

DISTRICT NEWS & EVENTS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! EMAIL SUBMISSIONS FOR THE FALL ISSUE OF THE MASONIC MESSENGER BY SEPTEMBER 1ST.

If your Lodge has any events or news to share, contact Parker Moore (pdmoore1@gmail.com) with details. Check out the Grand Lodge Facebook page for more news and events at www.facebook.com/GLofAL. We will update the page as often as possible. Get involved today! Submit to the Masonic Messenger and the Grand Lodge Facebook page!!

WE WANT YOU TO "LIGHT IT UP BLUE" FOR AUTISM AWARENESS

BY BRO. PARKER MOORE

2016 Light It Up Blue for Autism Awareness is just around the corner. Last year, Alabama had dozens of lodges participate and this year we want to encourage everyone to participate. The Grand Lodge Facebook page is sponsoring "light it up blue" for Autism awareness and we are asking every lodge to 'light it up blue' to help raise money and awareness. For more information visit the Grand Lodge Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/GLofAL

You can also find more information and register your lodge on the Autism Speaks website at:

www.autismspeaks.org/liub/what-liub

If your lodge participates, be sure to take a picture and post it on the Grand Lodge Facebook page. World Autism Awareness Day is April 2nd.

SONORA LODGE #635 SPONSORS CHILD ID



Mobile and Baldwin County Masons and ladies of the Eastern Star during the CHIP ID at Summerdale Elementary (AL).

Several Masons from Mobile area lodges and ladies from the Eastern Star teamed up with members of Sonora Masonic Lodge No. 635 in Summerdale recently to sponsor a Child Identification Program (CHIP) Event at Summerdale Elementary School's Fall Festival. Lodge members also donated hot dogs for the school's PTA to sell during the festival in order to raise funds for school projects. According to CHIP Group 5 Coordinator Mike Griffon, there were 32 Child ID kits provided to parents during the event.

"Taking Care of Our Own" Masonic Social Services Program
Financial assistance is available to our Brethren and Widows who are in need!!! Contact the Grand Lodge for more information or visit the website to download program details: alafreemasonry.org/committees/coprog

ALABAMA'S FIRST OBSERVANT LODGE OPENS IN HUNTSVILLE

The newly formed Renaissance Lodge #933 received its' dispensation on March 9th. MW Grand Master Greg Durr attended the opening of



the new lodge. Van Tidwell, JGW, Grand Secretary Teddy Grogan, PGM and Larry Hancock, PGM were in attendance as well.

Renaissance Lodge is Alabama's first new lodge to be formed since Lillian Lodge in 1987 and it is Alabama's first Observant Lodge.

Meetings will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at Helion Lodge #1 in Huntsville.

Greg Durr, MWGM and Grand Lodge Officers with the members of Renaissance Lodge #933

THE GENERAL GRAND COUNCIL OF CRYPTIC MASONS INTERNATIONAL RONALD L. THOMAS RITUAL AWARD

BY BRO. MIKE FELD



Left: Ronald L. Thomas, Right: Ritual Award Jewel

During the 2014 - 2015 Masonic year, our Senior Grand Warden RW Ron Thomas also served as the Most Illustrious Grand Master of Royal and Select Masters of the Grand Council of Alabama.

To encourage memorization and impressive performance in the ritual, he commissioned me to develop a Ritual Award program similar to the one offered by the General Grand Chapter.

With the assistance of Brother George Marshall and Smokey Ferguson, we developed a ritual award program that was adopted by the Grand Council of Alabama at its 2015 session. The Grand Recorder, David Grendle, then took the Alabama program

to the General Grand Council for review and at our 2016 Grand York Rite session, the Grand Council of Alabama voted unanimously to allow the General Grand Council to adopt, with some modification, Alabama's ritual award program. In memorial of RW Brother Ron, it will be known as the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International Ronald L. Thomas Ritual Award.

This is a powerful tribute to RW Brother Thomas's legacy that Masons around the world know his name and perhaps learn of his virtues, his example, and his leadership within Alabama.

Let us imitate the example of Brother Ron Thomas in making Alabama an example of Masonic discipline and virtue to the world!

On Saturday, February 27, 2016, the Grand Council of Alabama approved the request of the General Grand Council to assume the responsibility of administering a Ritualist Award for the Royal Master, Select Master, and Super Excellent Master Degrees.

- General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sawyer Lodge #93

11th Annual Buddy Bass Tournament

Saturday, April 2nd - 7:00 AM - Wedowee, AL, Lake Harris (Hwy 48 Boat Ramp)

Contact: Robert Richards (256) 357-2929

Mobile Lodge #40

Fort Gaines Outdoor Degree Conferral

Saturday, April 23rd - Dauphin Island, AL

Contact: Eric R. Snellgrove (678) 982-5306

Rising Sun Lodge #29

5th Annual Hooked on Decatur Team Bass Fishing Tournament

Saturday, April 16th - First Light Brickyard Landing, Decatur, AL

Contact: Paul Lamont (256) 353-5491

Post upcoming events on the Grand Lodge of Alabama Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/GLofAL

THE MASONIC MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF ALABAMA



GRAND MASTER'S REMARKS

BY GREG DURR, MWGM

First, I want to thank the good brothers of Alabama for honoring me with the high and distinguished privilege of serving this great institution. As I think about how fast the past three years have gone by, it makes me consider where our fraternity will be in the next ten years. With this in mind, I want you to know that the Grand Lodge is working for you!

