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A Message From The Grand Master

(Continued from Page One)

We are taught in the obligations and by the symbolic penalties of the importance of secrecy. The rule of non-solicitation tends to instill in us a prohibition against discussing Masonry with non-Masons. These are misconceptions and the Masonic teachings and law do not prohibit a discussion of Masonry with non-members. Also, in many cases, we fail to instruct newly raised Masons in the things they can tell their non-Mason friends about their pride of membership in the greatest fraternity in the world. I recommend that special programs be presented in the lodge instructing the brethren in those things they can and should discuss about Freemasonry with their non-Mason friends and associates.

Let's look at some of the things we can discuss with non-members. Each of us should always be prepared to give a good definition of Freemasonry. One that everyone can relate to is that Freemasonry is a fraternity based on certain moral and religious doctrines. The moral doctrines are brotherly love, relief and truth, and the religious doctrines are a belief in a Supreme Being and in immortality.

Surely, we can tell the public about the illustrious history of Freemasonry; that we evolved from the stone-Masons' guilds who built those magnificent cathedrals in Europe and England in the middle ages. We can inform our non-Mason friends that Masonry stresses character building and the higher plane of life. But more importantly, we should inform our non-Mason friends about what Masons are doing in the world today for the cause of humanity. In North Carolina we should be proud to share with others what we are doing at the Children's Home at Oxford and at the home for our older Brothers and Sisters at Greensboro.

A good topic of conversation would be to discuss the appendant bodies of Masonry and what those organizations are accomplishing for the less fortunate in our society. York Rite Masons perform a commendable service through the Eye Foundation and the Knights Templar Educational Foundation. The Scottish Rite is doing a remarkable work for handicapped children at its Childhood Language Disorders Clinics, three of which are located in North Carolina. The Shrine is another interesting topic with its twenty-two hospitals for crippled and burned children.

Speakers from the appendant bodies can be invited to present programs in our lodge meetings. This would make our members more knowledgeable and at the same time improve Masonic relations which is important to the prosperity of our great fraternity. When we learn to discuss Freemasonry appropriately with our non-Mason friends, hopefully it will be discovered that we are not a secret society and our recognition level will increase significantly in the public eye.

Public awareness of Freemasonry will increase as our lodges become more involved in community activities and a more visible part of our respective communities. There are many worthwhile projects that a Masonic lodge can become engaged in. Remember that the project should serve a worthy and needful purpose and that we should always stay within the guidelines of the CODE and do those things that will bring credit to Freemasonry.

The word solicitation in our Masonic vocabulary has a very misunderstood meaning. What is solicitation? Its definition is to intreat, to approach with a request or plea, to strongly urge, to lure or to proposition. Any of these approaches would certainly be un-Masonic and prohibited by the CODE. But unfortunately the prohibition against solicitation has been built up in the minds of Masons to mean that they are not to mention, much less discuss Masonry with their family, friends, or acquaintances. To solicit a person to become a Mason is wrong, but to discuss Freemasonry with a man you believe to be suitable Masonic material, to tell him what Freemasonry is and what it is doing for society and to tell him what its principles are is commonsense.

Masonic charities in North Carolina embrace three fundamental endeavors, Oxford Orphanage, the Masonic and Eastern Star Home and the North Carolina Masonic Foundation. Our continued and increased support of these institutions is vital to the success of Freemasonry in North Carolina.

In 1981, Past Grand Master Nelson Banks instituted a program to raise ten million dollars for the North Carolina Masonic Foundation for the purpose of providing an endowment fund, the earnings of which would aid in the ever increasing operating expenses of the Home and the Orphanage. We are not half way there yet and I am asking each lodge to conduct a fund raising activity sometime during this year for that purpose.

It is important for us to remember that the Grand Lodge of North Carolina is made up of its 394 subordinate lodges. There is sometimes the perception that the Grand Lodge is one group and the Subordinate Lodges another. I want to find a way to dispel that perception and impress upon every Mason the fact that all of us knelt at a Masonic altar and took the same obligations, and each time we attend lodge we are reminded that we meet on the level.

