

The North Carolina Mason

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From the Editor's Desk

Come To Grand Lodge

It's that time of year. Annual Communication is upon us. A couple of thousand Masons will soon descend on Raleigh and exercise their power over the direction of the Craft in our state.

If you've never been, it's about time you got yourself there for at least a day.

If ritual, pomp, and circumstance are your thing, Tuesday will be a good start for you. Lots of officials, many in fraternal uniform, will be announced and escorted. During the time that these distinguished visitors are being received, you'll see as many important Masons as you likely to see in any one spot. Several speeches are also on the menu for the day.

Between these sessions, or during if you

don't mind slipping out of the auditorium, there's plenty of fellowship to enjoy. It's a perfect time to make a new Masonic acquaintance or to run into an old, seldom seen friend.

If a good scrap is more to your liking, Wednesday morning is recommended. That's when the Brethren start discussing budgets and amendments. Luckily, these debates seldom follow a quiet or predetermined course. Some will make you celebrate your Masonry and others will be a sorely test of your ability to live by your Masonic obligations.

If you've never made it to the event, we urge you to come this year. It's never too early or too late for you to finally attend. Come and see that you have the power.

Come and enjoy your Masonry.

Should We Try A Developmental Director?

At the 1992 Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, a resolution was introduced to hire a developmental director to coordinate fundraising for the Masonic charities. The measure was defeated by a narrow margin.

Those who favor the concept will introduce a similar proposal at our 1993 meeting. The resolution is supported by many grand lodge officers, the boards and superintendents of the Masonic and Eastern Star Home and Oxford Orphanage.

Our current system of charity was studied by an analyst who lives outside the state and could not be a candidate for the job. He consulted with Masons around the state and examined the problems peculiar to our needs. His recommendations have played a great part in defining this resolution. He says, for the techniques we use, we're doing a good job.

Recent shortfalls at the Orphanage and Home, however, require that we do better. He, and the other supporters of the resolution, think that with a more professional approach, we can do better. After all, only 20% of Masons currently contribute anything to our state charities.

What does a full-time professional offer? Perhaps most important is a continuity of leadership. He should help maintain focus over a period of time. We could avoid the swings in programs that come with annual changes of grand lodge leadership. Needs of the Foundation, Home, and Orphanage could be coordinated over a long period of time.

The intention is not that he take over the function of the charity committees of the blue lodges. Rather, he would be expected to spend most of his time on the road visiting you.

He would be expected to educate Masons on the specific needs of the charities and show you how the institutions are currently using your support. His visits would not be to tell you how much money to raise next year, but to consult with your committees and teach them how to be more effective at the job.

More help would come from his production of more efficient fund raising materials. Instead of Xeroxing that same old begging letter you used last year, modern, more capable pamphlets would be available. Formats could be altered to fit the needs of your situation. Advice on their best use would be available.

"Planned giving" is a method we've seldom cultivated. By taking advantage of proper tax and accounting procedures, a professional coordinator could assist individuals capable of giving large amounts. Bequests, charitable remainders, and other long-term development techniques can be to the financial advantage of the donor and his heirs. Proper use of these takes a trained advisor.

When will we see results?

Big results take time. Our consultant says a good director should increase giving enough within two or three years to pay for the program. One could expect to see good results within three years. By the time five years of the development have passed, he thinks the payoff would be great enough that no one would argue against the program.

What will it cost us?

Nothing. The boards of the Foundation, Home, and Orphanage are confident enough in the possibilities of the right man doing the job, they will be paying the cost of operating the program. The costs will not be passed along in terms of per capita increases.

During the War of 1812, when it seemed that New York itself might be stormed by the British, Grand Master DeWitt Clinton called the Craft together through an emergent meeting of the Grand Lodge. On September 1,

1814, New York Masons gave one day's work constructing the redoubts of Fort Green in Brooklyn. These redoubts were later named "Fort Masonic."

— *The Wisconsin Masonic Journal*.

The Better Read Mason

John Robinson:

A New Mason, A New Book

If you read a lot about Masonry, you may have noticed that, these days, you come across John J. Robinson's name more often than King Solomon's.

He burst on the Masonic scene with the 1989 publication of *Born in Blood* (One day, we plan to actually review that volume in this column.) in which he exposed much of the ritual of Freemasonry. He did so to explain his contention that Freemasonry sprang from the Knights Templar after they were banished to secrecy by the politics of the church.

Robinson began speaking to Masonic groups around the country as well as appearing on talk shows as a defender of the Craft in the face of religious fundamentalists. His cigarette smoke-haloed face became a fixture at large Masonic gatherings. By now he has probably spoken to more Masons than any man ever. This is especially striking for a man who isn't a Mason.

John Robinson has now become a Freemason and quit smoking.