We are still working on the insurance plan to provide insurance to all the lodges that choose this program, and to provide insurance for smaller lodges that cannot afford insurance. I signed an agreement with American Income Life that will provide a \$2,000 accidental death and dismemberment policy for each member, at no cost to the Grand Lodge. You will receive a letter in a few days which will explain the new policy in detail. American Income Life also provides supplemental insurance, so you will receive a contact card with the letter as well. If you want to be contacted by one of their representatives, just fill out the card and mail it in. Regardless, you will still be covered under the new policy just for

being a Mason in good standing. Also brothers, after the first quarter our investments are not doing as well as we would like. In an effort to offset the shortage, I am writing a proposal to take the \$3.00 of the \$8.00 per capita allotted to the Masonic Home Endowment and put it in the general fund. This will be at no extra cost to the members and will not burden the Masonic Home Endowment fund, which is currently caring for only 4 members. The revenue generated by the purchase of the Masonic tags has funded the Masonic Home, and will continue to do so. On that note, I would like to encourage you to purchase our newly designed Masonic tag and help us support the Masonic Home Endowment fund. \$42.00 of the \$50.00 purchase cost of the tag goes to the Masonic Home Endowment fund.

Brethren, to say we have been busy is an understatement but I have enjoyed it and I look forward to a good year as I start my visits to the different group conferences and lodges across the state. Brethren, I thank each and every one of you for what you do for Masonry. Keep up the good work and let the world know what we are about!

Show your Masonic pride and purchase a tag at your next renewal date. NEW MASONIC TAGS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!!!



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MILLBROOK, AL 36054

P.O. Box 1070

GRAND LODGE OF F. & A. M. OF ALABAMA



MASONIC LIFE TODAY

BY VAN KEVIN TIDWELL, JGW

Brethren, as I look at my life as a Man and a Mason, I ask myself, “What have I done today?” I ask each of you to ask yourself the same question as you are reading this.

I believe that a lot of the problems within Masonry are directly related to the word ‘today.’ I believe we take ‘today’ for granted and rely on tomorrow. I believe that we think, “Why do today, what we can put off till tomorrow.” Brethren, this is the exact ‘mind set’ our fraternity does not need. We need to grow the fraternity today to insure its existence for a possible tomorrow.

Brethren, the ‘mind set’ I am talking about is, there is no guarantee for tomorrow, much less, the next hour! The book of Matthew 25:13 says, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” Also, Luke 12:40 says, “Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” Brethren, to apply this to our everyday lives as men and masons, there is no tomorrow. Today is the first day and only day we should be worried about in our growth as human beings and our growth of the fraternity!

I recently read a poem that was published by the Masonic Service association titled “Trestleboard Tidbits,” that I would like to share with you:

*The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just where the hands will stop
At late or early hour.*

*Now is the only time you own;
Live, love, toil with a will,
Place no faith in tomorrow,
For the clock may then be still.*

Brethren, this speaks volumes to me about the meaning of ‘today’. I hope I can start thinking from this day forth, how am I going to make my mark as a human being ‘today.’ If we apply this ‘mind set’ that today is the beginning and the end of Masonry, I believe that our fraternity will grow, prosper, and have an inspiring image in our communities. To make our fraternity achieve this, all masons must see today with the eyes of tomorrow. I recently read a tidbit that best describes our progress in masonry’s growth. “Behold the turtle: He makes progress only when he sticks his head out.” Brethren, today is the day we need to stick our heads out, push our great fraternity in a growing direction, and be most proud to let everyone know that, “I am a Mason!”

Finally brethren, be proactive today, not reactive tomorrow. Learn from the past, live in the present, and prepare for the future. Today is that day! Let us live, love and grow together as Masons.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND SECRETARY

BY TEDDY GROGAN, PGM

Brethren, first I want to give you an update on the insurance proposal. We have only received 213 out of 285 responses from the Lodges. We really need everyone to respond if you want to participate or not. Until we get more information from the Lodges we have not heard from, I am afraid we are at a standstill.

I want to take this opportunity to remind you of the Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS) requirement that each lodge file Form 990-N or e-Postcard. Any lodge failing to file for three consecutive years will lose its tax exempt status. Filing electronically is easy. You will need your EIN number. If you do not know what it is, you can contact us here at Grand Lodge. We have the number for each lodge in the state. Do not get your own.