The business of the Grand Lodge is the business of its 394 subordinate lodges. It is important that we work together as brothers in the spirit of harmony to the end that all that we do is for the good of Masonry and to the glory of God.

Questions and Answers

The Grand Lodge Constitution and Regulations (THE CODE) spell out the Masonic law that governs lodges and Masons in North Carolina. Copies of THE CODE are furnished each lodge. Individual members may purchase copies through their lodge secretaries (\$10.00). The answers to the following questions are brief, they are subject to error, and they are unofficial; they are intended only for general information. Some members may wish to score themselves in their knowledge of Masonic law with their answers to these questions. The answer follows each question.

1. How did THE CODE come into being?

Answer: Following up on a proposal in 1873 by Grand Master John Nichols, Grand Secretary Donald W. Bain prepared a manuscript of the laws, resolutions, edicts and such then in effect and this was presented to the Grand Lodge the following year. After full examination and discussion, printing was authorized. The printed version was adopted in 1875 and THE CODE of 1875 was the first to bear that name.

2. What Masonic law prevailed prior to 1875?

Answer: During those early years of our Grand Lodge, as is the case today, laws were adopted during the annual communications, as were resolutions; Grand Masters issued edicts and official opinions. Efforts were made to record and distribute all this to the lodges, but it appears that measures taken prior to 1875 were generally unsatisfactory.

3. How many times has THE CODE of 1875 been revised?

Answer: THE CODE of that date was revised three times, in 1892, 1897 and 1915. The fourth revision must have been rather general, as it then became known as THE CODE of 1924. Then, in 1936, a decision was taken to make yet another revision, which was in progress for twelve years before THE CODE of 1948 was finally adopted at seventeen minutes past midnight on April 22, 1948. This version was revised in 1957, in 1966 and in 1977. (The answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 were all taken from the "Introduction to THE CODE," which consists of the first two printed pages, i and ii, at the very beginning of the current version.)

4. Isn't another revision now in the offing?

Answer: Possibly so. The delegates voted last April for the appointment of a committee so study THE CODE and submit recommendations in 1989. Action eventually taken will depend upon those recommendations and upon the delegates' vote concerning them.

5. What would another revision accomplish?

Answer: This would depend upon the scope decided upon. It would have the potential to accomplish a great deal. It could eliminate a large portion of the numerous duplications now existing; it could transfer regulations from chapters to which they have been haphazardly added to chapters where they would make more sense; it could arrange regulations within a chapter in a much more orderly fashion than is presently the case (in many instances the present version has had regulations added or deleted with the effect of taking a reader's trend of thought along one line, jumping to another, then going back to the first, and so on); it could ELIMINATE CONTRADICTIONS; it could eliminate the present ambiguities which now permit a variety of interpretations that can be resolved only by official opinions of the Grand Masters; it could do away with most of the legal language and be rewritten in layman's language. A really comprehensive revision would leave us with a much thinner volume than the one we have now, one much easier to read and use than the one we have now.

Hibriten From High Brighton

Lenior -- A grand old building almost ninety years of age is a prominent landmark on Lenoir's South Main Street; it is the home of one of the more unique lodges in North Carolina, Hibriten No. 262.

Instituted in 1866 and chartered a year later, Hibriten is now 122 years old and is therefore one of our older but not one of our oldest lodges, and it is not by reason of age that it is unique.

Ponder upon its unusual name

Named for a nearby mountain, "High Brighton" was the original name of the mountain and of the lodge, and the reason for the change to "Hibriten" is not known; it is known only that the minutes of June 17, 1875 were the first recorded under the new and present name. (The name change is also noted in the "Historical Table of Lodges" compiled in 1979 by Past Grand Master Charles A. Harris. That table also notes that except for a brief period during 1880-82 the lodge has an unbroken record.)

Although, as earlier noted, its 120 years of activity are not in themselves unique among North Carolina lodges, the fact that the lodge has preserved intact the minutes of each meeting held during those years is indeed unique. Most or nearly all lodges of like age have had some minutes destroyed by fire, or lost or misplaced, or ruined by water or other substance, or for other reasons have not been able to preserve some of their minutes.

