

The Guiding Light

Issue #2 August 2014

From The East

How Long Is The Cabletow?

This is an often discussed precept in Masonry and one that is interpretive, at best. Symbolically, we learn that the cabletow can be used to escort us from the Lodge Room if found unworthy. In the Fellowcraft and Master Mason degree the candidate avows to abide within its 'length', but what does all this really mean?

In the early days of American Freemasonry a cabletow was considered to be as long as an hour's journey – roughly, 3 miles. The Baltimore Masonic Convention of 1843 declared that the length of a cabletow is “the scope of a Brother's reasonable ability”, and this is the generally accepted meaning today. If we are to accept this as a proper definition by today's standards, then the question remains, “what is my reasonable ability?”

We often incur situations within Masonry, as well as in the 'outside world', where we are challenged to define within ourselves the length and use of our cabletow. Should I help this person even though he might not be a Mason? How much should I help this person? Does help include money? Are they worthy to receive my help? Do they really need, or want my help? These are but just a few of the questions that can erode away at the very basic principles of benevolence, charity, relief, brotherly love and good will.

One must remember the ceremony of the Rite of Destitution in the Entered Apprentice degree. Through this lesson of metallic deposit we are taught to remember that there are other persons about us who are actually without resources. Masonic charity is not confined to money, however. It encompasses thought and time devoted to those in need; visiting the sick; assuring the unfortunate of our interest and concern; sympathizing with those who suffer, or who are grieved; and particularly in exercising tolerance toward those whose opinions or beliefs may differ from ours.

Masonry teaches us that before entering upon any great and laudable undertaking we should first invoke the aid of deity. Masonry also teaches us to exercise power, physical, mental and moral strength to stand for the right; strength on occasion to say no; control, that our power may not be wasted, but bring only good to ourselves and to our fellow man. Thus, the answer can be very simple. When in doubt, my brother, pray, and be willing to listen to that small, still voice of discernment deep within your heart. Just be prepared to unconditionally accept the answer because sometimes you might not understand, or like what the answer might be.

In other words, a Mason is bound to his fellow man, Mason and non-Mason alike, by a tie which is as long and as strong as his own conscience dictates. He alone, with the guidance of the Great Architect, must determine for himself what constitutes his “reasonable ability.”

Duke Davis, Worshipful Master

The West Gate

As the second edition of The Guiding Light is published, the world evolves around us. It is true that the news is filled with negative subjects such as horrific wars in the Middle East, outbreaks of deadly plagues, airliners shot down by missiles, and much more. But it is business as usual at the local Masonic Lodge. Not because Masons are indifferent, or choose to ignore what is happening, but because we do all we can in our local community.

When I think of our Lodge and its business or activities, I think of the word 'charity.' It is defined as: “generous

actions or donations to aid the poor, ill, or "helpless;" "benevolent feeling, especially toward those in need or in disfavor;" "something given to a person or persons in need." We, as Masons, make a concerted effort to fulfill, perform and satisfy our duties to make sure the work we do is truly a benefit to our community and our Brethren. We are pulled in every direction by our work, our families, our service to God, other obligations and even entertainment, but in the end we do our best to labor in favor of others. It is good to encourage each other for a job well done thus far and to keep moving forward in favorable, or even unfavorable times.

When we sit in Lodge for the dispatch of business and discuss how we will and can conduct business that will benefit our community, we see the letter "G" above the Master of the Lodge. Is it there to remind us that the Great Architect of the Universe is watching and guiding us in order to how best handle the work we are discussing and deciding upon? Does He influence the Master of the Lodge, any other persons, or even the whole group to move in a certain direction? I suspect He does. This reminds me of how important it is then to be at the Lodge, so as to be a part of this process. It is a blessing to be a Mason, to be part of this historic time, when bad things may be happening in this world, but we can still work in our local community for the benefit of others without expecting a single thing back. May God continue to bless our efforts down this path and on this journey.