To file, go to the IRS web-site. Click on “Filing”. Then click on “Charities & Non-Profits”. Click on “e-file for Charities and Non-Profits”. Find and click on “e-Postcard (Form 990-N)”. Find and click on “How to File use this link”. You will then be directed to the Urban Institute web-site which handles the e-Postcard filings for the IRS. This web-site was recently hacked, so you will need to change your password before entering this site. If you do not have a password, you can register as a new user. Once there, you will only need to answer a couple of questions and you will be finished.

You have four and a half months from the end of the fiscal year to file this report. Our fiscal year ends September 30th, so you have until February

15th of the next year to file. There is no penalty for filing late. However, if you lose your tax exempt status, the fee for getting it back is \$400.00 if your net assets are less than \$250,000 which includes your building. If your net assets are more than \$250,000, the fee is \$850.00. We have lodges in the state that have faced this situation, so please keep your e-Postcard current.

The second thing I want to remind you about is that it will soon be time for your lodge’s Annual Communication. The Masonic Code states that officers will be elected at the regular communication immediately preceding June 24th, and be installed as soon as practicable after the election, but in no case longer than 45 days after the election. Also at this communication, you will vote on four proposed Constitution changes. We will send the proposed changes to you sometime around the end of April. Each lodge must file all annual reports with Grand Lodge no later than August 14th. A complete list of the reports may be found in Article 6-Section 21 of the Constitution and report dates in Edict 8.13 of the Alabama Masonic Code.

There are five things we will need:

- 1) Your Master and Secretary (short form).
- 2) Lodge officers (long form).
- 3) Your vote on the proposed changes to the Constitution.
- 4) The Annual Report.
- 5) Grand Lodge dues.

Please remember to send these reports in on time.

A COMMENTARY ON THE PSALM 33

BY REV. RICHARD R. LOSCH, 33°

This beautiful psalm is traditionally attributed to King David. However, its style and language leave little doubt that it was written some five centuries after David’s time, when the faithful remnant returned to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylonia. It is one of the six “wisdom” psalms, 1, 49, 73, 113 127 and 133. These psalms were part of a body of Hebrew literature and poetry designed to teach moral principals to groups of pilgrims to the holy

EA° PSALM

Temple at Jerusalem. It is a particularly appropriate way to introduce the initiation of those who are beginning their pilgrimage to light in Masonry.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Pilgrims to the Temple in Jerusalem came from all walks of life. Ancient Israelite society was strictly stratified and class-conscious, and it was rare for one class to have social intercourse with

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To stay up to date on all the Grand Lodge and District news, please send all changes of address and membership status to your Lodge Secretary and become an E-M@son, just visit: www.alafreemasonry.org/emasons



A MASONIC TOUR OF NEW ENGLAND

BY K.A. CARPENTER, PM, HELION LODGE #1

In the summer of 2015, my wife and I toured New England. While revisiting colonial ancestral sites, I took the opportunity to research and visit several historic Masonic sites as well that may be of interest to the Messenger readers.

In New London, Connecticut, (home of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy), I found that the city hall and post office are located on Masonic and Union streets. This was the site of the Freemasons Hall of Union Lodge No. 31, erected in 1799. This Lodge was established in 1753, as Union Lodge No. 1 (Grand Lodge of Massachusetts Bay Colony). No records exist of this historic Lodge, as all of New London was burned (1781) during the Revolution by then, British Gen. Benedict Arnold of Hiram Lodge No. 1 of New Haven. It was reestablished by the Grand Lodge of Connecticut as Union Lodge No. 31 (now of nearby Niantic, Ct.).

In Boston, one of my key goals was to refresh myself at the Green Dragon Tavern. The original tavern was the Masonic temple of St. Andrews Lodge (founded 1756, chartered 1760, Grand Lodge of Scotland) whose members included famed silversmith, Bro. Paul Revere (Grand Master of Mass. 1795-1797), Maj. Gen. Dr. Bro. Joseph Warren (appointed by the Grand Master of Masons in Scotland as the Provincial Grand Master of Masons in Boston. 1769, and Grand Master of Masons for the Continent of America 1772, the heroic revolutionary leader, killed at “Bunker Hill”), and Bro. John Hancock (1766 membership). It was the organizational site of the Sons of Liberty’s Boston Tea Party, the Committee of Correspondence, and the Boston Caucus. The Lodge maintained it as a tavern, called the Mason’s Arms in the 1770s. It is said that the British plan to raid Concord was overheard here; and Bro. Revere left here prior to his ride to Lexington. Bro. William Dawes took an alternated route, making it to Lexington and Concord, while Revere was captured upon leaving Lexington. The original building was demolished in 1854. The exact site is undetermined due to urban renewal at that

time. The current Green Dragon would have been located in that neighborhood near the narrow and short Marshall St. and a short distance from Revere’s house.

We are indeed fortunate that the Revere house (1770-1800) has been preserved. It was purchased by his great-grandson J. P. Reynolds Jr. in 1902 to prevent its demolition, and is preserved by the Paul Revere Memorial Assoc. Nearby is the 1795 Bell in Hand Tavern, Boston’s oldest continually operated tavern located in its 1844 building, across from the modern Green Dragon.

