

ANCIENT LANDMARK LODGE NO. 5

Ancient Free and Accepted Masons

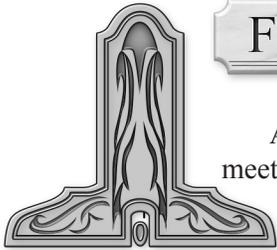


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FROM THE WEST

Fiscal Business

At our January Principal Officers meeting, the other Principal Officers and I sat down with our Trustees to have a chat about the fiscal health of the Lodge. It was an eye-opening experience. I don't pretend to understand the minutia of the financial world or the ins and outs of investment portfolios, but I did take away a couple of valuable lessons from the meeting. The first is that we have a fine group of Trustees. I take comfort in knowing that we have dedicated individuals who are willing to oversee our accounts without any thought of compensation and who will give us friendly advice from time to time. And by friendly advice, I don't necessarily mean telling us only what we want to hear. Our Trustees gave us a very informative presentation and did not sugarcoat the reality we find ourselves in. That brings me to the second lesson I took away from the meeting: we need to examine our fiscal practices a little more closely and discuss some changes.

We live in an economic system that is cyclical. Anyone who's been around for more than five years has probably deduced that we're currently experiencing a downswing in that cycle. What this means for the Lodge is that the funds that we've put aside to help us run the Lodge are shrinking. As a member of the Lodge put it at our January stated meeting, we're eating our seed corn.

It is not my intention with this article to ring alarm bells or to advocate for drastic measures. I do not believe that our position is dire. We shouldn't arrange a fire sale of Lodge assets to right the ship. Our current budget is sound, our investments appear to be doing better than they were, and we have already begun to take some measures to address the situation. Instead, what I want to do is to try to begin a discussion among the members of our Lodge about some other things we could do. I believe we all love our Lodge and we enjoy one of the most active groups of members in the state. Let's use that resource to ensure that future generations can enjoy it as well.

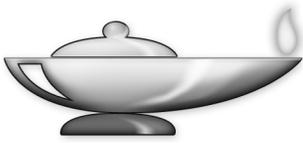
Probably one of the largest expenses we incur as a Lodge is our Lodge building. As part owners of the Masonic Center, the bills are also part of our responsibility--taxes, electricity, water, trash removal, maintenance, etc.. All of these things have to be paid for. The MTA has done a great job over the years of steering us in the right direction. They have certainly mitigated many of the costs associated with owning such a large building. We have also had several groups step up to lead drives to help pay for other improvements, such as replacing the carpets and re-upholstering the benches in the small Lodge room. Yet, the costs still remain and they are considerable. What can we do as a Lodge to help defray them?

Over the years, our Lodge has ridden the waves of our economic system, much as our society as done. We've come to expect the bumpy patches from time to time. When we stare at the balance sheets and try to figure out what to do next, I think the first inclination is to look at ways to cut costs. But what about also trying to raise revenue? What are some of the things we could do to raise money to try to offset some of the costs we face? Could we start a capital campaign? Should we promote fundraising projects for smaller projects? Are we willing to pay more for the things our Lodge does to bring us together? When we ask these questions, we should also ask ourselves how much the Lodge means to us. What is the value we get from the friendships we've built in Lodge over the years?

Finally, I want to end with a caveat. I am not personally advocating for any particular course of action. Not yet. As I said before, I don't think the situation is desperate. The barbarians are not at the gates--nor are the debt collectors. Furthermore, I do believe that we are making good progress toward getting our house in order. The problem is that the current economic downturn has hit harder than most expected it would. We need to examine our fiscal house more closely and we need to ask ourselves some hard questions. As members of a great Lodge and a wonderful Craft, we owe it to ourselves and to future generations to do it.

Joseph Amos - Senior Warden





Do You Understand What You Said

LODGE EDUCATION OFFICER

Back in the mid-eighties I had the opportunity to be a Den Leader for a group of Cub Scouts of which my youngest was a member. Each week we would come together for our Den meeting and we would always open the meeting by having one of the boys lead the group in the Cub Scout Promise or Pledge of Allegiance. I had listened to this very brief and quickly performed ritual for a couple months and began to realize that not much thought was going into this opening of our Den meeting. It came one night that my son was selected to lead the group and he chose the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone lined up and they began, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America". I interrupted and said "STOP!" My son's eyes opened wide as if he knew something was going to happen that he wasn't prepared for. I looked at him and asked, "What does that mean?" Of course he didn't know, and from that day on, when we met, we took some time to understand what we were saying in our Cub Scout Promise and Pledge of Allegiance.