Sal Pacheco, Senior Warden

The South Gate

As you read this article, we are officially in the "dog days" of summer. I hope that your iced tea glass is full and you're a/c unit is in tip top shape. This time of year I often feel like that old dog that does very little. He moves just enough to follow the shade throughout the day. The good thing, we all know that cooler temps are on the way as we approach autumn.

This month, I will continue my theme of looking to the future. Our lodge has begun the process of building a new home. Our current building has become outdated and fallen in disrepair, due to Father Time marching onward. We have done our best to keep up, but it is time to leap frog ahead. Change is never easy. We can either embrace it or get left behind. As a lodge, we must set out unified in this big step forward. Our lodge has seen growth recently and will continue to grow if we invest in new and improved facilities. The opportunity to present Masonry to a new generation in a state of the art building with the historic setting of Fort Martin Scott in the background is a very unique opportunity. What a way to open our doors to others and show them the great history of Masonry in Texas.

This great fraternity is deeply rooted in the foundation set forth by great men over time, not only Masonry in general, but Masonry in Fredericksburg. We must continue that tradition, but also build on it. We walk forward to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection to unite us all, now and into the next generation. I hope that we will all find ourselves as part of that cement.

Randall King, Junior Warden

Mouth To Ear

Visitation:

As you know Freemasonry is a world-wide Fraternity. In the earliest day of Operative Lodges the Stone Mason needed to travel to a new location when the building project he was working, or his portion of it, was completed. He would travel to other cities / countries to obtain work so that he could support himself and his family. To obtain such work he would visit the local lodge. By proving himself to be a Master Mason by way of certain tokens he had the privilege to work. (Note the word privilege versus right.)

Now in modern times, one of the benefits we have a Speculative Masons is to travel and visit with brethren in lodges. If you bring up the idea of visitations and traveling, it probably won't be long before someone regales the table with their memorable visits to some lodge far away. (I have a few such stories of my own.)

There are a few points you should be aware of before visiting. First of all, visiting within your home district is generally very easy. Make sure you have a current dues card and photo ID. Traditionally, you would locate the Tiler and express your desire to attend the Lodge meeting. He will then contact the Senior Warden (SW) with your information. The SW will then determine the need to examine you or if Brother present can vouch for you. The Worshipful Master will also be informed of your desire to visit during the meeting. As a Texas Mason visiting Lodges in Texas is incredibly easy. Show up, introduce yourself, present your dues card showing that you are in good standing, along with a photo id, and you're in. (Ref. Title II, Chapter 6. Article 380, Grand Lodge Law.) Remember that visiting is a privilege, and the Worshipful Master does have the authority to deny your admittance.

If however you are going to be in the jurisdiction of another Grand Lodge, the proper method is to notify your Lodge Secretary of your desire to visit a Lodge in that other Grand Lodge. He will then contact our Grand Secretary, who will in turn contact the Grand Secretary of that distant Grand Lodge and request permission for you to visit the Lodge(s) there. Obviously this is the age-old and preferred method; however in today's world of fast travel and sometimes short notices of your pending trip you may find yourself in that distant location with the desire to visit a Lodge. I recommend when you travel and have even the most remote thought of visiting a Masonic Lodge in another jurisdiction that you pack a dress suit and tie. Not all Lodges are as casual as many of our Texas Lodges.

Start your experience by visiting the Lodges in your district. You will most likely find Brothers there that you've already sat in Lodge with so that you'll be comfortable.

You well know the pleasure you feel when you open the door to your lodge and are greeted by your brothers and friends. How your heart lifts when you're out and about in town and come across a brother, both of you smile and share a moment of fellowship that the others around you do not know, nor can they understand. How about enlarging that circle of Brothers? It's really simple. Go visit the other lodges in your District.

When should you visit? I think an excellent time to visit is when Lodges are doing degree work. You'll have the opportunity to refresh your knowledge of the degrees, plus show the new Mason that we are indeed a community of Freemasons and Brothers that support and encourage each other.

