a function for fellowship, a discussion typically ensues about how to make the function have the smallest impact on the Lodge's coffers and the wallets of the members. The result is paper plates, meager meals, and boring events. To spend money wisely in order to make fellowship a grand time is wise for the Lodge that wants to be successful.

Quantity Without Quality

A Lodge with seven great men that believe in the Masonic ideals and actively labor to improve themselves – and therefore the Lodge – is far better off than a Lodge with one hundred men that show up to Lodge just to show up for Lodge.

Education Without Philosophy

Many times, we think of Masonic education as being a lesson on the local history, a famous Mason, the history of the worldwide fraternity, or how to do the ritual properly. But if no philosophy is covered in Masonic education, then little self-improvement is accomplished. Discussing Masonic lessons in terms of philosophy, ideas, and a man's conduct is what truly transforms men into Masons. It is important to discuss topics that are foreign to a Lodge's membership and it is sometimes even necessary to challenge our preconceived ideologies through Masonic education.

Charity Without Connection

Big institutional charities often require that fund raisers be conducted and large checks written to the people that actively perform the charity. This type of charity is devoid of self-improvement because it has no real connection. If we extend our hands to our needy Brethren and devote our own skills and time to their problems, then we are engaging in true, meaningful charity.

Frugality Without Discretion

Frugality is not a tenet of Freemasonry, a cardinal virtue, or a Landmark. It is okay for the Lodge to spend its funds on worthwhile activities that will enhance the Masonic experience of its Brethren. Not everything should be done in the cheapest way, a habit to which we have become accustomed.

Leadership Without Competence

A man does not deserve to be a Master of the Lodge solely because he has spent a certain amount of years in the Lodge. We elect leaders without any regard for the skills that they possess to function in that capacity. Only competent, qualified men should be elected to preside over the Craft.

Source: euphratesblog@gmail.com

My brothers, it is incumbent on every member of the Craft to not be guilty by omission. We simply cannot leave certain principles out of the workings of the Lodge and expect to succeed, grow and flourish. Sometimes, it's not so much what we do that makes the difference, it's what we don't do that enables us to avoid failure.

Duke Davis, Worshipful Master

The West Gate

In thinking of the event of the Cornerstone Ceremony at the Texas Rangers Heritage Center here in Fredericksburg Texas on May 2nd, I decided to research this subject. I being a new Freemason there is much I do not know so I enjoy digging into the meaning of all this symbolism. I now share with you my findings based on a Masonic encyclopedia...

CORNER-STONE, SYMBOLISM OF THE

The corner-stone is the stone which lies at the corner of two walls and forms the corner of the foundation of an edifice. In Masonic buildings it is now always placed in the Northeast; but this rule was not always formerly observed. As the foundation on which the entire structure is supposed to rest, it is considered by Operative Freemasons as the most important stone in the edifice. It is laid with impressive ceremonies; the assistance of Speculative Freemasons is often, and ought always to be, invited to give dignity to the occasion; and for this purpose Freemasonry has provided an especial ritual which is to govern the proper performance of that duty.

Among the ancients the corner-stone of important edifices was laid with impressive ceremonies. These are well described by Tacitus in the history of the rebuilding of the Capitol. After detailing the preliminary ceremonies, which consisted of a procession of vestals, who with chaplets of flowers encompassed the ground and consecrated it by libations of living water, he adds that, after solemn prayer, Helvidius Priscus, to whom the care of rebuilding the Capitol had been committed, "laid his hand upon the fillets that adorned the foundation stone, and also the cords by which it was to be drawn to its place. In that instant the magistrates, the priests, the senators, the Roman knights, and a number of citizens, all acting with one effort and general demonstrations of joy, laid hold of the ropes and dragged the ponderous load to its destined spot. They then threw in ingots of gold and silver, and other metals which had never been melted in the furnace, but still retained, untouched by human art, their first formation in the bowels of the earth" (see Histories iv, 53).

The symbolism of the corner-stone when duly laid with Masonic rites is full of significance, which refers to its form, to its situation, to its permanence, and to its consecration.

As to its form, it must be perfectly square on its surfaces, and in its solid contents a cube. Now the square is a symbol of morality, and the cube, of truth.

In its situation it lies between the north, the place of darkness, and the east, the place of light; and hence this position symbolizes the Masonic progress from darkness to light, and from ignorance to knowledge.

