



Letters from District No. 10

Free & Accepted Masons of Washington

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March 2018

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Whatcom Lodge Report

Special Communication: Our Thursday, February 1st meeting was attended by 16 Whatcom Brothers.

Member History: VWB Don Higgerson gave a short personal history talk. He highlighted his hobby of archery, at which he was skilled and competitive, his careers in broadcasting and real estate, and his valuable thoughts on being a Mason.

Masonic Education: WM Craig read from the Washington Standard Work on the basics of our Funeral Services. This was timely as in a few days the services for WB Bill Hall were to be given. WM Craig Bruner read a Short Talk Bulletin on a comparison of Masonry to Fly Fishing, which was a life long hobby of WB Bill Hall. He then opened the floor for brothers to share their remembrances of Brother Bill Hall. Several brothers took this opportunity to speak.

DDGM: VW Terrell Goertz announced that SW Ken Peck won the right to represent District Ten in the Wardens Competition. He added that Kurt Gazow of BB#44 were both excellently prepared and the contest was very close.

Stated Communication: The February 15th Stated meeting was attended by 20 Whatcom Brothers and 2 visitors: WB Rick Kiene & Bro. David Gehrcke of BB#44, they were given a hearty welcome.

Masonic education: WM Craig Bruner read an article explaining the various possible applications for the word Free to Freemasonry.

Personal History: WB Ted Schuman gave a presentation of his personal history. He highlighted his time as a DeMolay and how it led to his wife Penny and his family. He also noted how proud he is to wear the Lewis Jewel in honor of his father.

Next communications: Our next Special is on March the 1st and the next Stated Communication will be on Thursday, March 15th. For both meetings Dinner is at 5:30 pm and Lodge opens at 6:30 pm.

Fraternally, John Browne, Secretary ... **Contact info is at bottom right corner, page 4**



Stated Meeting Dates of the District Ten Lodges

- Mar 2nd Bellingham Bay - 7:30 pm
- Mar 8th Lynden/Ferndale Int. Lodge
56 - 7 pm
- Mar 15th Whatcom Lodge - dinner at
5:30; meeting at 6:30 pm.

Up-coming Events

Masonic Monthly Luncheon.... Tuesday, Mar. 20th. 12 noon at Lee's Restaurant, at James & Alabama Streets.

IN MEMORIAM

Last month on Wed. February 7th, Whatcom Lodge lost another long term member. Bro. Roy McDonald passed at age 96. He was a Mason for 64 years. He was residing in Arizona. Secretary John Browne has been in contact with Bro. Roy's daughter Kathleen McDonald. Kathleen contacted sec'y Browne when Bro. Roy was taken into a care center back in November of 2017.

Brother Roy H. McDonald was born on 5/1/1921 in Brooklyn, Washington. His Masonic career started on 1/15/1953 when he was elected to receive the Degrees of Masonry. His First Degree was conferred on 2/6/1953, his FC Degree on 9/24/1953 and he was raised to the Sublime Degree on 10/10/1953. He completed his MM Proficiency on 11/19/1953. Though Bro. Roy spent much of his senior years in Arizona he stayed in touch with our lodge secretaries and remained very loyal to Whatcom Lodge.

NW Shrine Club....Our next big project takes place on March 25th.

The Shriners Hospitals for Children - Portland has scheduled an Outreach Clinic to be held in Bellingham. A doctor will be present to provide specialized orthopedic care for kids. The members of the Shrine club assist the children by escorting them to their appointments - providing refreshments and help making them feel comfortable while they are here. Please come and watch the Shriners in action.

Notes from Lynden Lodge No. 56

Mar 8 th	Stated Meeting	7:00 PM
Mar 22 nd	Special Meeting	7:00 PM

Greetings Lynden Brethren:

Widows & Widowers Luncheon

Our Widows & Widowers Luncheon was held on Sunday, February 18, 2018 at the Raspberry Ridge Golf Club restaurant. Honored guests were two widowers and four widows. This annual event was well attended. Thanks to WB Glenn Boodey & Barb Arnett for handling all the arrangements.

