

Trestleboard

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Back East

Brethren:

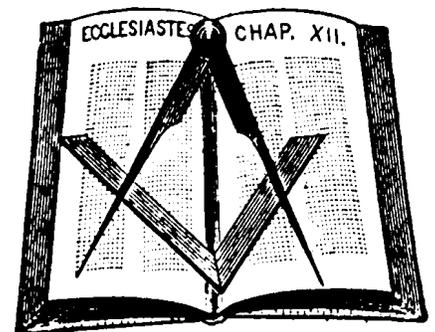
I was asked "who is my favorite President" and I choose Harry S. Truman the thirty-third President of the United States. Harry Truman was born May 8, 1884 in Lamar, Missouri and was first elected to public office in 1922 as a Judge, then a U.S. Senator in 1934, and as Vice President to Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944. Just eighty-two days after being sworn in as Vice President, after the death of President Roosevelt, Harry Truman took the oath to become President. He was plunged into a world at war and made the decision to drop the bombs on Japan that brought the war to an end. He was faced with the spreading threat of Communism as the Soviet Union moved to dominate Europe. He answered this threat by helping form NATO to protect our allies. When faced with the Communist overtake of Korea he took us to an undeclared war to save Korea from Communism. Truman was definitely a controversial President and in the end a somewhat unpopular president for the stands he took in the International arena. But he always stood behind his convictions and lived by his motto of "the buck stops here."

Harry S Truman was initiated February 9, 1909 in Belton Lodge #450 in Belton, Missouri. In 1911, several members of Belton Lodge separated to establish Grandview Lodge #618 in Grandview, Missouri and Brother Truman served as it's first Worshipful Master. He

was elected at the annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Missouri on September 24-25, 1940 as the ninety-fourth Grand Master of Masons in Missouri. Brother and President Truman was made a sovereign Grand Inspector General 33 degree and Honorary member, Supreme Council on October 19, 1945 at the Supreme Council A.A.S.R. Southern Jurisdiction Headquarters in Washington D.C. upon which occasion he served as Exemplar (Representative) for his class. He was also elected as an Honorary Grand Master of the International Supreme Council, Order of DeMolay. On May 18, 1959 Brother Truman was presented with a fifty-year award, The only U.S. President to reach that golden anniversary in Freemasonry. Brother Harry S Truman was called by the Great Architect to the Grand Lodge above on December 26, 1972.

In the light,

R. Gene Blackmore



Masons in the News - "What century do we live in!?"

As many of you know, I enjoy re-searching Masonic history and most recently the persecution Freemasons have suffered for their membership. So this month, I bring to you a story from the December 7, 2004 edition of the Moscow News which is a textbook case of "How Politicians Persecute Freemasons."

Ukraine is the former Soviet Republic where someone tried to poison Viktor Yushchenko, the pro-Western Presidential candidate, with dioxin - a very poisonous controlled substance. They have now had three Presidential elections in less than a year because of the massive voter fraud perpetrated by the Communist Party.

Communists have a long history of persecuting Freemasons, and fortunately for our brethren there, the Communist candidate Viktor Yanukovich, lost the election.

Keep your eyes and ears open for any further developments. Remember our brethren there when upon your bended knees.

Ukrainian Parliamentarian Suggests Jailing Freemasons

Created: Dec 7, 2004 15:04 MSK (GMT +3),

<http://www.mosnews.com/news/2004/12/07/masonsukraine.shtml>

Ukrainian MP Taras Chornovil has suggested that the country's parliament, the Supreme Rada, introduce criminal responsibility for Freemasonry, the MigNews web-site reported on Tuesday.

Taras Chornovil is the son of the late nationalist leader Vyacheslav Chornovil, and his appointment as an adviser to presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich on West-Ukrainian affairs earlier this year provoked much criticism in nationalist circles. He will head Yanukovich's

campaign headquarters in the repeat of the controversial second round of Ukrainian presidential elections.