At Lexington, Massachusetts, adjacent to the “Battle Green,” where in April 1775 the British, en-route to Concord, attacked the Minutemen of Lexington, is the Simon W. Robinson Lodge. This 1822 building is one of the great landmarks in American public education, serving as a state chartered academy (1822-1833), then one of Americas’ first “trade schools” (1835-1837), and the first Normal (teacher training) school in America (1839-1844). In 1917 it became the property of the Lexington Masonic Assoc. A few blocks away is the 1737 “Hancock - Clark” house, where Bro. John Hancock and Samuel Adams were warned by Bros. Revere and Dawes, thereby allowing their escape from the approaching British Regulars under orders to arrest them.

L’Hermonie

We made a special trip to Newport, RI, where I was stationed, serving in 1970, aboard the USS Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. DD850 (now a museum ship in Fall River, Ma.). A particular purpose, and most exciting Masonic feature of this part of the trip, was being present at the arrival on 8 July of the French frigate, L’Hermonie at Ft. Adams, Newport. L’Hermonie is an exact replica of the ship which returned Major General Bro. Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette in



Hall which was burned down by Union troops during the Civil War.

There are lodges in this state whose records predate the MW Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Alabama to when state was a territory. It is up to us

to preserve those documents. This can be achieved simply by taking digital photos or scans of your historical documents and saving them to a CD or flash drive. Though time consuming, it is cost effective and ensures those records are around for a long time.

HISTORY

1780 to Boston announcing the alliance of France with the United States. In July of 1780 the French fleet commanded by Adm. de Ternay, and Army commanded by Gen. Comte de Rochambeau arrived in Newport. The L’Hermonie [pronounced: air –ee –on] is a 216” Concorde class frigate (185’tall, 216’in length, 1,166-ton displacement, and crew of 242). She was recently built in Rochfort, France where the original L’Hermonie was built, as a near-exact replica, using 18th century tools and techniques. She left Rochfort, on 18 April, sailing 3,819 miles to America. Her ports-of-call included ports in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, as well as Rhode Island. She was met in Newport by the US Navy Band (playing La Marseillaise and the Star Spangled Banner), and US and French dignitaries, including Rear Adm. Howe (President of the US Naval War College). A number of ceremonies were held honoring Gen. Rochambeau (who’s statue is nearby) and Admiral de Ternay (died off Newport, buried Trinity Church, Newport). Having to return home that day, I was unable to attend the “Table Lodge Dinner” at the fort that evening. This event was hosted by the Rhode Island Masons who, after opening an entered apprentice Lodge, held a “Masonic feast” which featured food and drink of the 1780s, and was attended by Bro. Dean Malissa, the official Mount Vernon interpreter of George Washington. The RI Trestle board noted “This is a chance to showcase Rhode Island to Masons and non-Masons abroad in a communal celebration of the road to national independence.”

For those Brothers who are interested in touring Masonic Boston, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts has published a web-site entitled, Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts Self-Guided Masonic Walking Tour of Boston.

It is without a doubt, that our lodge records are valuable historical documents. Many times these documents, our lodges history, are destroyed through neglect when storing them. Other times they are lost or damaged when a lodge goes dark and a member decides to take them home instead of forwarding them to the Grand Lodge or they are destroyed either by fire, flood or storm such as what happened on April 27, 2011 when tornadoes ripped apart several lodges within this Grand Jurisdiction. Let us be good stewards and preserve that which was entrusted to us so that those who come after us have a firm understanding and grasp of their heritage.

EA° PSALM CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

another. The one exception was in pilgrimages to the holy shrines and to the Temple. People of all walks of life went on these pilgrimages, and as they traveled together, class and background were ignored. They even referred to each other as brethren. Even in today's society people are all too aware of class and socio-economic levels.

In Masonry, however, we value the principle that despite our individual backgrounds, we meet on the level and all are equal as brothers. "On this principle, Masonry unites men of every country, sect and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance."

"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."

In the ancient Middle East anointing was a common practice, consisting of pouring scented olive oil on the head. It was used not only to signify elevation to a high rank, such as the anointing of a king or priest, but also to symbolize a change in status, such as the official recognition of a boy's

becoming a man. When an honored guest was received into one's home it was basic courtesy to greet him with a kiss on both cheeks, then to wash his feet and anoint his head with oil (Lk. 7:44ff). Anointing was usually with enough oil that a few drops would run onto the collar of the robe. It was a rare man whose robe collar was not oily, and one whose hair was not oily would have been suspect. When the anointing was for a special honor enough oil was used that it ran onto the beard, and when a king or high priest was anointed enough was used that it would run down the full length of the robe (Aaron was the first high priest). No honor was higher, so the unity of brethren is as wonderful as the anointing of a king or high priest.