Official visit of the District Deputy

VWB Terrell Goertz, Deputy of the Grand Master for District 10, made his official visit to Lynden/Ferndale International Lodge No. 56 at the regularly scheduled stated communication in February and delivered the charge as the Lodge was closed.

Hands Across the Border - 2018 Spring

Thursday, April 12, 2018 is the date that has been selected by the Deputy Grand Masters for 2018 Spring Hands Across the Border event. We will honor RWB Barry Burch, Deputy Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of A. F. & A.M. of British Columbia & Yukon, and RWB James Kendall, Deputy Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of F. & A.M. of Washington. The social period will begin at 5:00; dinner will be served at 5:30. The choice of entrees is either prime rib or butterfly prawn. The Lodge will be tyled at 7:00. The meeting will be short on business and long on brotherhood. Masons are most welcome! Please make your reservations by contacting HAB Events chairman Dick Decima at rhdecima@aol.com.

Hands Across the Border - 2018 Fall

In the late Spring the two honorees, Deputy Grand Master James Kendall and Deputy Grand Master Barry Burch will become Grand Masters of their respective jurisdictions. They have selected Saturday, November 3rd, as the date for the Hands Across the Border gala dinner show. Wives and other guests are most welcome. Please mark this date on your calendar.

Scholarships

Applications for five \$1,000 scholarships have begun to arrive from seniors in the Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden, Meridian and Nooksack Valley School Districts. Presentations will be made at award ceremonies in late May and early June.

Educators of the Year

During the past month contact has been made by Committee Chairman Eric Bauer with the District Superintendent of Schools in the Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden, Meridian and Nooksack Valley School Districts. Each District Superintendent will be selecting a deserving educator to receive a \$500 award. Presentations will be made at the May or June meeting of the Board of Directors of each School District who have graciously agreed to honor the awards in that venue.

WB Dick Decima,
Secretary...Ph. 392-0145

The Broken Mirror—Part 2 of 2

John Bizzack, Ph.D. Lexington, Lodge No. 1,
Masonic History & Study Group, Rubicon Masonic Dinner Club

We've watched as our fellowship meals digressed from worthy feasts to nibbling on snacks, single slice cheese sandwiches, and occasionally a mysterious colored soup washed down with warm cans of colas.

Somewhere along the line, we gave in and allowed the belief to consume our thinking that whatever a man feels like wearing to lodge, or whatever he believes he is most comfortable in wearing, is acceptable as appropriate for the work involving Freemasonry and labor toward all aspects of self-improvement. Somehow, watching a Master wearing a silk top hat, pair of shorts, sandals and a Roy Rogers and Trigger t-shirt while being prompted through the process of conferring a degree has been deemed completely acceptable. Can we really embrace the idea that this fittingly corresponds with the intended dignity our rituals are supposed to project?

We find that many men are not able to be successfully tried when they visit a lodge without extensive tutoring. In fact, during such trials the phrase "We don't teach that at our lodge..." in response to a simple question intended to authenticate a man's membership has become as common as, "We've never done it that way..." We artificially swell our ranks from time to time by shot gunning thousands of men onto our membership rolls in one day all — each becoming members after sitting through several hours of watching other men perform Masonic ritual — all without ever demonstrating their understanding, much less proficiency in any of the degrees before being ushered on to the next. Although there are some men admitted in this manner who have gone on and taken responsibility for learning about and studying Freemasonry on their own, we have precious little valid research to confirm this approach as anything more than what it was hoped to be when first introduced: a method to increase our membership rolls and collect more dues for inadequate coffers.

There are some lodges who boast that they have had the same Master in the East as many as six to eight times — many of those years consecutive. In contrast, we find some Masters who have been members a little more than a year. We find lodges unable to open because there were too few members in attendance to serve as officers.

