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It Really Happened

Jacksonville — Semper Fidelis Lodge No. 680 began construction of a new lodge building in 1959, completing it early in the following year. Not long afterward, they asked Grand Master Harvey Smith to dedicate the building and a date was set.

Dave Owens, of Sneads Ferry, was Junior Deacon of the lodge that year, and a more serious minded, conscientious and dedicated Mason would have been hard to find. Dave took quite literally any duty he assumed and any instructions given him, and that certainly applied to the responsibilities of a Junior Deacon.

On the night of the dedication, the large lodge room was filled with members, visiting members of neighboring lodges and others, and a goodly sprinkling of Grand Lodge officers and Past Grand Masters.

Many of these Masons were strangers to Dave Owens, and when the time came for the Junior Deacon to designate those he did not know to be Master Masons, Dave set about the task with the same steady determination that characterized all his endeavors. He designated Masons by the handful, by the bucketful—he designated so many that a little snickering began to be heard among those not being designated.

As Dave moved ever nearer the East, he began designating some of those that had been afforded the more prominent seats, the Grand Lodge officers and the Past Grand Masters. The snickering erupted into loud guffaws, enthusiastically led by those few members of the Grand Lodge brass that Dave knew and who had thus escaped being designated.

"That's right, Brother Junior Deacon," roared the Grand Master, obviously enjoying the discomfiture of his brethren in brass, "if you don't know 'em, STAFF 'EM!"

And that is exactly what Dave did. He methodically designated with his staff every Mason he did not know, the high and the low, until he climbed the three exalted steps and planted his staff squarely at the feet of Grand Master Harvey Smith himself!

Well, it brought the house down. It was a good five minutes before the laughter subsided enough for someone to rise and vouch for the Grand Master as being a Master Mason. The Grand Master was a good sport about it, acknowledging that Dave had done only what he himself had admonished him to do, and that was to carry out the duties of the Junior Deacon.

The funniest thing about the whole episode was that it never was funny to Dave. During the whole procedure, his face was as solemn as a tomb. So far as he was concerned, he was performing a serious duty.

Dave's dedication continued to show in later years. He was to later become Master of Semper Fidelis 680, then Charter Master of Stump Sound 733. He served as District Education Chairman, as District Deputy Grand Lecturer and as District Deputy Grand Master. He was elected to Life Membership in 733 and to Honorary Membership in five or six area lodges. The Scottish Rite elevated him to the 33rd, Inspector General Honorary. He would drive for miles to deliver a lecture for a lodge that had no one else to do it. He would do the same to assist in degree work or in any other manner he could. He coached dozens of candidates. He helped anyone he could. He did all these things while in constant pain from a severe back injury that never healed and which rendered it difficult for him to rise or to sit, to go up or down stairs, to get in or out of a car.

Dave Owens was a plain and simple man, and no one knew that better than he. He never pretended to be anything that he was not, never "put on airs." But as a Master Mason, he was a Prince among men. Other Masons loved him and respected him until he finally laid down his working tools and ascended painlessly into that Higher Lodge above where it is certain the Junior Deacon did not find it necessary to staff him.