Robinson took his entered apprentice degree two days before Thanksgiving. Two days after Thanksgiving he passed out and didn't wake up until three and a half weeks later. He was suffering septicemia (an infection of the blood) and the effects of a stroke. He was pronounced terminal by his doctors.

In Virginia, Allen Roberts, prominent Masonic author, heard of the situation. He called Ray Evans, Ohio grand master, with a plan.

Robinson was in Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, directly across the street from the new Shrine Burn Center. On December 3, a quick meeting was called in the board room at the Shrine hospital. The Grand Master left the meeting, crossed the street to Robinson's side in the intensive care unit and conferred on him the Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees. Evans told him, "I'm going to get you before the Grand Master in the sky does."

Since his sudden illness, Robinson has made great and unexpected progress. He had surgery to repair an aneurysm. During a complete CAT scan, lung cancer was found.

John spent the last week of January at home, sent there with strict injunction to gain 12 pounds before surgery. No spread of the disease has been found.

He had surgery on February 2. According to Mrs. Robinson, the surgery went well and her husband was expected home by mid-February.

We hope that this means he'll soon return to the service of Masonry. He made a start on a new effort before his sudden illness.

Frustrated by the lack of a unified voice and no available spokesmen for Freemasonry, John Robinson and Masonic acquaintances came up with the idea of the Center for Masonic Education. The big question was how to fund it.

Ever willing to step to the fore when it came to the defense of Freemasonry, Robinson once again volunteered. He would share his vision of Masonry in a new book. He would also share the rewards from the sale of that book. He sent the last draft of the work to his publisher just days before his illness.

A Pilgrim's Path, One Man's Journey to the Masonic Temple is Robinson's personal story of his trip from stumbling inadvertently into Masonry while researching a book on medieval history to his becoming the leading spokesman for and to Freemasonry in this country.

In the book, Robinson debunks the deceptions of Masonry's major critics. His analysis arms you with the defense you need in the face of attacks from religious zealots.

Now is your chance to educate yourself and help educate others at the same time. Until June 1, the publisher and author will make a \$5 donation to the Center for Masonic Education for each copy of *A Pilgrim's Path* sold.

The Center has been set up within the Masonic Service Association. It will answer attacks of anti-Masons. Among other projects, they will contact Southern Baptist leaders and members through direct mailing as well as the mass media with our story. They plan to be a presence at the Southern Baptist Convention in June. Every blue lodge in the country is to receive a copy of the February issue of *The Scottish Rite Journal*, a special edition addressing exclusively the topic of "Freemasonry and Religion."

Copies of Robinson's latest book are \$11.95 each, postage and handling included. You may get your copy by sending your check or money order made out to M. Evans & Co., Inc. to:

Department M
M. Evans & Co.
216 East 49th Street
New York, NY 10017-1502.

AMENDMENTS From Page 1

public and the families of the deceased Brother. This makes it important that we have a large attendance.

Supporters point out that many young Masons must take lunch hour to participate. This time restraint often requires the young man to choose which to attend — the lodge opening or the graveside service. They think the change will allow us to get more Masons to the graveside as we "adjust to the times and today's situation."

Lodges whose circumstances are different would be free to continue in their traditional form. Each lodge would make its own decision if the amendment passes.

Initiation Fees: The current minimum initiation fee for conferral of the degrees was set at \$50 in 1970. A proposed change to the Code would raise that to \$150. Those who advocate the increase think that we make our degrees seem less important by selling them so much more cheaply than some of our appendant bodies. Some who supply souvenirs of the occasion (*Bibles*, *Claudy books*, *Bahnson's*, et al.) or have to pay fees to a temple committee have even found that they lose money when they confer a degree. For example, Forsyth Lodge found that they were spending more than \$300 on each new member while collecting a fee of only \$75 from the candidate. Shared jurisdictions must all use the same fees.

Jurisdictional Restraints: We will choose whether or not to do away with jurisdictional restraints on petitions. Currently men living within the regional jurisdiction of one lodge

must get permission from that lodge and the Grand Lodge before their application to another lodge may be considered. The change, if adopted, would make the only territorial requirement a one year residency in North Carolina.

Miscellaneous: Another revision to be considered in April would allow a past district deputy grand lecturer to serve as district deputy grand master. Currently a district deputy grand master must be a master or past master of a blue lodge.

An amendment we will consider would require the grand secretary and the grand treasurer to attend all meetings of the finance committee.

There is also a resolution expected. It is discussed elsewhere on this page of *The Mason*.

ACCORDING TO JIMROD

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



JIMROD Q. WAXPILLOW

There once was a Mason named Trent
Who walked in some wet cement
Stepping from the goo
He lost his left shoe
And this changed the way that Trent went.