"As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion:"

During the summer months, rain was extremely rare in most parts of Palestine, and the landscape was arid, dusty and brown. Mount Hermon, on the other hand, because of its high altitude and the abundance of rain and snow from October to April, was bathed in dew every morning even during

the summer. The mountainside of Hermon was therefore green and lush all year round. There were two main pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem each year: the Feast of the First fruits (Bikkurim) in early June, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth) in September. Although the crops flourished in the fertile lands, the city of Jerusalem was hot and dry at these times. Despite the harsh conditions, however, the beauty of brotherhood was as refreshing as the dew of Hermon, and brought refreshment to the mountains of Zion (Jerusalem).

"For there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

God blessed Jerusalem as the heart of faith. It was there that Abraham offered to sacrifice Isaac and that God established David's kingdom; it was there that Jesus died and rose again; and it was from there that Mohammed ascended to heaven. And as the prophets promised countless times, God blesses His people when they live in unity.

The Jews revere life as one of the greatest of all God's gifts to man — a standard Jewish toast and blessing is *l'chaim*, "to life." To them, as it is to all Masons, life is not an end in itself. It is the great unifying gift and blessing, the one thing that we all have in common with each other and that unites us with God.

MASONRY & THE ART OF MEMORY

BY MIKE FELD, EDU. & P.R. COMMITTEE

The Alabama Officer Installation charges "TO THE BRETHREN OF THE LODGE" "To this end make yourselves intimately acquainted with all its principles and obligations and practice in your lives all its duties and requirements.¹ As the obligations are not written, it stands to reason that they must be memorized to be performed unless someone is constantly supervised. Without constant external monitoring, memory is the only way to internally store the required information necessary to check ones actions against one duties and vows. When called upon, there may not be time to say "oh, let me look that up."

The Alabama Ritual has its roots in *Thomas Smith Webb's Freemason's Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry*.³ This book was based on the works of William Preston adopted by the Grand Lodge of England. But for American Masonry in every state, what we know comes primarily from Webb. "Webb so believed in what he did that he went out of his way to teach it, preach it, fight for it, memorize it, make others memorize it, spread it. Freemasonry in early days had little if any unity in work. While the essentials were the same, the variations were enormous, and Ancient and Modern, Scottish and Irish, English and local "work" was a veritable hodge podge throughout the colonies."³ We can see that as early as 1797, Thomas Smith Webb provided a book, but also promoted memorization. While Webb provided written work that was adopted, he specifically omitted certain parts of ritual from his book. Surely, his book would have sold more copies if he had written down everything? Why would he have not written out all of the ritual? Consider.

How old is Memory Work in Masonry? Lodge Kilwinning #0, the oldest lodge in Scotland, holds its distinction based on its possession of the First Schaw Statute of 1598 and the Second Schaw Statue of 1599.⁴ The First Schaw Statute of 1598 lays out the requirements for Masonic memory work.⁵

"(10) Every fellow of craft, at his entry, shall pay to his lodge ten pounds to go for the banquet, and ten shillings for gloves; before admission he shall be examined by the warden [and] deacon and the district masters in the lodge as to his knowledge [memorie] and skill, and he also shall perform an assigned task to demonstrate his mastery of the art [memorie]."

"(13) The warden of the lodge of Kilwinning, being the second lodge of Scotland, once in each year, shall examine every fellow craft and 'prentice, according to the vocation of each, as to his skill and knowledge [memorie]; those who have forgotten any points they have been taught shall pay fines."

From the First Schaw Statute of 1598, we read that not only were masons examined on their degrees, but in those days forgetting anything a year later that they had memorized resulted in fines!

Still, this evidence that memorization was required dating back to 1598 shows that early masons valued memorization, but we have not found why memorization was so highly prized and requisite. But now that we have traced the requirement of memorization from Alabama's current Grand Lodge requirements in 2016 back to Webb in 1797 and to Scotland in 1598, we can look at the practice of memorization in 1598 and back as far as the 1300's.

The Art of Memory is not exclusive to Freemasonry, but Freemasonry is perhaps one of the few places the technique survives.⁶ It was valuable for those who could not read and write as well as to those who could. The Art of Memory encompassed the use of the five human senses as well as its application to Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy. The Art of Memory can be traced back to ancient Greece and is discussed by Aristotle in *Topica*, "For just as in a person with a trained memory, a memory of things themselves is immediately caused by the mere mention of their places, so these habits too will make a man readier in reasoning, because he has his premises classified before his mind's eye, each under its number."⁷

In the Middle Ages, Memoria in the Trivium (Faith, Hope, and Charity) was accomplished by "grammatical memory (verbatim memorization), rhetorical memory (recollection, often by arresting images, as a tool of composition), and dialectical memory (analytical reasoning from "the topics of argument"). The blue lodge ritual makes extensive use of grammatical memory and some use of rhetorical memory. Dialectical memory is employed in the presentation of many of the Scottish Rite degrees. Memoria in the Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy) employed similar devices in order to group information in collections.