As I was coming through the degrees of the Blue Lodge and learning the "Prove Ups" of the degrees, I realized it didn't take much time to get the words figured out, and then it was just a matter of getting the words into my head. This gave me the opportunity to begin to ask some questions about what I was tasked to learn. Why did it say that? What was the meaning or message that was being conveyed? As I asked these questions and many more, I began to understand this fraternity I was joining, and, with the help of the Brothers of the Lodge, I began to understand what the fraternity would eventually hold for me. This could only have been done because someone told me to "STOP!" Listen to what you're saying, ask questions, and understand what it means to you.

Do we understand what we are saying when we open our Lodge or perform the ritual of any of the degrees? We spend much time committing the ritual to memory so we can deliver it well in our ceremonies, but do we really understand what it says? I have been told that little blue book holds all we can ever want to know about Freemasonry.

STOP!

Bruce Sherman, Lodge Education Officer

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Brothers, a short time ago I walked through the door to our lodge room to begin my journey to becoming a Master Mason. As I entered for the first time the words I heard and the lessons I was taught are similar to those that have greeted other men as they have begun their journey over the years. I learned that Freemasonry is a tradition of fellowship built upon three basic tenants - Brotherly love, Relief and Truth. Brotherly love is the practice of the golden rule. Relief embodies charity for all mankind. Truth is honesty, fair play and adherence to the cardinal virtues. I was somewhat awed at the aspect of following where great men in history have gone before me. I felt there would be an obligation to live up to their expectations as a Mason, and as an American.

In reading our website, under the heading "What does it mean to be a Mason" the following is written:

Membership in the brotherhood of Masons means many things. It means being a part of an unbroken tradition that stretches back over 500 years to a time when guilds of Freemasons traveled throughout Europe laying the stones of the great gothic Cathedrals. It means sharing the values of our Nation's Founding Fathers. Men who believe in the brotherhood of man are firmly rooted in the Constitution of the United States. It means forming deep and lasting friendships that transcend the boundaries of race, religion and culture, as well as those of geography. But most of all, being a Mason means the kind of deep satisfaction that comes only from selfless giving, from doing for others without asking, or expecting anything in return.

To be honest with you, that is why I wanted to become a Mason, I want to be a part of something larger than myself. I feel that many of the failures in our society today can be in great part attributed to a lack of fellowship, of not being accountable to anyone but yourself, of not giving of your time and talents to a common cause. New members are not recruited, they ask to become one of us, they are attracted by the example of good men performing good works and living good lives. Through its traditions and teachings, Freemasonry attempts to instill in its members both the desire and the means to improve themselves and the lives of others. That in its essence is the nobility of Freemasonry. That is why we became Masons.

A new outreach committee has been formed. We have been tasked to provide opportunities for community involvement, to look for ways to encourage all Lodge members to come together for the purpose of fellowship. We will be asking all of you to call upon members that maybe you haven't seen in a while, new members who have not been back since the third degree, long time members we have not seen in years. Family and friends are encouraged to join us, heck walk up to a stranger and ask them to come along.

This is an exciting time! With chances for fun, fame and prizes! We will keep you informed as to the time and date of events as they become available. You can talk to me at 612-328-1613 email at doyle21962@yahoo.com or waylay John Burns with any questions, comments or suggestions.

Thank You All

Mike Doyle



THE SECRETARY'S DESK

Bucket List or Soap Box

I started this article back in November, but it just never felt like the right time to share until now.