There are lodges that have not seen a broom used in years. Some have windows boarded, shabby and peeling wallpaper, thread-bare carpets, unemptied trash cans, occasional sightings of a roach or other insects, with rest rooms equivalent in condition to those found in bus stations. And yet, there are members in lodges found in this condition who wonder why prospective petitioners don't return. There are members who stand during ritual to stretch and yawn as some others mosey to the nearest window where they spit while trying not to disturb another member who is loudly snoring. Some answer phone calls on their smart phones and check email during lodge meetings.

Our due guards and penal signs, if bothered to be given at all in lodge, are lax and indolent making the motions of the arms and hands look as though flies are being swatted, which is a possibility considering the condition of some lodges. There are lodges too that have not had a petitioner in years. Some lodges ask other lodges to perform their rituals and lectures because they have no ritualists qualified to do so. Some practice fast-tracking candidates through the degrees so they can quickly petition an appendant body and then, never attend their blue lodge again.

Following the meetings of these types of lodges, men are often found lingering in the parking lots where they shake their heads and pose to each other the questions of why aren't brothers coming to lodge anymore, as they predictably express their dismay at the lack of men knocking on the West Gate.

There's certainly nothing wrong with accentuating the positive and celebrating those who are engaged and immersed in our Craft. There are those in North American Freemasonry, however, who apparently do not see the state of our fraternity in areas other than larger cities, at national Masonic functions, conferences and other such events that seem to believe these accounts apply only to a very small section of the fraternity. If so, they are either ignoring the reality of the state of Freemasonry as a whole or they have not spent much time traveling except to those Masonic events, lodges and other gatherings that are opposite of the aforementioned descriptions. "The design of the Masonic Institution is to make its members wiser, better, and consequently happier. Does anyone really doubt that Freemasons have the right to demand that Freemasonry actually fulfill its purpose?"

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Fortunately, there are indeed lodges that are 180 degrees opposite of these descriptions and these are the lodges that will carry on Freemasonry's genuine purpose into future generations. These are the lodges with men who find it unacceptable to be ordinary and strive to break out of the paradigm that has smothered our Craft for decades. Unfortunately, they are not in the majority.

How did the practice of Freemasonry become so dissimilar? Why do some lodges have waiting lists and thrive while many struggle month-to-month to survive? Why do we have members who are unable to prove themselves Masons during a trial when visiting another lodge? Why do we find members wearing raggedy cargo shorts, flip-flops, Mega Death t-shirts, and in a few cases, baseball caps, and sweat-shirt hoodies pulled up over the heads while wearing sunglasses in lodge meetings? And if that was not enough, we also find members wearing t-shirts bearing vulgar phrases with words emblazoned prominently across the back to lodge meetings — the same meetings where we are supposedly laboring to positively influence our members to become better men in a number of ways.

Why do we expect members to be knowledgeable about the Craft when they are offered no Masonic education beyond our ritual, which is so often left unexplained once given? Should we expect members to be able to intelligently discuss aspects of Masonry with another Mason if they have received no wholesome instruction and fail to pursue further Light on their own? Why should we expect men to take off their baseball caps (or hoodies) when sitting in open lodge if no one bothers to explain why only the Master wears a hat when in open lodge? Why should we expect simple and appropriate decorum in open lodge such as no talking, joking, clipping fingernails, sending texts or sleeping, if men have not been instructed otherwise? And why should we anticipate proficient openings and closing, lectures and ritual, adherence to a fitting protocol and basic manners and behavior unless the men who went before them gave them proper instruction?

Among the many other questions that must be asked is why do lodges that cannot muster enough men to open on any of the degrees or conduct their own degree work (if they have any petitioners on which to confer them) continue to hold a charter? Some say these lodges must be preserved for their history. Others will clearly point out the best part of their history has likely passed.