The permanence and durability of the corner-stone, which lasts long after the building in whose foundation it was placed has fallen into decay, is intended to remind the Freemason that, when this earthly house of his tabernacle shall have passed away, he has within him a sure foundation of eternal life—a corner-stone of immortality—an emanation from that Divine Spirit which pervades all nature, and which, therefore, must survive the tomb, and rise, triumphant and eternal, above the decaying dust of death and the grave.

The stone, when deposited in its appropriate place, is carefully examined with the necessary implements of Operative Freemasonry-the square, the level, and the plumb, themselves all symbolic in meaning-and is then declared to be "well formed, true, and trusty." Thus the Freemason is taught that his virtues are to be tested by temptation and trial, by suffering and adversity, before they can be pronounced by the Master Builder of souls to be materials worthy of the spiritual building of eternal life, fitted, "as living stones, for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And lastly, in the ceremony of depositing the cornerstone, the elements of Masonic consecration are produced, and the stone is solemnly set apart by pouring corn, wine, and oil upon its surface, emblematic of the Nourishment, Refreshment, and Joy which are to be the rewards of a faithful performance of duty.

The corner-stone does not appear to have been adopted by any of the heathen nations, but to have been as the *eben pinah*, peculiar to the Jews, from whom it descended to the Christians. In the Old Testament, it seems always to have denoted a prince or high personage, and hence the Evangelists constantly use it in reference to Christ, who is called the Chief Corner-stone. In Masonic symbolism, it signifies a true Freemason, and therefore it is the first character which the Apprentice is made to represent after his initiation has been completed.

Saint Martin-in-the-Fields Church, perhaps the best known church in London, was the first in England to have its foundation stone laid with special Masonic ceremony after the coming into existence of the Grand Lodge there. This event took place in 1724, in the reign of King George I, whose direct descendant, the Duke of Connaught, was Grand Master two hundred years later (see *Freemason*, March 7, 1925).

The first or cornerstone of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was laid by the Grand Master of Maryland with the Grand Masters of Pennsylvania and Virginia co-operating with the Brethren of Maryland.

The stone was laid on July 4, 1824, in Carroll's Field at Baltimore and the first spading of the ground where the stone was to rest was dug by the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton, then the only living signer of the Declaration of Independence. Brother E. T. Schultz (*Freemasonry in Maryland*, pages 562-79) says that the first train over this new railroad reached the bank of the Ohio River, January 11, 1853. The several city trades took part in the procession and presented gifts to Mr. Carroll, one from the Weavers and Tailors was "a coat made on the way."

Allusions to public ceremonies by the Craft are frequent in the old records. One of Tuesday, August 27, 1822, deserves mention, not because of the distance in elapsed time from that date to the present, but by reason of the close identity of the custom in Great Britain and in other Countries during these many years. The occasion was the laying of the Foundation-stone of the National Monument of Scotland, at Edinburgh, and after describing the usual procession, and the placing of coins, newspapers, plans, etc., in the cavities of the stone, these were covered with inscribed plates. 'the first being headed "To the Glory of God-In honor of the King-For the Good of the People." Then Laurie's *History of Free Masonry and the Grand Lodge of Scotland* (1849, page 201) continues:

The Most Worshipful the Grand Master proceeded with the ceremony, and having applied the square, the plumb, and the level respectively to the stone, with the mallet he gave three knocks, saying, "May the Almighty Architect of the Universe look down with benignity upon our present undertaking, and crown this splendid edifice with every success; and may it be considered, for time immemorial, a model of taste and genius and serve to transmit with honor to posterity the names of the artists engaged in it;" followed by the Grand Honors from the Brethren, and the Band playing "On. on my dear Brethren."

When the music ceased, the cornucopia with corn, and the cups with wine and oil were delivered by the Grand Wardens to the Substitute Grand Master, who in succession handed them to the Most Worshipful the Grand Master, when he, according to ancient custom, poured out the corn, the wine, and the oil upon the stone, saying, "Praise be to the Lord immortal and eternal, Who formed the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and extended the waters beyond it, Who supports the pillars of Nations, and maintains in order and harmony surrounding Worlds: We

implore Thy aid, and may the contintled blessings of an allbounteous Providence be the lot of these our native shores. Almighty Ruler of Events, deign to direct the hand of our gracious Sovereign, so that he may pour down blessings upon his people; and may they, living under sage laws and a free government, ever feel grateful for the blessings they enjoy'." Which was followed by the Grand Honors from the Brethren, and prolonged cheering from the Royal Commissioners and spectators. Brother Laurie also tells on page 207 of the curious fact that on April 30, 1824, "the Foundation-stone of the new road or approach to Glasgow from London was laid, by sanction of the Grand Lodge, by the Right Honorable Lord Provost Smith of Glasgow, Depute Provincial Grand Master of the Lower Ward of Lanarkshire, in presence of a large assemblage of the Brethren and a great number of spectators."

