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THE BEACON

The monthly Trestleboard of Union Lodge #3, A.F. & A.M

February 2017

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Tidings From the East

Greetings from the East, Craftsmen! As we're heading away from the Winter Solstice and the darkest time of the year, I'm

looking toward the months ahead and I think you'll all be quite surprised at how much is going on at Union Lodge. Below, you'll find a list of the speakers and activities to help give you an idea of what's ahead and to help you plan accordingly. The events which are not during our stated communications are noted along with their dates.

Even though the Lodge will be dark in July and August, we've got five presentations lined up in addition to the Grand Lodge visit in March, the District Deputy visit in April, a School Outreach Program fundraiser in May, and a work day with Habitat For Humanity on Saturday, June 10th.

Speaking of Lodge activities, please note that our annual Sweetheart's Dinner will take place on Sunday, February 12th at 6:00 PM at the Union Lodge building. The cost is \$10 for the men and ladies eat free. The dress code is nice but casual. RSVPs are always appreciated, so please contact WB Rod Brown Jr. if you are interested in attending:
BrownieBatchDad@gmail.com

We are also looking into ways to make the Lodge library more accessible to our members. We will be setting aside a portion of our books so that they will be available for check-out. There will be two sheets of paper in the library – one list for indicating which book you've checked out and one list for people who are waiting for a book to become available for checkout. Books which are rare, old, or historical

will not be part of the check-out program due to the difficulty we would have with replacing them.

We hope that this new approach to our library will make it easier for all of us to conduct Masonic research and expand our knowledge. I will be donating a copy of Albert Pike's Esoterika book to our library to be included among the books which are available for checkout. Esoterika is a wonderful book on Blue Lodge Masonry and I hope that you will check it out if you don't already have a copy of your own. It will be a bit of work getting our library organized, so if you would like to help with the transition process, please let me know.

I would like to give a hearty thanks to all of the Brothers who have stepped up to help run the Budget Planning and Auditing committees in particular. These committees are essential to the health and future of the Lodge and I greatly appreciate your time and diligence on these matters.

Fraternally,
WB Matthew Gerbrandt

2017 Union Lodge Calendar of Events

February: Sunday, February 12- Sweetheart's Dinner
March: Grand Lodge Visitation and Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner
April : District Deputy RWB Steve Vanderzanden visitation
May: Presentation - WB Thomas Pierce, The Craft's Philosophical Underpinnings

Saturday, May 20th - Open House/Pancake fundraiser for School Outreach Program

June: Presentation - DeMolay Capitol Chapter - visit and degree
 June 1 & 2 - Grand Lodge in Bend
 Saturday, June 10th - Lodge work day with Habitat for Humanity

July: Dark
August: Dark
September: Presentation - WB Johnny Edwards, Grand Lodge Library and Museum
October: Presentation – Bro. Scott Rasbach
November: Voting on Lodge Officers for 2018
December: Presentation - WB Larry Roberts, Alchemy in Freemasonry

finally in the end a better man because of their journey.

I am only one Freemason.

I am a Freemason who has never been satisfied with what I consider “the basics of Freemasonry”.

I am neither a scholar nor a credited historian. I am not educated on any level other than the college of hard knocks for which I hold an advanced degree. What I am though is a Brother who has freedom of thought and I believe I have been enlightened by my personal path of seeking knowledge that is readily available to the average Freemason. From my interactions of my senior Brothers of the Craft and my personal research of “further light” I have created in my mind what I think Ancient Craft Freemasonry is all about and how we should apply it to our lives.

Of course this does not in any way make me right but it works for me.

It is in my humble opinion that some (many) Brothers do themselves and the people that surround them a disservice by not seeking “further light” within Freemasonry.

At a bare minimum if we as Freemason’s listen to the lessons of the Tools of each degree and how to apply them to our lives, the Obligations we as Brothers took west of the altar and the individual lessons of the multitude of symbolic items placed throughout a Masonic Lodge and their meanings I believe there would never be a single Brother that would ever stray away from the correct path provided by our honorable Craft.