Deaths

- 685—Jonathon Daniel Tomlinson
691—Franklin R. Snody
692—Lloyd Henry Ewart
692—Walter Brian Wallwork
693—Frank Rowe Carson
693—Clyde Malcolm McGee
694—Jack Grady Norton
702—Clyde Alton Rosser
710—Ralph Casper Rattledge
714—Joseph William Flynt
737—Herbert Lee Turner
738—Eugene Hunter Carter
751—Gene Pratt
758—Harold Edward Hartwig
1—Frank John May
5—Grover Rupert Barnacascel
13—Robert Clifton Quinn
31—Frank Smoot Worthington
32—Reuben A. Morgan
40—Ronald Gray Herriage
40—Luther Clyde Thomas
53—Thebert Ferebee Leary
75—William Mathias Whaley
83—Frazier Caldwell Stanley
84—Raymond Elsworth Moore
84—William Arthur Hooks
97—Thorvald Grau Petersen
99—Edwin Odell Farabee
104—Millard Filmore Smith, Jr.
106—Jasper Stanley Meekins
109—Eugene Larry Gaskill
113—Thomas Brooks B. Woody
114—Ralph Henry Moody
114—Furman Kenneth Biggs, Jr.
145—Branson Harvey Barrett
147—Bruce Edward Beasley
147—Isaac Bulu Lughrun, Jr.
155—Braxton Osborne Eddins
314—Joseph Ralph Hobbs
344—Whitman Thurlow Kearns
344—George William O'Dell, Jr.
357—Charles Richard Vinson
369—David Daniel Lapisch
375—Arthur Benjamin Davis
381—John Reid Washburn
384—William Pleasant Chandler
384—Ralph Lee Chandler
386—Oliver Merdia Hamlett
387—Ralph Edward Brewer
390—William Howard Hardy
395—Charles Edwion Walker
401—Steve Herman Clark
408—Edward William Hopper
420—Ray Talmage Moore
423—Dwight McKay McKnight
433—Clarence Eugene Neal
446—Cecil Earl Greene
447—Erby Ray Shealy
447—John Charles Tolter
453—John Edward Walter Belcher
462—Jerry Benjamin Phillips
463—George Gaskins Jones
463—Wilton Linwood Hampton
471—Graham Eugene Mullis
472—Samuel David Welch
484—Charles Tyrone Peavy
486—Johnie Broadus Elmore
500—Eppie Powell Stephenson
516—Willie Glenn Jenkins
519—Hugh Hunter Cobb
525—Mallie Valton Hinton
532—Harold Eugene Hamrick
538—John Herman Washam
542—Cecil Otis Turnage
542—Donald Howard Steele
542—Fred Peatree Cook
554—Everette Benson McKinney
558—Henry Davis Beck
562—Harry Guion Rogers
568—James Van Jenkins, Jr.
595—Zebulon Reinald Atkinson
596—Raymond Lee Creekmore
598—Ralph Jackson Topping
616—George Boston Beamer
617—Rhodes Culberth Smith
617—Acy James Arthur
626—James Luther Smith
656—Niles William Bortoff
656—Thomas Martin Wilson
667—Howard Lon Percifield
667—Benjamin Franklin Jones, Jr.
668—Daniel Robert Spearman
669—Noble Leonard Parrish
675—Columbus Herman Carawan
676—Branson Barrett Barron
679—Peter Wolfram Goetz
679—James Burton Cox
680—Lester William Israel
685—Lewis Doyle Chappell
692—Carl Allen Jones, Sr.
692—Rhoda Dale Elrod
699—Willia Lloyd Garner
714—Clifton Horton Ward
715—Harry Robert Easton
718—Horace Ledbetter
730—Charles Cornelious Griffin
732—Bruce Everett Woodell
736—George Edward Mayton
738—Herman Moore Kilian
747—Donald Morrison Snell
5—Winfred Fentress White
8—Fred Assye
19—Ewell Cornelius Limer
40—Harry Lee Mangum, Sr.
40—William LeRoy Chadwick, Sr.
99—Charles Herbert Wentz
109—Ralph Duval Merrick
109—Joseph Willis Peppers
112—Hiram Childrez Wilkinson
122—Ronald David Williams

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. We open and close a Master Mason's lodge in Due Form. Why is the Grand Lodge opened and closed in Ample Form?

Answer: I really don't know why, except REG. 94-07 says that is the way it is opened and closed by the Grand Master, who also opens and closes a Master Mason's lodge in Ample Form. Incidentally, the same regulation provides for the Grand Lodge to be opened and closed in Due Form when the Deputy Grand Master presides and in Form when the Grand Master and the Deputy Grand Master are both absent.

2. Please settle this little argument: does the term lodge refer to the building or to the Masons meeting in it?

Answer: REG. 94-11 says "a lodge is a society of Masons meeting by authority of a charter or warrant from a regular Grand Lodge..." The First Degree lecture says much the same thing. So the word refers to the Masons and not to the building. But don't go away. The same regulation winds up saying "the word sometimes in Masonic terminology means the place or hall in which a particular lodge meets." So, while you would be technically correct to say the word applies to a group of Masons, you would not harelip the universe to say it refers to a building. Why don't you just call you little argument a draw?

3. Should the apron be worn in lodge outside or beneath a coat?

Answer: Either way is OK, unless the Master has said it must be worn one way or another, in which case his order prevails. In either case, it must be clearly visible. REG. 95-05.

4. I have seen various designs of Past Masters' aprons; how do you know which is correct?

Answer: You don't. There is no apron of a Past Master provided for in CHAPTER 95, only a jewel.

5. I visited a lodge recently that had the three burning tapers lit during the whole of its stated communication. Wasn't this illegal?

Answer: No, it was perfectly legal. While REG. 51-10 (3) requires that they be lit during the First Degree, it leaves it optional whether they shall be lit at other times. I think it looks nice to have them lit whenever the Bible is open.

6. I know the law prohibits smoking during the conferral of a degree, but some lodges prohibit smoking in the lodge room at any time. Is this strictly legal?

Answer: Yes, sir. A lodge can adopt a "no smoking" by-law, as per REG. 49-15 (1), or it may simply decide by majority vote at a stated communication that it will not permit smoking, as per REG. 68-11. Of course, no lodge can adopt a by-law or a motion that is in conflict with Grand Lodge law, but since Grand Lodge law is silent on the subject of smoking (except for prohibiting it during degree work), the door is wide open for a lodge to adopt this prohibition in one form or another.