An unusual method of laying the Foundation-stone of a Masonic Temple took place in London on July 14, 1927. The site of the Temple in Great Queen Street, Ringsway, would not accommodate a large crowd, so it was arranged that the Grand Master of English Freemasons, the Duke of Connaught, should perform the ceremony at Royal Albert Hall, nearly three miles away. A replica of the stone was laid on a specially erected platform in the great hall where some ten thousand Freemasons from all parts of the Empire attended in their regalia. The ceremony in Albert Hall was performed simultaneously with the laying of the actual stone in Great Queen Street by means of special electrical contrivances.

A distinction should be made between Comer-stone and Foundation Stone. Doctor Mackey was emphatic on this point and it is well to have the matter in mind. But the two are not always distinguished definitely in the records. We have placed several items together here which the reader can list as he personally may choose. The precise classification of comer- stones of railroads and foundation stones of highways, judged by any Masonic requirement, is probably best left to individual taste. The subject may be considered under the several heads, Foundation Stone, and Stone of Foundation.

Sal Pacheco, Senior Warden

The South Gate

Gentleman, May is upon us, and summer is right around the corner. Please remember the Masonic Car Show will be here before we know it. We must all find time to volunteer or find sponsors if at all possible. This event helps fund our scholarship activity for graduating seniors in the county. Your help is always greatly appreciated.

My mind has been on "go" the past few weeks as I studied for the "C" Certificate exam this past month. As I worked on refreshing my memory of all the questions and answers, it brought up some thoughts. I began to recall what an important process the degree work was in my journey to become a Master Mason. It is truly hard to grasp the meaning of the journey from Entered Apprentice to Fellowcraft and Master as you go through the degrees. It only becomes possible to fully understand it as a brother grows in Masonry. I have found the bond between the brothers who taught me the work has been invaluable. I was blessed to have some pretty good teachers to help me prepare for proficiency in each degree. Those bonds will never be broken and have created lasting friendships.

As I have continued to study each year for the certificate exam, the proverbial "light" has come on in various areas of the work. The meaning of the symbols and the history are truly fascinating. Some things are easy to comprehend, while other parts require deeper thought. Many things can take on different meanings to every Mason. The symbolism of the working tools have made me a better person as I continue to grasp there full meaning.

As a Mason, I hope that we all strive to continue discovering more light as we grow in Masonry. It is all around us each and every day. It can always be found in the work that we engaged upon in each degree.

Randall King, Junior Warden

Mouth To Ear

Masonic Education

“To toil, whether with the sweat of the brow, or of the brain or heart, is worship, - the noblest thing yet discovered beneath the Stars. Let the weary cease to think that labor is a curse and doom pronounced by Deity. Without it there could be no true excellence in human nature.”

Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, 342-343

Think about Masons for a moment. The Worshipful Master sets the craft to work. Our work can be physical, or it can be the work of the heart or the brain. It is, however, our work. Be it Ritual, fund raising, charity, or service, the work is where we find personal fulfillment and growth as Masons.

The admonition to labor does not end at the close of Lodge. Pike continues, “The great law of human industry is this: that industry, working either with the hand or the mind, the application of our powers to some task, to the achievement of some result lies at the foundation of all human improvement.” Work provides purpose, dignity, and a sense of achievement to all.

We have all heard the stories of men who worked hard until retirement, then passed away sitting on a rocker on their front porch, doing nothing. There is a lesson there. Work keeps us going. The nature of the task at hand is far less important than the fact that we have a task. We must accept the task as our own, and perform it to the best of our ability to reap the rewards of purpose, dignity, and the sense of accomplishment. It is foolish to think that our need for work ends with retirement; that we might have accomplished all we possibly can during the thirty or forty years of labor in employment; that our retirement means we no longer have anything of value to contribute to our fellow man. For some of us, we may only have a trail of failures, but even these offer us the opportunity to teach the younger generations that they might not have to repeat our mistakes.