It was my cousin's 70th Birthday. You know the guy. Lynn lives in California, and I try to hook up with him at least once a year for a motorcycle trip. The "Cuz," as most of you have known him, has been fighting an aggressive melanoma for several years. In fact, our last trip through Death Valley was appropriately chosen as maybe his last one, although we are still planning for a few more. The time was right to pick up the phone and to give him a bit of warm well wishes for making it yet another year, not because of the cancer, but because of all the crazy things I can talk him into doing. He didn't answer his phone, which is usual for those "California" folks. I left him my signature Birthday song. (In case you don't know, I cannot sing. Somehow that makes it even better.) In just a few short minutes I received a text message from him, more of that California stuff. "I am at the oncologist and it is not good" was the note. A few seconds later, "Not me, Carmen"...WHAT! Carmen is his beautiful 45 year old daughter. "I'll call later" was the next text. That was a long hour waiting for his call. He explained that she has pancreatic cancer. Chemo will need to be started at once to give her some time. Carmen has set up a Caring Bridge site to keep her friends and family informed about her condition. I believe she wants to leave her comments and those of others on the site as a gift for her family in the future. One of the things on the site was her "bucket list." There was one piece of information in that list that I had to share with her Dad. She wanted to take a family cruise. A few weeks later, there was a posting on her site for a cruise and she was inviting her friends to join her and her family for a Caribbean trip. Now, my winter was going to be really full--San Antonio to see in laws, a trip to Barrett Jackson with my Kings from Winter Carnival, a family trip to Cabo, and now an early February cruise. Yup, we are going on that one for sure.

One day later though, I received a phone call from a Brother with more troubling news that was going to change plans that were made five years ago. His brother-in-law, Don Schoeller, has stage four cancer of his kidney. Don was King Boreas in 2007, my year in Winter Carnival. Many of you will recall meeting Don and the Knighting he made during our Canadian Visitation that year, including the Grand Master, the Master of AL #3, and Ron Larson, all in the spirit of Winter Carnival fun.

After the call from Brother Danny, I met with Don a few

days later for lunch. I needed to catch up on his news and current prognosis. This included a lot of small talk about what the future might bring, including our up-coming trip to Phoenix to celebrate our fifth year out. While we were in Winter Carnival together, the three of us had decided that if he, Dan, and I didn't kill each other and were all on speaking terms at the end of our year, we would celebrate by going to Phoenix for the granddaddy of car auctions, Barrett Jackson. I've been there and it is unbelievable sight. That five year out promise has now become less important than Don's current struggles. It will wait for now as he progresses forward with his chemo treatments.

All of this has brought me to reflect a bit about my own Bucket List, but maybe it's more of a Soap Box appeal and I am asking for your help. Let's start a war on cancer, and let's start right now by using our beloved Masonic Charities and get this Masonic Cancer Center built! For the last couple of years, instead of sending flowers, well wishes, or memorials, I have sent a check to Masonic Charities instead in the person's honor or memory. I ask that you also do the same over the next few years until the ground is broken and their research begins. In case you are wondering, "Will it really make a difference?" The Rotary Club has nearly finished its world wide commitment to eradicate polio. India was just dropped from the list of countries in which it existed; and there maybe yet one small zone left in Africa before polio will be wiped from the earth. So, little steps do provide great results. If the Rotary Club can eradicate polio, why can't the Freemasons do the same with cancer?

If you can't name anyone right now in whose honor to make your pledge, please feel free to use the name of one of my friends or family—"The Cuz," Lynn; his daughter, Carmen; and last, but not least, Boreas Rex 71- Don Schoeller. Doug Kuchera, Secretary

Bowling Night

When: Thursday, April 5
Where: West Side Lanes (www.westsidelanesmn.com)
1625 S. Robert Street, West Saint Paul
Time: Meet at the lodge lot at 6:40pm to carpool or
Join us at the alley at 7:00pm
Cost: \$3 for shoes, \$3.50/game
Please R.S.V.P. so we can reserve enough lanes

SPRING DEGREES

Well brethren, it is getting to be that time of year when we start out with a new class of candidates for the degrees of Masonry. The first degree is rapidly approaching and the cast is hard at work learning their new parts. We are expecting a large class, perhaps as many as 10 candidates, for the spring degrees, and I'm hoping to see a proportionally large number of members on the sidelines to support the cast and the soon-to-be new brothers of the lodge.

The first degree will be conferred on Thursday, March 22nd, with dinner at 6pm and the degree beginning promptly at 7pm.

If you are interested in learning the ritual and getting involved in our degree work, please contact me and we'll find a good fit for you in an upcoming degree.

Fraternally,
Keith Reiersen

LODGE of SORROW 2012



And we shall become immortal by our deeds which will live on after us.

Name	Birth	Initiated	Passed	Raised	Celestial Lodge
J Robert Collier	12/11/1915	02/22/1945	03/13/1945	04/04/1945	01/08/2012

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