A very common response from some members of lodges like these to a well-intended suggestion that might constructively help is, "You can't tell me anything about Freemasonry I don't already know." Another typical reaction is, "You must be from a Grand Lodge somewhere... You practice your Masonry, and we'll practice ours," as if there is supposed to be two different kinds of practices in the first place. Some members who ask for suggestions on how to revitalize their lodge, often respond with quizzical, blank expressions when constructive replies are offered.

Some say these things are only apparent in lodges that have "fallen on hard times." Well, that is certainly one explanation, but buried within that attempt to rationalize a justification are serious reasons that led to a lodge falling on hard times in the first place. Some will attribute the slow, generation-to-generation decline in Masonic education, lack of instruction and consistent enforcement of our rules and processes as an explanation. They would be closer to being correct than those who just say the lodge fell on "hard times." Others, point the finger the lax practices of investigation committees that have allowed men to become members who are not qualified, and who can often end up in the East. Some believe our rush in the past to charter as many lodges as could be established as the primary reason we now see how watered down our understanding of what Freemasonry has become. They too would be correct.

When we consider that new members, on the average for the past quarter century, attend lodge and then drift away from Freemasonry after 1.7 years, we should start to realize there are some very good reasons other than the old standby excuse that men are busier these days. Our organizational mechanics, educational system, and proficiency of our practices is far from uniformly administered, much less synchronized across the nation. Regretfully, the Masonic mirror we look in to see our reflection is broken. Some believe we should only talk about what which accentuates the positives in and about Freemasonry, and as an institution, there's plenty of positives to accentuate. It is, however, very difficult and sometimes quite awkward, to truthfully accentuate positives about some of the practices we find in our Craft. As a result, we often remain silent, reluctant or unwilling to speak out about those practices and things that debase the integrity and general reputation of our fraternity. Why do we accept that which masquerades as Freemasonry to continue to be called Freemasonry? Calling a dog's tail a leg does not make it so.

Is there any reason Masons should acquiesce and adopt the lax decorum, eye brow arching behavior, poor manners, shoddy appearance and meager knowledge of many things we see in the rest of society? It certainly seems that is what we have done over the past several decades instead of uniformly striving to maintain what was once thought of as extraordinary. Our claims today of collectively being something other than ordinary is an extraordinary claim indeed. We belong to an extraordinary institution, and there are many Masons and lodges who strive to live up to its historic billing. But, as a whole, we can in no way justifiably lay claim to the idea that Freemasonry in North America is collectively extraordinary as it was designed to be.

Fulfilling Our Purpose

No one gets Freemasonry right all the time. If it were easy, then everyone's ashlar would be highly polished and gleaming. There are certainly lodges whose members are involved and actively engaged. No, they may not have their ritual down pat. Their practices, protocol, etiquette, lack of fundamental Masonic education may vary and in some cases seen as woeful.

They may have facilities that need extensive work and have good years as well as bad ones. But, some believe that as long as they are striving in a positive direction, then they are practicing Freemasonry. Perhaps, this position is acceptable to many under the varied definitions we see today of tolerance.

The purpose of Freemasonry clearly stated in our ritual: The design of the Masonic Institution is to make its members wiser, better, and consequently happier. Does anyone really doubt that Freemasons have the right to demand that Freemasonry actually fulfill its purpose?

Will society continue to influence our fraternity and its practices and organization more than our fraternity influences any part of society? Will our distinctive history and genius of our philosophies and practices continue to wane and invite further degeneration? Again, the answers to these two questions will depend on who you ask. Those who find these candid observations annoying or seek to challenge them with the same old predictable rhetoric are also likely those who are part of and contribute to the practices and examples described.

Freemasonry will be kept alive and preserved in the form in which it was intended, and the purpose of our Craft will carry forward. There are enough lodges in North America that are not part of the examples given to make that happen, but it is likely to happen only in certain areas of the country, not across the board.