Not only does Hibriten have all its minutes, on its walls hang the pictures of all the Masons that have ever served as Master of the lodge. It is truly an awing and inspiring sight, just sitting in the lodge and looking about at the more than 100 pictures gracing the two longest walls, all of the pictures identically framed.

Surely, one would think, it would be a near impossible achievement, obtaining and preserving all these pictures. It is beyond belief that at least one or two of those Masters would not have failed to have a picture made. Well, one did--fail to have his picture made, that is. But this did not deter his brethren. This particular Master's picture was made as he lay in his coffin, the eyes being painted in by a local artist.

While unique in some particulars, Hibriten is akin to its sister lodges in most others.

One problem it shares with many other lodges is the age of its building and the resulting ever-increasing cost of operating and maintaining it. The two-story building has all the lodge facilities on the second floor; a kitchen and dining room, an ante room, rest rooms and such, and a truly beautiful lodge room. The lower floor is rented to two Lenoir business establishments.

Although remodeled and repaired not too many years ago, the type of construction and the age of the structure cause maintenance and operating costs to continually rise. For that reason, the members are considering the idea of purchasing real estate upon which to eventually construct a new lodge building, in which event the present building would be sold.

Moving out of the home the lodge has occupied for the greater part of a century would certainly be an emotional experience, particularly for the older members, but it would afford opportunity to create new history to go with the magnificent old history so carefully preserved for so many years.

Unscramble

Rearrange the letters in the following six words to form six new words familiar to Masons: bowel (or elbow), mango, bleat, earth (or hater), ringer, newer. Now take the first letter of each new word you have formed and arrange these to form a six-letter word familiar to Masons. The answer is something that is vital to continuing life. If you arrive at a final answer meaning someone washing themselves, take heart, you are almost there. Answers on page three.

are \$8.00

Each publication listed is the most recent edition.

Checks should be made payable to GRAND LODGE OF NORTH CAROLINA and orders should be addressed to: The Grand Secretary, P. O. Box 6506, Raleigh, North Carolina 27628. Masons visiting Raleigh can pick up any of these items from the Grand Secretary's office at 2921 Glenwood Avenue during normal business hours on any weekday except holidays.

(Lodge Secretaries and other interested Masons should clip this list for future reference.)

Publications Available From Grand Secretary

Raleigh -- Various Masonic publications and emblems are in stock at the Grand Secretary's office for sale to lodges and to individual Masons. Items are priced at levels necessary to recover initial costs, plus the costs of packaging and mailing--non-profit. The Grand Secretary's office requires that payment accompany each order, as it is not set up to maintain individual accounts. All prices include postage.

A fairly new offering is FREEMASONRY REVEALED, the booklet written by Reynold Davenport and successfully marketed by him for a number of years. He sold tens of thousands of the booklets to lodges and Masons in all fifty states and in foreign countries. Lodges reported using them for a variety of purposes, but most especially as something a Mason could give to a non-Mason who expressed interest in Masonry and who asked questions the Mason was not prepared to answer. Brother Davenport has given all rights to this booklet to the Grand Lodge and has requested that any profits from its sale be turned over to the North Carolina Masonic Foundation. Several hundred dollars have been turned over to the Foundation thus far. So this booklet is the sole exception to non-profit practice. In order to keep the price low as possible, the Grand Secretary's office cannot accept orders for less than twenty-five (25) copies at the time, except for orders picked up at the office. The price of this booklet on this basis is \$.25

BAHNSON'S NORTH CAROLINA LODGE MANUAL is well known to Masons in this state. It contains a portion of the AUTHORIZED WORK of this Grand Lodge and must be used with The Official Standard of The Work-by all studying any portion of lodge ritual. It is useful and informative for every Mason. Its price is \$2.00

OUR TRIBUTE OF LOVE is designed for presentation to Masonic widows, particularly at the conclusion of Masonic Burial or Memorial Services. It contains one of our two authorized burial services in its entirety and is beautifully illustrated with original art work throughout. There is a presentation page at the end. Its price is \$.50