I will use the P W T C located in all well-furnished lodge halls as an example.

Part II Next Month

Fraternally,
 Johnny Edwards
 Senior Warden



Tidings From the West

Freemasonry Through One Brother’s Eyes
 Part I

I believe it is fair to say that not all Brothers of the Ancient Craft look upon Freemasonry the

same way.

We all go through the same 3 Degrees of Freemasonry and listen in the best way we can during the Ritual and Lectures.

We are taught by our Coaches and Mentors the meaning of the Ritual and how to apply it to our lives.

This is where many Freemasons end their lessons. They end these lessons because they assume that they have reached the end of what there is to know about the Craft, because there is nothing more to learn. Or the Coaches and Mentors believe that their jobs are complete at the end of the last line of memorization of the 3rd Degree Candidates Lecture.

Both of these examples are very wrong.

Very few Freemason’s pursue “Further Light” that is available through many sources old and new. These sources are vast. Even a hungry reader could never read all of these books, magazines, papers and other media.

For many Brothers of Masonry the lessons of the 3 Degrees are enough for them and they hopefully will become an active member in their lodge and



Tidings From the South

Some time back, I was talking with a small group of Brothers after Lodge. One of them, a past Grand Master, smiled kindly and excused himself as he had a long drive home. That Brother has always been a bit

of an inspiration for me, for he is almost always upbeat and happy—no matter the challenges or the setbacks he might face. As he walked away, another Brother said “There goes one of the best of us.”

One of the things that makes us Masons is that we tend to feel compelled to make ourselves better men. We study the lessons of the Working Tools, and try to apply them to our lives. Sometimes we fail. Hopefully, with persistence, we more often succeed in improving ourselves day-by-day. But for some (I’ll raise my hand here) that sense of happiness and *contentment* that the past Grand Master displayed remains elusive. It’s a bit of emotional intelligence that can be a challenge. How do you help yourself to be more centered, and consequently happier?

As Masons, we straddle two very different realms. We study and practice an ancient craft, yet walk and work in a modern world. The lessons of Masonry help to guide us, but it turns out that modern science can lend a hand as well. I recently read an article on neuroscience, summarizing research on what practices actually help people to become and stay happy, and which do not. Some of the results are fascinating and well worth sharing.

One result that stood forth was that pride, shame and guilt all tend to activate the reward centers in the brain. Even worrying about something did so, as the brain interpreted it as doing something about the problem. But worrying about something, or feeling shame and guilt, is terrible for long-term happiness. Asking yourself what you are grateful for, on the other hand, boosts both serotonin and dopamine production.

Trite as it might sound, focusing on what you are grateful for eased the impact of negative things and stimulated the brain’s reward centers. Interestingly, the very act of looking is what had the effect. Even if there was nothing to be grateful for, simply focusing on the question made people feel better. In social situations, expressing your gratitude towards others helped set up a feedback loop and increased the benefit. I know it’s an old saying, but it turns out that counting your blessings is actually backed by hard science.

Trying to suppress negative emotions, as many people do, turns out to be a bad idea. It not only failed to make people feel better, it can actually increase the impact that negative emotions engender. A less intuitive approach that was effective

was to simply assign a label to how you felt. If a person was feeling terrible and down in the dumps, simply thinking about their feelings and putting them into words moved the brain activity more to the prefrontal cortex and away from the amygdala—which is to say, it lessened the impact of the emotions. An easy trick to remember when you’re feeling down.

Ever feel overwhelmed by a situation because you can’t find the perfect solution? Making the best decision can be hard—and, it turns out, counter-productive. Making decisions (either by setting goals or making intentions) engages the prefrontal cortex and reduces worry and anxiety. But trying to be perfect created more activity in the brain areas that are active when we feel overwhelmed. Making a decision that was “good enough”, on the other hand, activated areas that help people feel more in control. Ever hear a Brother say “Don’t sweat the small stuff”? According to neuroscience, that’s wisdom talking.