Memorization was used to train the mind for the purpose of building habits. By repetition, either aloud or in meditation, the individual internalized the lessons memorized to create a habit of thinking. By making a habit of virtuous thoughts, this lead to virtuous words and virtuous actions. The Art of Memory was used by scholars, preachers, and any number of individuals wishing to recite, to instruct, or to exhibit certain virtues. "Freemasonry is not only the most ancient, but most moral science known to man. Every character, emblem, and figure depicted in a lodge has a moral and useful meaning and forcibly inculcates the practice of virtue."⁸ We find the value of memorization in training the mind in the habit of

virtuous thought, to discipline the body in virtuous words and deeds, to create a virtuous influence by example. When we speak of the Art of Memory, we refer to memorization as the process of internal transformation. "The internal, and not the external, qualifications of a man are what Masonry regards."⁹

Frances Eiximenis, *On Two Kinds of Order That Aid Understanding and Memory*, wrote "first, it should be noted that our memory is either of names and words (nomina or vocabula) or the things they signify (res significatae). Words are difficult to remember, because for each one some similitude or figure must be imagined. But when we have to remember things (res), then a single similitude or figure will represent a while story to us."

This method is familiar to Freemasonry in the form of the Masonic Tracing Boards for the several degrees and the pictures Webb included in his monitor with each section of the lecture. For example, the "sword pointing to a naked heart" has a picture of the same and is followed by an eye surrounded by the sun, moon, and stars and a comet which summarizes the words. Aristotle wrote in his book *On Memory and Recollection* that every memorable thing results from a past action, that is, it often comes before a sense, as before the eyes, or the ears or the touch, according to what was once sensed by one of the several senses."

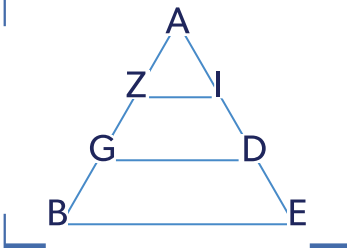
Aristotle has pointed out the use of the five senses of human nature for the purpose of memorization and recollection. Of the five, he only mentions the eyes, ears, and touch specifically, but smell (such as incense used in some churches) and taste (the bread and the wine of Communion, "this do in remembrance of me") can also be used to impress upon the memory.

Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle, On Memory and Recollection*, writes that Aristotle "uses the proof from similarity of form, as geometers use it. They call figures similar when their sides are proportional and their angles equal, as is evident in the sixth book of Euclid.

Using this method, the geometric figure establishes the relationship between the different subjects and each proceeds from its relationship to others. In this manner, when one has established the relationships of AZI, AGD, and ABE to see that in each of the

three triangles that while the proportion of the sides of the triangle increase as the base of the triangle increases while the angles of each of the three are the same.¹⁰

There are a number of other memory devices, such as Hugh of St. Victor's *A Little Book About Constructing Noah's Ark*, which he used to



REVIEW: OBSERVING THE CRAFT THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN MASONIC LABOUR AND OBSERVANCE

ANDREW HAMMER (2010 MINDHIVE BOOKS) BY JERRY BURPEE, PM, JW, RENAISSANCE #933

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memorize the biblical genealogy from Adam to Jesus and which contained three levels within the ark with ladders containing rungs of certain of virtues which aided an individual to climb out of certain vices and which contains a various colors throughout so that once imprinted on the mind this singular visual image could be used to recollect a vast amount information and the relationships between each virtue and vice and the history of the Christian church and biblical genealogy going back to Adam.

We will close on one last example, The Tower of Wisdom, “put together in the last quarter of the thirteenth century by John of Metz, a Franciscan disciple of St. Bonaventura who was active as a preacher in Paris.”



John of Metz's Tower of Wisdom

The Tower of Wisdom is constructed as a one dimensional image of building to be read from bottom to top, as though entering at the base and ascending upwards. Of all its 131 parts, of note are the columns Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice (the four Cardinal Virtues), the doors Obedience and Patience, “the width of the tower is Love which is common to all its components” is written at the foundation, and “Height of the tower is perseverance in the Good” written vertically on the right side of the tower. Each floor is marked as a theme and the rooms of each floor denote a practice of each theme such as the first floor, Love, contains the rooms Be Simple, Fear God, Please God, Adore God, Give thanks to God, Spurn the

“Observing The Craft” by Andrew Hammer is a guideline for tradition observance lodges. An observant Lodge is a Lodge that seeks to uphold the highest standards of the Craft. The teachings and meanings of Freemasonry are numerous and there will naturally be groups of brothers who choose to emphasize one aspect of the Craft over another. For instance, many brothers may enjoy the

World, Honor the saints, Celebrate the Feast Days, Always have a clear conscience.