By visiting the other lodges in our district you'll enlarge yours circle of friends and possibly learn some new nuance of the work. After all we're not automatons. We all speak the same words, but different inflections and emphases of those words may very well trigger a new way of looking at and interpreting the work for you.

This was not intended to be an intense look or tutorial on visitation, rather I hope I encouraged you to step out of your comfort zone a little and visit the other Brothers in the District in their Home Lodges and thereby enlarge your circle

I hope to see you in the several Lodges in the 51st.

James A. Wheeler, DDGM-District 51
PM, Sugar Land Masonic Lodge #1141: 2005-2006

Labors of the Craft

We had one EA Initiation in June. Presently, there are two additional EA's preparing for their proficiency in the Second and Third Sections, so FC Degrees are right around the corner.

Next month, for Stated Meeting of Monday, September 8th, we will open Lodge and call it from Labor to Refreshment so we can present a guest speaker. Our newly elected Mayor, the Honorable Linda Langerhans, will speak briefly about her visions and future for Fredericksburg and field questions from the audience. The public is welcome to attend. Dinner is served at 6:00 PM by donation and the Mayor will speak at approximately 7:15 PM.

Words of Wisdom

“When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other.”

- Eric Hoffer -

“Experience is that marvelous thing that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.”

- Franklin P. Jones -

“If you wait, all that happens is that you get older.”

- Mario Andretti -

Tongue in Cheek

We had a power outage at my house this morning and my PC, laptop, TV, DVD, iPad, ham radio and my new surround sound music system were all shut down.

Then I discovered that my iPhone battery was flat, and to top it off, it was raining outside, so I couldn't play golf.

I went into the kitchen to make coffee and then I remembered that this also needs power, so I sat and talked with my wife for a few hours.

She seemed like a nice person

Actual Call to the Call Center at Samsung Electronics

Caller: 'Can you give me the telephone number for Jack?'

Operator: 'I'm sorry, sir, I don't understand who you are talking about.'

Caller: 'On page one, section five, of the User Guide it clearly states that I need to unplug the fax machine from the AC wall socket and telephone Jack before cleaning. Now, can you give me the number for Jack?'

Operator: 'I think it means the telephone plug on the wall.'

AND FINALLY

Customer: 'I've been calling 700 -1000 for two days and can't get through; can you help?'

Operator: 'Where did you get that number, sir?'

Customer: 'It's on the door of your business.'

Operator: 'Sir, those are the hours that we are open.'

Recipe of the Month

Sauerbraten

By Ruth Davis (My Daddy loved this!)

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 whole cloves
- 12 juniper berries
- 1 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1 (3 ½ to 4 pound) bottom round
- 1 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 18 dark, old fashioned ginger snaps (5 ounces, crushed)
- ½ cup seedless raisins, optional

In a large saucepan, over high heat, combine the water, cider vinegar, red wine vinegar, onion, carrot, 1 tablespoon kosher salt, pepper, bay leaves, cloves, juniper berries and mustard seeds. Cover and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Pat the bottom round dry and rub with vegetable oil and one tablespoon kosher salt on all sides. Heat a large sauté pan over high heat; add the meat and brown on all sides, approximately 2 to 3 minutes per side.

When the marinade has cooled to a point where you can stick your finger in it and not be burned, place the meat in a non-reactive vessel and pour the marinade over it. Place into refrigerator for 3 days. If the meat is not completely submerged in the liquid, turn it over once a day.

After 3 days of marinating, preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Add the sugar to the meat and marinade, cover and place on the middle rack of the oven and cook until tender, approximately 4 hours.

Remove the meat from the vessel and keep warm. Strain the liquid to remove the solids. Return the liquid to the pan and place over medium-high heat. Whisk in the gingersnaps and cook until thickened, stirring occasionally. Strain the sauce through a fine mesh sieve to remove any lumps. Add the raisins if desired. Slice the meat and serve with the sauce.

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