One interesting result of the research that has been done is that *how* you think about something you need to do can have a huge effect on whether the activity is rewarding or punishing. Thinking of an activity as something you *have* to do (like exercising) leads to stress, whereas thinking of the same activity as something that you are *choosing* to do leads to a pleasure boost from being decisive and in control. Same activity, just a different mindset when approaching it.

Have you noticed that in some Lodges the Brothers will nod and greet each other when meeting, whilst in other Lodges the Brothers will actually hug one another? Turns out that the Brothers who hug are onto something. Research has shown that touch is incredibly powerful in helping us to feel centered and happy. Touch increases persuasiveness, team performance, and even boosts math skills. It reduces stress and increases feelings of belonging, which lessens the impact of stressful situations or negative stimuli. In one study, one member of a couple was subjected to a shock, with one group of the couples holding hands. The simple act of holding hands actually decreased the perceived pain of the stimulus, with the effect being most pronounced in couples with the strongest relationships.

Even reaching out by communicating with someone we care about can increase positive emotions and decrease negative ones. But interestingly enough,

the effect only occurs when we actually *talk* with the people we care about. Test subjects who texted or used e-mail had no more positive reaction than those who had no support at all. So the next time you're feeling down, give your thumbs a rest and go Old School...call someone special to you and talk to them. Texting and e-mail simply won't give you the same support and reassurance as hearing their voice.

As we walk through our lives we all deal with challenges and circumstances that have the ability to make us feel either more overwhelmed or more accomplished. Our fellowship and Masonic teachings give us tools which can help us in our quest to become better, and consequently happier, men. I hope that some of these musings might give you a few extra tools to help you on that path. As the past Grand Master demonstrated, a positive mindset can be a wondrous thing.

Walk in Light, my Brothers.

Fraternally,
John Porter
Junior Warden



From the Secretary's Desk

"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?" - Percy Bysshe Shelley

Welcome to February!

This is a busy part of the year. January kicks off a new Master's year with a new agenda, new energy, new officers, committee appointments, closing out the old year and looking ahead. It's hard to believe that we'll shortly have 1/6th of the year's Stated Communications already under our belt – so much to do and so little time.

Before the year gets away from you, may sure that dues are paid.

Coming up in a couple weeks is the Sweetheart's Dinner – details elsewhere in the Beacon. Be sure to come if you can, bring your lady, and invite any widow's that you know. Wives whose husbands can't make it for work or other reasons are also invited – the more the merrier. WB Rod Brown (the younger) will be cooking again and it will be a good time had by all to celebrate Valentine's Day and all the support that we get from our "better halves"

and "significant others." You are important to us and to the Lodge. Ladies dine free and gentlemen pay \$10.

On the subject of widow's – we're trying to actively rebuild our widow's list and keep it current. I'll have a copy out for the Sweetheart's Dinner so that we can check it and make sure that we have as many accounted for as possible. If you'd like to check on someone specifically, send me a note and I'll look them up.

In March will be Corned Beef and Cabbage again – an official visit from the Grand Master and many of his Grand Line, if history holds. A similar menu from previous years – corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, soda bread, "Spotted Dog", and rolls. I'll probably make another soup and salad for vegetarian fare. Spice cake to follow for dessert. Come if you can make it to that, too. Donations are gratefully accepted. Remember – dinner starts at 6:00 pm to accommodate the additional Brethren and allow for getting clothed and signed in for Lodge.

Because March is such a big month at the Stated, the Trustees have requested two (that would be 2) work days at Lodge to help prepare. We'll be hanging pictures to get the foyer and entry hall decked out properly for the Grand Master's visit and doing a general "field day" on the Lodge floor. If you are available, please let me know by calling or sending email to the Lodge. We're tentatively scheduling Feb 18th and March 4th, probably half-days (8am to noon.) I'll have coffee and doughnuts set up and maybe we can swing out for lunch to close out the day(s.)