THE CODE (CONSTITUTION AND REGULATIONS) is the law of this Grand Lodge. Two copies are furnished each lodge, one to be held by the Master and the other by the Secretary. A copy must by law be in the lodge room during each communication. Additionally, each active member, particularly lodge officers, should own a copy of THE CODE in order to prepare themselves for coming responsibilities. Copies of amendments to it are provided free of charge following their adoption. Its price is \$10.00

THE LODGE SYSTEM OF MASONIC EDUCATION is a designated and useful tool for employment in the indoctrination of candidates. Lodges--sometimes members--often wish to purchase additional copies. Its price \$1.60

NORTH CAROLINA MASONIC CEREMONIES contains each ceremony in which a lodge might ever be officially involved. Here again, lodges and individual members often wish to obtain additional copies. Price \$4.00

THE CLAUDY BOOKS (Introduction to Freemasonry) are three small books, one pertaining to each of the three degrees, written by Carl Claudy, a distinguished Masonic scholar and writer. These books are designed to be presented, one at the time, to the candidate as he progresses through the degrees; they can help him so much in his understanding and appreciating what he is receiving. They are also interesting reading for any Master Mason who has never seen them. The price of these books may soon change, but right now a set of three is priced at \$6.75

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GRAND LODGE (current year, paper-bound) is published in the late summer or early fall of each year and is a factual and detailed account of everything the Grand Lodge did in the Masonic year ending during the preceding April. The young Mason who begins now to purchase a copy each year will, upon attaining old age, have assembled an inexpensive but valued Masonic library and history. Per copy \$2.00

LAUNCHING THE CRAFT has been sold out and those who have copies of it are now the owners of collectors' items.

25 Year Emblems are presented free of charge to those that earn them, but replacements for lost emblems must be purchased, priced at \$2.00

50 Year Emblems are likewise presented without charge, and the replacement emblems in this instance

West Gate Dedication

(Continued from Page One)

witness the ceremony, which was conducted in due and ancient form. The Master welcomed everyone in attendance and the Grand Master delivered the oration for the occasion. Roy W. Tittle, a lodge member, provided music for the occasion.

When the ceremony was completed, the Master expressed the lodge's appreciation to the Grand Master and others participating in the ceremony; the Grand Master responded.

West Gate Lodge first came into being in the minds of several Masons who felt there was need for a lodge on the west side of Charlotte. The idea spread, with the result that 1967 saw the actual birth of the new lodge, with ninety-one charter members (possibly a record). Chartered the following year, the lodge has grown to a membership of 446, including six Certified Lecturers and two Certified Instructors. It has provided the Craft with two D.D.G.M.'s and two D.D.G.L.'s.

On the dedication night, the lodge presented Grand Master Thomas with three \$1,000.00 checks; one each for the Home, the Orphanage and the Foundation. There are plans to double those amounts by the end of the year.

The handsome new building is fully paid for and a front view of it may be seen in the picture below.

6. Who would do all this?

Answer: A good question. If the recommendation is made and adopted to go for an all-out revision, provision would undoubtedly be made for the appointment of a competent committee to undertake the task. The Masons on such a committee would necessarily be well-versed in all phases of our Fraternity; they must be highly intelligent men that have the ability, the desire, the time and the opportunity to do the tremendous work that would be involved. To transform the present hodgepodge of regulations into an orderly set of concise laws that Masons in general can understand is not an undertaking to be accomplished by just anybody, these Masons must be special!

7. How much would it cost?

Answer: I have no idea. My guess is that the cost would be substantial but not prohibitive.

8. How long would it take?

Answer: It could take anywhere from one or two years to four or five. The time required would depend upon the Masons doing it; how much time they could devote to it, whether they would be slow or fast workers, and so on. It could not be done in just a few months.

9. Would Masons be able to make suggestions?

Answer: It is almost certain a committee would desire input that would give it some line on what the brethren were thinking, but it obviously would not wish for and could not handle 70,000 suggestions. There would have to be, I should think, arrangement for a consolidation of the recommendations that would reduce their number to something a committee could reasonably handle.

10. What is the basis for the answers to questions four through nine?

Answer: Pure conjecture.

Please remember that answers in this column are always unofficial.