Pike concludes, “It is better for the Mason to live while he lives, and enjoy life as it passes; to live richer and die poorer. It is best of all for him to banish from the mind that empty dream of future indolence and indulgence; to address himself to the business of life, as the school of his earthly education; to settle it with himself, now, that independence, if he gains it, is not to give him exemption from employment. It is best for him to know, that, in order to be a happy man, he must always be a laborer.” (*Morals and Dogma*, 345)

Fred Ayers, Secretary, SWKSRC

Labors of the Craft

Don't forget the Cornerstone Ceremony at the Texas Ranger Heritage Center on Saturday, May 2nd at 3:00 PM, officiated by Deputy Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas, Honorable Wendell P. Miller. This is a full day of Masonic activities with the Former Texas Ranger Association annual meeting at 10:00 AM in Marktplatz, followed by a noon Bar-B-Q.

Fredericksburg Lodge #794 will be opened at 1:30 PM and called from labor to refreshment, to be followed by the opening of a representation of the Grand Lodge of Texas that will be called from labor to refreshment for the purpose of conducting the cornerstone ceremony at 3:00 PM. Afterwards, we will return to the Lodge building to close both Lodges. At 6:00 PM dinner will be served at the Sunday House followed by the annual meeting of the John B. Jones Masonic Ranging Company. Don't miss this occasion, for it is a special day in history for the Texas

Rangers, the Masonic fraternity and the entire state of Texas!

The Breakfast Boys Social Club will convene this month on Tuesday, May 19th at Hilda's beginning at 8:00 AM. All Masons are welcome to experience good Mexican food, wild stories and some bragging.

The Lunch Bunch will meet on Monday, May 25th at Gatti's Pizza at 11:30 AM. Masons, wives and friends are all invited.

Join us at Kerrville Lodge on Wednesday, May 27th for the monthly Master Wardens Secretary Meeting. All Masons, especially new Masons, and wives are invited. Dinner will be served at 6:30 PM followed by the meeting at 7:00 PM.

We currently have two EA's preparing for proficiency in the first section.

Words of Wisdom

"Something happens to a man when he puts on a necktie. It cuts off all the oxygen to his brain."

- A. J. Carothers -

"If you can't explain what you're doing in simple English, you are probably doing something wrong."

- Alfred Kahn, Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board -

"Novelists with the most damned consciences tend to write the most blessed prose."

- Melvin Maddocks -

"War is nothing more than the continuation of politics by other means."

- Karl von Clausewitz -

"I have three rules. I never believe what the prosecutor or police say. I never believe what the media says, and I never believe what my client says."

- Alan Dershowitz, Harvard Law Professor -

Tongue in Cheek

"Reincarnation"

by Wallace McCrae

"What does reincarnation mean?" the cowpoke asked his friend. His ol' pard replied, "It happens when your life has reached its end.

They wash your neck, and comb your hair, then clean your fingernails, and lay you in a padded box away from life's travails.

Now, the box goes into a hole that's been dug there in the ground, reincarnation starts in when you're planted 'neath that mound.

Them clods will melt down, just like you who is inside, then you're just beginning on your transformation ride.

In a while, some grass will grow upon your rendered mound, until one day upon your moldered grave, a lonely flower is found.

And say a hoss should wander by and graze upon this flower, that once was you, but now has become his vegetative bower.

Now, that posey that the hoss done ate up with all his other feed, becomes fat, bone and muscle, all essential to the steed.

But there's some that's left over that the hoss can't use, so it just passes through, and finally lays upon the ground, this thing, that once was you.

And say, that I should happen by and see this thing layin' on the ground, and I ponders, and I wonders, at this object I have found.

I thinks of reincarnation, of life, and death, and such, and I come away concludin' well, Slim, you ain't changed all that much!"

Recipe of the Month

Fritos Casserole

By Ruth Davis

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup flour
- ½ can (15 oz.) olives, sliced
- 6 cloves garlic sliced
- 1 can (10 oz.) Las Palmas Red Chile Sauce
- 1 can (20 Oz.) tomato sauce
- 10 ½ oz. regular Fritos
- 1 pound Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 10 green onions, sliced
- 1 pound ground beef, fried slightly

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Sauté garlic in oil, add flour to make a paste. Add the tomato and Las Palmas Red Chile Sauce. Stir over medium high heat until slightly thickened.

In a large casserole dish place a layer of each: Fritos, meat, onions, cheese, olives and sauce, repeat. Top with Fritos. Bake uncovered for 35 minutes or until heated throughout. Best on the first day since the Fritos are crispy.

From the Fredericksburg Lodge #794 "Recipes, Remedies and Ramblings" – 2012