Starting in late March, we'll be starting to turn our attention to the cemeteries. I'll be asking for more volunteers at that time – there will be a lot of clean-up and mowing to do to get ready for Memorial Day which will be right around the corner. Watch this space.

Fraternally,
Frank Blair
Secretary



Some Thoughts from WB Johnny Edwards

Here are some links to websites and podcasts that may well be of interest to you.

Click on the links below and enjoy.

<https://www.thewindingstairs.com/>

www.thewindingstairs.com/freemasonry-podcast/

<https://scottishrite.org/about/media-publications/tylers-place/>

www.blogtalkradio.com/masonic-central

www.masonicpodcast.com/

www.themasonictrowel.com/masonic_podcast.htm

www.wcypodcast.com/

www.themasonicroundtable.com/



Union Lodge Sweethearts Dinner

When: Sunday, February 12, 2017, at 6:00 pm

Where: The dining room of the Lodge

How Much?: Brothers and other gentlemen - \$10.00 - Ladies enjoy the meal without charge

Again, WB Rod Brown, Jr. will prepare a wonderful dinner of:

Chicken Cordon-Bleu
Broccoli with Rod's special dressing
Salad
Dessert
Coffee, milk, water

This year we are making a special effort to have as many of our Masonic widows attend as possible. If you know of a lady who needs a ride, please offer her a lift or call the number below and we will arrange transportation.

Please RSVP no later than February 8. Email to WB Rod at browniebatchdad@gmail.com or call him and leave a message at 503-560-1719.

January/February 2017 Calendar

Jan 31 - Officers Meeting 7:30 pm

Feb 1 - Rickreall # 110 - Stated 7:30 pm

Feb 2 - Newberg # 104 - Stated 7:30 pm

Feb 4 - Tuality # 7 - Stated 10:00 am

Feb 7 - Union # 3 - Stated 7:30 pm

Feb 7 - Holbrook # 30 - Stated 7:30 pm

Feb 8 - Sheridan-Dayton # 64 - Stated 7:00 pm

Feb 12 - **Sweethearts Dinner - see left column**

Feb 28 - Union # 3 Officers meeting 7:30 pm

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING MINUTES OF LODGE COMMUNICATIONS

To speed up our Stated and Special Communications, and to provide all brothers with the opportunity to review the minutes of the previous month's meeting(s) before the next meeting, WB Blair has made them available on the Union Lodge website. To have access to these documents you will need to obtain a password from WB Frank. Email him at unionlodge@onlinenw.com and he will contact you with the password.

After you receive the password, please do the following:

1. On the menu bar on any page of the Lodge website, click on "Meeting Minutes."
2. Click on the red & white button labeled "Meeting Minutes."
3. In the Login box on the left side of the page, click on "Sign up."
4. You will be asked for your email address, a screen name (your name for example), the password provided by WB Frank, your location and your date of birth. NOTE: The date must be entered in dd/mm/yyyy format, or simply select the month, year and date from the calendar display.
5. Click the "Agree" box and then click "Submit."

You will receive an email from "server@serifwebresources.com" that contains a link to click to activate your account.

From then on you can view the minutes by simply logging in with you email address or screen name along with the magic password.

The Brothers of Union Lodge are encouraged to submit articles for the The Beacon. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word documents. Please email your articles to Tom Gardner at gardner_t@onlinenw.com by the 15th of the month for inclusion in the following month's edition of The Beacon.

Be sure to keep up with Lodge activities between editions of the Beacon by checking our website <http://www.unionlodge3.com>

or



Visit Union Lodge # 3 on Facebook and be sure to Like us.



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FRANK BLAIR, SECRETARY (503) 858-5445**