7. Is it illegal to bring firearms into a lodge meeting?

Answer: Yes. One of our Grand Masters, I believe it was Nelson B. Banks, ruled that this is illegal, and his ruling was upheld by the Grand Lodge at its following annual communication. Thus it has the effect of law until rescinded or overruled, or until a modification of the law renders it inoperative. SEC. 7-04.

8. Our Master always uses the title Worshipful Master after his signature. It seems I have heard this is improper. How about it?

Answer: Your recollection is in good order. REG. 64-05 says it is indeed improper for him to sign as Worshipful Master, he should sign as Master.

9. What is meant by clandestine lodge?

Answer: This is one that pretends to be Masonic, but has no warrant, dispensation or charter from a Grand Lodge recognized by our Grand Lodge. REG. 94-01.

10. Is it illegal to visit such a lodge?

Answer: You'd better believe it. Our law really looks askance at any such organization and its members, and a Mason can get himself into all sorts of trouble by having anything to do with such an organization or by holding Masonic intercourse with one of its members. Don't touch it or them with a ten foot pole. REG. 97-02 (3B) and others.

ACCORDING TO JIMROD

We present below this month's poetical offering from that distinguished Mason and philosopher, JIMROD Q. WAXPILLOW.



A great big chunk of plaster Fell down and hit the Master So the Senior Warden A guy named Gordon Moved up by way of disaster

- 136—Troy Crews Hodges
136—Len Gordon Clarke
137—Frank Plonk Heavner
137—Hunter Victor Rhyne
138—Marvin Armstrong Rivenbark
151—Charles Roy Dixon, Sr.
162—Carl Douglas Hauser
207—Harry Elwood Robinson
208—Roger Edward Howell
210—Robert Glenn Richardson
210—David Ernest Butler
210—Francis Arnold Brandon
210—Perian B. Fish
214—Ernest Melvin Swaim
218—Henry Huel Lassiter
218—Clyde Talmadge Carmichael
218—Charles S. Manooch, Sr.
230—Grosser Matheson Young
243—Lloyd James Chapman, Jr.
244—John Raymond Shute, Jr.
257—Arthur Leonard Wilkins
261—Joe Bunyan Pierce
261—Cecil Mason Foil
271—James Henry Hughes
272—Ralph Canipe Ray
276—Bivins Griffin Simpson
276—Cam Buck Comer
284—John Ansley Guy
289—Clarence Excell Gentle, Jr.
289—Lewis Kenneth Brewer
289—Joseph Howard Hicks
292—Charles Dedrick Bowman
293—Walter Samuel Compton
301—Claude Truitt Kitchens
301—Ronda James Ledford
304—William Graham Turner
317—Walter Townsend Kirby
339—Kelly McCarter
340—Charles Hayden Pender
344—Theodore Antonakas

Editorial

DON'T BE A STATISTIC

Most of our lodges have begun the new year minus some members who are still Masons, but who now bear the not so proud title of "nonaffiliated." These Masons were excluded from membership last year for nonpayment of dues. The status of an excluded Mason is the same as that of a nonaffiliated Mason. REG. 82-10 (1).

We are all familiar with the rights and benefits of a Master Mason.

A Master Mason has the right to attend his lodge and to participate in its activities. He can visit other lodges, attend Grand Lodge, hold Masonic office. A Master Mason is eligible to apply for admission to Masonic and Eastern Star Home, he can recommend a petitioner, and he is entitled to Masonic Burial. There are many other rights belonging to a Master Mason.

But not if he is an excluded (nonaffiliated) Mason. A nonaffiliated Mason has but one Masonic right, the right to apply for restoration to membership.

Think about that. Think about the years and the effort, and the expense, you have put into becoming and remaining a Mason in good standing. Do you wish to risk throwing all that away by becoming careless in the annual payment of your dues? Do you wish to risk the possibility that you may someday be cast into the depths of despair and not have Masonry as your strong and reliable support? Surely you do not wish to risk having your wife embarrassed some day by having to explain why you did not receive Masonic Burial, as did other Masons.

It may seem to be no big deal to be notified by the Secretary of your lodge that you have been excluded for nonpayment of dues. No big deal next November—perhaps. But will it continue to be no big deal ten or twenty years down the road, when you long for the fellowship in your lodge, the steady companionship of your brethren? Do you really wish to become one of those that have but one Masonic right, the right to apply for restoration to membership?

If you are thinking about dropping out of Masonry because it requires too much of your time, or because other pursuits are more attractive to you right now, or for any other reason, THINK about it! Think about the long term consequences.

Masonry does not require any of your time, except that which you obligate yourself for by accepting Masonic office or other responsibility. You can remain a Mason so long as you live, without ever darkening the door of a lodge, without ever lifting a finger in any Masonic cause, just so long as you pay your annual dues and keep your nose clean.