Many of these conditions today did not start just recently or become this way quickly. Most of these things that pass as Masonic practices or Freemasonry were passed on by previous generations who, in turn, had them passed on to them. With no change in these regressive practices on the horizon in many areas, what will be passed on to the next several generations? It should be safe to say that what will be passed is the same thing. One veteran Mason recently joked that in another 20 years there will be no one left in his lodge who will remember how to open and close lodge anyway. His comment drew no laughter at all.

We need a grip on the fact that Freemasonry is not going to be a multi-million member fraternity again in the near future. There's no reason at this time in our history to believe it can be. Importantly, and fortunately, it does not have to be to survive.

Regardless of the state of Freemasonry today, the institution and all it stands for will always attract good men. The questions in context to our current condition are how long can we retain those men and how much genuine knowledge will they have of our stated purpose, factual history, and practices, and working knowledge of the Craft?

We need to continue to look in the Masonic mirror and to do so often. The broader image of Freemasonry we see reflected back at us today tells us the mirror is broken. The good news is that it can be repaired or replaced, but only through consistently committing the labor to do so through wholesome and genuine fundamental instruction, and a hardy does of high caliber leadership that embraces the challenge.

So, instead of calling a tail a leg, why don't we push and work with commitment to get back to Freemasonry as it was intended to be instead of just talking about it. And for those who doubt we need to, then to paraphrase Past Grand Master of Indiana, Dwight Smith, why don't we try Freemasonry and see what an explosive difference it would make?

Shared by JW WB John Brown (city John of Whatcom Lodge 151)

BMC = Bellingham Masonic Center on W. Maplewood ; FMC = Ferndale Masonic Center;
 FHMC = Friday Harbor Masonic Center; NMC = Nooksack Masonic Center; SRH = Scottish Rite Hall

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	31 V of B Scottish Rite: Dinner at 6:30 pm & Stated Mtg at 7:30 pm	1 W #151 - Special Dinner at 5:30 pm. Lodge opens at 6:30pm.	2 BB # 44 - stated 7:30 pm.	3 Memorial Service for WB Bill hall.
4	5 Hesperus Com-mandery No. 8 - 7:30	6 ML-OES # 58 (BMC) 7:30 p	7 V of B Scottish Rite: Education Night at 7 pm Chuckanut Chapter DeMolay 7:30 pm	8 L # 56 Stated, 7:00 pm Evergreen RB # 17 7 p. (BMC)	9	10
11	12 Bellingham Council No.16 R&SM - 7:30 p F-OES # 223 7:30 p. (FMC)	13 Bethel # 25 at 6:25 pm	14 V of B Scottish Rite: Education Night at 7 pm	15 W 151 - stated dinner at 5:30 lodge opens 6:30 pm.	16 BB 44 Spl Comm 7:30 p. (SRH)	17 <i>St Patrick's Day</i>
18	19 Bellingham Chp Royal Arch - 7:30 p.	20 ML-OES # 58 7:30 p. (BMC) <i>Spring Equinox</i>	21 Chuckanut Chapter DeMolay 7:30 pm	22 L # 56 special meeting 7:00 pm Evergreen RB # 17 7 p. (BMC)	23	24 Bethel #25 at 6:25 pm
25	26 F-OES # 223 7:30 p. (FMC)	27 Bellingham Temple Association meeting 7:30 PM	28	29	30	31

**Widows & Orphans Fund
for District No. 1**

If you would like to know more about the W & O Fund contact one of the officers listed below.

Bro. Ken Peck - *Secretary/Treasurer*
Phone: 360-820-4752,
Email: sectreaswof@gmail.com

WB John Brown - *President,*

WB Jesse Petersen - *Vice President*
360-319-5556



Has your message missed this publication. Don't get left out. Please send your group's article, event information and/or calendar note by the 22nd of each month. In order to promote events occurring at the beginning of each month I try to send out the newsletter on or about the 25th of each month. Thanks,

To contribute to this newsletter please send your letter, comment, historical fact, poem or calendar announcement, by the 20th day of each month, to:
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