He has submitted to the Rada a bill entitled "On amendments to the Criminal Code of Ukraine", according to which, membership of Freemason organizations, or any other organizations that require rituals and oaths of higher priority than the current law, must be punished by a jail sentence of up to three years.

The bill also reads that the members of Masonic organizations who are Ukrainian civil servants, law enforcers or military servicemen must be jailed for three to seven years.

Ukraine's president, members of parliament, civil servants of ministerial rank, military servicemen and law enforcers of the rank of major-general or higher, if discovered to be members of Freemason organizations, may face up to 10 years in prison.

If the membership in a Masonic organization causes deaths, a threat to Ukraine's national integrity or its defense potential, members of the organization must be imprisoned for 10 to 15 years, the bill reads.

In February, the leader of Ukraine's Socialist Party, Aleksander Moroz, said that about 300 of Ukraine's top officials were members of the St. Stanislaus Order Masonic Lodge. Later, other left-wing parties and also the pro-Western bloc headed by Yulia Tymoshenko also called on the government to ban the St Stanislaus Order in Ukraine.

Calendar of Events for January

Plano Lodge Events

Jan 6 - Stated Meeting

Jan 13 - TBD degree

Jan 20 - TBD degree

Jan 27 - TBD degree

Feb 3 - Stated Meeting

Feb 3 - Museum & Library meeting after Stated Meeting

Events for the Super-Mason

- Scottish Rite Valley of Dallas stated meeting Jan 10th.
- Hella Shrine stated meeting Jan 20th.
- Plano Assembly Rainbow #320, Jan 11th & 25th.
- Plano Chapter #703 Order Of Eastern Star Jan 17th.
- Plano Shrine Club meeting Jan 25th, 6:30 Los Rios CC

Door Chatter by: JJ Miller

There has been much debate recently about what is causing the decline in membership. Too often the discussion shifts to reducing or eliminating the esoteric work and not to the fact that Baby Boomers as a generation simply did not join Masonry (or any other civic groups for that matter). We have all heard the complaints about the esoteric work: people do not have the time in today's world; it's just too long; it's keeping good people out; I cannot make the time; or my personal favorite – why teach something that will never be used. The “quick-fix” conclusion to each complaint is these changes will make candidates rush in the door.

The questions which need to be asked in response are: 1) Is the esoteric work holding Masonry back? and, 2) What do we seek to improve by reducing the esoteric work?

If the esoteric work is really the obstacle to membership, why not print a cipher book? Then let's make it easy to come by selling it in bookstores and placing copies of it in public libraries. Why if Texas Masonry had just such a book the heavy burden of the esoteric work would be lifted for all of these potential Masons. Problem solved, right? Candidates will come pouring into our Lodges because advancing would be much easier now, would they not? And yet they do not.

There are several states which have done this very thing. These states have eliminated the esoteric work, printed cipher books, given them to their EAs after the lecture in the EA degree, and some states have gone so far as to eliminate the cipher books and print the esoteric work word for word. Can an EA really be expected to take the obligation seriously, much less the ritual, if they are handed a written book at the end of the EA degree? Has anyone heard about a membership boom in these states as droves of candidates beat down their Lodge doors to join? Sadly, no.

Eliminating the esoteric work to increase membership is like cutting off your right arm to save money buying one-armed shirts. The esoteric work is what is holding the lodges together during these tough times, not what is destroying them. By eliminating the esoteric work these Lodges have cut their own throats because each new member places less and less

importance on the work and this leads to less and less importance on the ritual. Point in fact, a very good friend of mine was recently raised in a state that has just such a situation and he said the Lodge told him they did not do his entire third degree because they could not remember it all. I was speechless. Sadly, the decisions to eliminate the esoteric work have not reversed the decline in membership but instead they have accelerated it by compromising the very things which distinguish us from other civic organizations. Reducing or eliminating the esoteric work is neither a viable long-term or short-term solution, but rather it is the beginning of the end.