Many lodge seats are filled on meeting nights by Masons who stayed away from lodge and from Masonic doings for year after year, because they felt Masonry required too much of their time, or because there were other activities they deemed more important or enjoyed more. But they continued to pay their dues. They continued to be Master Masons in good standing. Each year they spent the small effort and time and money to mail a dues check to the Secretary.

Now they still have a right to attend lodge, and to bask in the fellowship of their brethren. Some have lost their mates and desperately need someone and something to fill the lonely nights. Some no longer enjoy the parties, or the ball games, or television, and now seek something with more substance to it in order to enrich their lives. Some have even become residents of Masonic and Eastern Star Home. Some are comforted by the knowledge that they have the right to receive Masonic Burial, as did their fathers, or their brothers, or their close friends. But all of them, you see, have retained their rights to these things because all through the years they have paid their annual dues. They did not become statistics, they remained Masons in good standing.

So don't YOU become a statistic. Don't become a nonaffiliated Mason. Don't wait for the Secretary to notify you that you are delinquent, but pay your dues now! And pay them every year. No matter how you may feel today about your Masonic membership, sooner or later, somewhere along the road, you are going to be happy and proud that you retained your Masonic membership—and pretty thankful, too.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Did you vote to exclude some members last November? If you did, are you certain in your heart and mind that each of them should have been excluded? Were you personally aware that none of them were experiencing financial hardship, that none of them had

been offended or hurt by something done or said to them by another Mason or Masons? Did you make any effort to retain any of the excluded members?

Our 394 lodges excluded 827 Masons in 1987 (the totals for 1988 are not yet official). Exclusion for nonpayment of dues was the second greatest form of loss in membership, exceeded only by deaths. We cannot reduce the deaths, however much we would wish to, and we cannot prevent all the exclusions, but we can prevent a substantial number of them.

The dues of a Mason in North Carolina are due and payable in advance on or before January 1 each year, and he is delinquent if he has not paid his dues for any year by or before March 1 of that year. The Secretary is required by law to mail a notice of delinquency by or before March 1 to each member then owing dues; he is not required to announce in lodge the names of those then delinquent, but no law says he cannot. So it could prove highly beneficial to all concerned if the Secretary should name those delinquent as of March 1, and if the Master should then appoint a member or members to personally investigate the cause of each delinquency, individually.

The appointment of Masons for this purpose should be undertaken with great care. Each delinquent member is sure to have one or more other members that are closer to him than any others, and it is one or more of these that should visit and discuss his delinquency with him, or write or telephone if he is out of the area. No Mason or other individual wishes to discuss his personal affairs with someone he scarcely knows, and it could do more harm than good if he is approached by someone in that category.

Most delinquencies result from simple procrastination, or carelessness, and these dues can often be collected by the Mason/s making the approach to the delinquent brother.

Other delinquencies result from financial hardship, and in most such instances the delinquent brother is embarrassed by it and unlikely to appeal to the lodge for a remission of dues. Such circumstances can be discreetly hinted at in lodge by the investigating brother/s and it is rare for a Mason ever to be excluded when such circumstances are brought to the attention of the lodge. Financial hardship may be a temporary or an enduring circumstance, and the lodge should keep itself posted accordingly.

Still other exclusions result from misunderstandings between Masons, causing one or more parties to the misunderstanding to decide to just get out of Masonry. Such situations are often unknown to the general membership, until there is investigation into a delinquency. Such cases can often be cleared up by wise counsel, although this is often a delicate situation prompting the investigating brother/s to seek the assistance of experienced, judicious Masons.

Some delinquencies come about by failures in mail service, by incorrect addresses, and other mechanical quirks. Most such delinquencies can be cleared up simply by locating the brother.

A small percentage of delinquencies are Masons that have, for one reason or another, decided that Masonry is not for them and who are not going to be swayed by any argument or appeal. There is nothing we can do about these—except try.

There are other causes for delinquency, but the fact is that we can substantially reduce these losses by the means just described, and some of our lodges prove it every year.

A large responsibility for delinquency rests with the Master.

As rewarding and as gratifying as it is to be the Master of a Masonic lodge, be assured that the brethren did not elect you Master simply to fulfill your personal desires and vanity; they expect you to lead the lodge in every phase of its activities. You are responsible for the whole ball of wax.

It is your duty as Master to have something each meeting that will interest the members, and it is your duty to involve each member in the work of the lodge—give each member something to do that is within his capabilities and is worthwhile.

If the Master is successful in accomplishing the above, he will have solved the problem of attendance. Solve the problem of attendance, and you automatically solve the problem of delinquency, for it is not the members attending the meetings that become delinquent.

Finally, do not wait until your first stated meeting in November to do something about delinquent members; start working on it when they officially become delinquent—in March. Reynold Davenport