John of Metz specifies that reading and recitation are not sufficient to inculcate the practice of virtue. He writes:

“The Tower of Wisdom does not fulfill its entire purpose when the reader has reached the top of the ramparts by reading, event by repeated reading. The moral injunctions of the building blocks demand action, and for this the reader must first absorb the 108 commands inscribed on the stones into the memory in order first to learn how to behave and then to behave accordingly. Since the possibilities of virtuous behavior are multifold and the dangers of sinful behavior are without limit, successful incorporation of the res (image) of the Tower of Wisdom into memory (by those who have become “experts”) should stimulate the mind to identify and strengthen the will to perform virtuous acts (and avoid sinful acts) beyond those spelled out in the diagram.”¹¹

By learning of the Art of Memory, it is hoped that the Masonic student will see some of the origins of the process of memorization that Freemasonry inherited from the past handed from Aristotle, or earlier, to Cicero’s Rhetorica Ad Herrenium, down to the early Christian scholars, and finally to us.

Our degrees, tracing boards, and verbatim memorization are not only vessels that contain moral lessons, but we have also inherited an educational system that perhaps only Freemasonry has preserved. The increase in literacy rates, the proliferation of printed material, and the development of the internet may appear to be a suitable replacement for the ancient Art of Memory; but, times change and the wisest knows not how soon.

“Freemasonry, notwithstanding, has still survived. The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue, and the mysteries of Freemasonry are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts.”¹² Remember that?

¹ Alabama Masonic Monitor
² www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/biography/webb_t/thomas_webb_bio.html
³ www.themasonictrowel.com/masonic_talk/stb/stbs/38-06.htm
⁴ www.mk0.com/history2.htm
⁵ www.themasonictrowel.com/Articles/Manuscripts/manuscripts/shaw_statutes/shaw_statutes.htm
⁶ The Art of Memory, page 286 Francis Yates
⁷ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_of_memory#cite_note-32
⁸ Entered Apprentice Lecture, Alabama Monitor
⁹ Fellowcraft Charge, Alabama Monitor
¹⁰ The Medieval Craft of Memory, Page 183
¹¹ The Medieval Craft of Memory, Page 222
¹² Alabama Monitor, Fellowcraft Degree

inviting atmosphere of a casual setting, or other brothers only enjoy the ritual work of Freemasonry.

This book explains that Observing the Craft is understanding that the things we do definitely have meaning, and when we discover that meaning, we understand why it is important that the meaning be observed and respected as we go about our Masonic labor. Observing the Craft matters because while the tediously clichéd explanation of Freemasonry as ‘making good men better’ is offered almost as a mantra of the Craft, it is impossible to do that very thing unless we are making a concerted effort to better ourselves at everything we do in the Lodge as well as in our lives, from ritual to program, from the quality of our food and dress to the manner in which we conduct ourselves in Lodge.

It explains that the manner in which one approaches the ritual of Freemasonry is perhaps the single most important aspect of observing the Craft. Without our ritual, Freemasonry is nothing more than a social club. It behooves us then, to embrace our ritual with the utmost solemnity, understanding that we are the guardians of a trust handed down through time, one which was crafted in order to help us with the work of honing ourselves. The ritual is what transforms a room into a Lodge, the men in that room into Masons.

A very enjoyable custom in some Traditional Observance Lodges is a Moment of Reflection, where a particular piece of music is played while the brethren sit in this darkened Lodge, giving them the opportunity to quietly reflect, or simply to take some time to meditate on whatever they chose. Less understood by many brethren is the role of silence. When an observant Lodge confers the degrees, it seeks to maximize the use of sensory elements in order to enhance the experience.

This book argues that some Lodges in the same way that they have done with dress, ritual and decorum, have allowed the Masonic banquet to lapse into nothing more than a cheap dinner with no other purpose but feeding people. The festive board therefore is meant to contrast with the reverent attitude of the Lodge. The levity of the Festive Board has a ritual, as well as its own etiquette, because it holds significance.

In North Alabama a Traditional Observance Lodge is seeking dispensation for Charter from the Grand Lodge of Alabama, if granted, it will be the first lodge chartered in Alabama in the past 30 years. The name of the Lodge will be Renaissance Lodge #933. As soon as the charter members of the lodge have perfected opening, closing, and performing the rituals to the standards of Observing The Craft, staying within Alabama adoption on work, we will welcome Masons to visit and if they enjoy some of the aspects they experience, that they will want to carry those over to their own lodge.

A GENTLEMEN’S GUIDE TO JOINING FREEMASONRY

BY BRO. DAVE BACON (BETWEEN THE COMPASSES)

Today I’m going to attempt to put into words why a man would want to join the fraternity. And why he wouldn’t. Based on 3 things. What he knows, what he sees, and what he experiences. This one will be lengthy.

Let’s begin with what Freemasonry is said to be. Freemasonry is a beautiful moral system that’s illustrated by symbols and veiled in allegory. It’s a system of moral code. How it differs from religion or any other moral system: It truly doesn’t. Not from the outside. Once inside the fraternity, for me at least, everything about it is different.