For a glimpse of the scenery on the road to the Fraternal Graveyard for these Lodges let's look at a similar fraternity of similar size and similar purpose. The International Order of Oddfellows (or I.O.O.F.) had more members than the Masons did in the year 1900 and in less than 100 years they have virtually vanished. How did this happen? The Oddfellows began to have membership problems so a series of “quick-fixes” were initiated. First the memory work was reduced and later eliminated. Next the degrees were shortened because not enough people knew the work. The age of maturity was reduced from 21 to 18 and finally to 16. Lastly, they became coed. Why are the Oddfellows in the fraternal graveyard today? Because their membership diluted and cheapened the tradition of what it meant to be an Oddfellow until no one knew why they were there. The Oddfellows died from the age old tragedy that anything easily obtained is easily discarded.

So what is the solution? Our membership problems did not happen overnight and they are not going to be fixed overnight. First we have to accept the fact that the Baby Boomers did not join the Masons like the generation before them and move on. It was not just the Masons who have suffered this decline in membership because they did not join the Kiwanas, or the Moose, or the Elks, or Rotary, or the Knights of Columbus, or the Oddfellows, etc., etc., etc. either. True to Timothy Leary they collectively “turned on, tuned in and dropped out [of everything.]” They did not join anything 30 years ago and they are not go-

The Chuckwagon



January is the start of a new year. Begin it by eating heartily thanks to our hard working stewards. We look forward to the Rainbow girls will be serving dinner on January 6.

January dinner menu:

- 6 - Provided by Rainbow Girls**
- 13 - Beef stroganoff**
- 20 - Red beans & rice**
- 27 - Smoked brisket**

**Scripture
for January**

Natural disasters in the Bible:

The Great Flood:

Genesis 7

Sodom & Gomorrah:

Genesis 19: 12-29

Seven years of famine:

Genesis 41: 25-57

The Plagues:

Exodus 5, 7, 8 ,9, 10, 11, 12

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ing to start now. This is not to say we have not had excellent brethren from this generation, but they are the exception and not the norm. They apparently did not hear the message “don’t be a square!” As a fraternity we need to accept this, decide enough time and effort has been spent trying to bring that horse to water, and focus on bringing the next generation to Masonry.

It is this next generation which has enthusiastically embraced all of the traditions of Masonry. Men aged 21-45 are excited about learning the work, learning the lessons, and learning the history and traditions that have made Masonry great. Young men are looking for something traditional in an untraditional world; something to be a part of that is bigger than their self; something to make sense of the personal, spiritual and patriotic pride they feel but do not see in our society. The Young Masons Program has talked to hundreds of young masons and we have yet to talk to a single one who said they regret taking the time to learn the

work or think we should do away with it. They have acknowledged it was a lot of work but have also said they feel better for having done it. The very thing attracting young men to Masonry is what some well intentioned but very misguided brethren are arguing to do away with.

I am not saying the esoteric work is the be all and end all to Masonry, but it is a lot like boot camp. Can you imagine the readiness of the Marines, Navy, Army or Air Force without boot camp. How effective would the Marine Corp be if they let anyone who wanted to be a Marine skip boot camp? I am not suggesting that candidates be required to get the esoteric work letter perfect but they should be required to try to learn it. I understand some people will really struggle but by the end they will understand the ideas and concepts behind it because much more is being learned and achieved by teaching the work than just memorizing words. If a person does not want to try to learn the esoteric work maybe they should reevaluate why they want to be a

Mason. If candidates do not have the time to try to learn it, maybe they should consider joining at a better time in their life or join another civic group with fewer membership requirements. If a person does not have the time to become a Mason, they will not have the time to be a Mason. What makes you a Mason? Not a dues card.

Do you wish to increase membership? Then go to work. There is nothing more rewarding in Masonry than taking the time to teach another brother their work. Not only will it help you, but I bet you come away from it with a very good friend. Get your new Masons involved in the ritual by encouraging them to participate in the degrees and set them a goal of conferring a degree. Build a community around your Lodge. What are you doing outside of Lodge to include the families? Get the families involved and offer more to your new Masons than just a seat on the sidelines. It does not take much more than a little determination and a desire to make a difference for your Lodge.