Freemasonry for me is a way of life. It’s a way of viewing the world from a tolerant perspective. That’s what it’s supposed to be. Sure, you’ll have the occasional experience that can affect your thoughts on the fraternity. But the important thing to consider is it’s a human institution. Much like religions. However, Freemasonry is not a religion. Humans have many errors and make many mistakes. Myself included. The fraternity is setup to inspire its members to live the life of a gentleman.

So why would anyone join the fraternity at all? Let’s look at the 3 things that can influence why, or why not.

Reason #1: What do you know about Freemasonry?

Many people think its just a social club, or a civic organization that just meets to hang out. Or, even a community organization that donates time and money to their communities. All of this is absolutely true. But these reasons didn’t come until much later.

Freemasonry is a place where all men can enter and be accepted for who they are. No matter your political views, religious specifics, race, creed, financial position in society... Or any other specific reason that may otherwise set you apart. That’s what Freemasonry is for me. And Thats what it has been since it began.

Every institution has its fare share of sour apples. But the important thing to remember is that we’re all human. And it’s human nature to make mistakes. Freemasonry is about tolerance. To accept people for their flaws because we realize we have them as well. No one is perfect.

Reason #2:

What you witness by members of this fraternity is typically very personal and subjective to that one person. Whether it be a good experience, or a bad one. Freemasonry is a moral system. There can be men in this fraternity, much like others, who may not consider the betterment of the fraternity as a

whole. And that’s one huge and important lesson of Freemasonry.

Once you decide to join, if you decide. (we will never ask you, you have to ask us) You should be willing to always consider those who feel differently than you. Its okay to disagree. But a gentleman shouldn’t argue, be aggressive, or be demeaning towards others. This goes against the principals of our fraternity. Some practice these lessons better than others. Again, it’s a human run institution. So mistakes are bound to surface. That’s just life in general.

Reason #3:

When a man engages in conversation, over the course of any social engagement, opinions are typically formed about that person by the end of the discussion. How well has he carried himself, how well and respectful his interactions were, and how proper he chose to be during times of passionate debate.

A gentleman, a true gentleman, will keep respectful no matter the topic. For me, personally, this has been the hardest one to manage. Not getting overly passionate about things that are said that make me angry. Anger is a natural human emotion. But the line is crossed when anger is then acted upon outside the mind and thought process by rude and discourteous behavior towards others.

I personally feel Freemasonry has helped me more in this way than any other. Its given me patience, and fortitude to continue on and be respectful no matter what. Sure, I falter from time to time. But I’m human just like everyone else.

Now for the message to my brethren specifically.

Why a man wouldn’t join:

We have all seen why a man wouldn’t join. We have seen it especially on social media and masonic Facebook pages. Those specific brothers who choose to carry themselves outside what it means to be a true gentleman and Freemason. What makes us different from the world of the uninitiated? Nothing. Not unless we take it upon ourselves to be true gentleman.

Freemasonry has always been the meeting of the noble mindset. To come together and meet as gentlemen. And to represent the fraternity as the same. What example are we setting when we are derogatory or demeaning? We’re setting a very poor example for the young brethren coming in, as well as painting the fraternity negatively in a manner that is not represented within the fraternity.

Tolerance isn’t about changing the opinions of others. Its about accepting them for who they are regardless of how you feel. To act upon our lessons

and display a noble mindset. We are Freemasons. We are to be true gentleman when the world needs us most. We are to treat all men and women as our brothers and sisters. And with the same level of respect that we insist to receive in return.

Be tolerant. Be patient. Word yourself in a manner that is truly respectful and considerate. And do so outside how you feel personally. Because we either represent the fraternity, or we don’t. The choice is truly yours. And if you choose to not represent the fraternity for what it is, why are we here at all?

If we aren’t acting as gentlemen always, we won’t inspire men in good standing to join as gentlemen either. You have the ability to make the change yourself. And in doing so, others will do the same. Will the fraternity ever be perfect? No, that’s impossible. But that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be trying to be perfect.

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OBITUARY SOMEONE ELSE

AUTHOR UNKNOWN The Masonic Fraternity was saddened to learn this week of the death of one of our most valued members, Someone Else. Someone Else’s passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Someone Else has been with us for many years and for every one of those years, Someone did far more than a normal person’s share of the work.

Whenever a job had to be done, a person to teach, a meeting to attend, a fund raiser to chair, a funeral to attend, a community activity to sponsor, anything at all, one name was on everyone’s list, "let Some Else do it".

Whenever leadership was mentioned, this wonderful person was looked to for inspiration as well as results; "Someone Else can work with that group." It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the most liberal givers in our fraternity. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone just assumed that Someone Else would make up the difference. When the Lodge needed a new roof or needed painting we all knew that Someone Else would do it.

Someone Else was a wonderful person; sometimes appearing superhuman. Were the truth known, everybody expected too much of Someone Else. Now Someone Else is gone! We wonder what we are going to do. Someone Else left a wonderful example to follow, but who is going to follow it? Who is going to do the things Someone Else did?

When you see a need or are asked to help this year, remember, we can’t depend on Someone Else anymore.

