

# Trestleboard

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### Inside this issue:

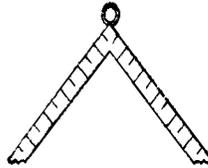
- The Master's Column 1
- History of St. Valentine's Day 2
- Calendar of Events 2
- Masons in History 3

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<http://Planomasoniclodge.org>



## Back East



Brethren:

### Why Graded Degrees??

Performing graded degrees is both challenging and fun and at the same time they bring special recognition to the lodge. All that being said, those are the least of the reasons we should strive to perform graded degrees.

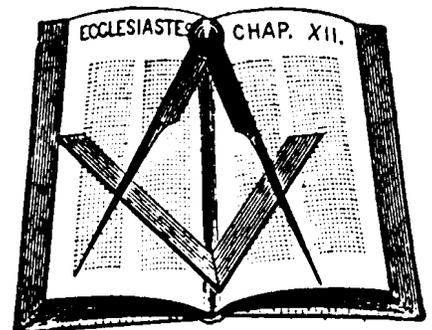
Preparing for a graded degree is an absolute learning experience that increases your own proficiency in many aspects of each different degree. As a lodge, we owe our candidates the best degree we can possibly conduct. Our great lessons of morality and living a good life are taught through our degrees and the explanations of them in the proficiency exams for each degree. If we do a half-hearted degree without properly portraying to our candidate the best example for him to study, we have failed in our purpose. At each step of a Masonic career, a candidate participates in a conferral, studies for a proficiency, stands examination and, moves to the next step. We stress to each person the best teacher they can have is to come watch the work and to participate in the degree they are studying so

all those words have a deeper meaning and are easier to commit to memory. What could be more confusing or more discouraging than seeing a degree done poorly??

Saying each phrase correctly at the right time and being in the proper place in the lodge room at all times reinforces these lessons. Doing it right makes it a beautiful degree that leaves a lasting impression and teaches the real lessons we are trying to impart. Besides that, it makes you feel really good to do your part in a degree and have the brothers come by and say "great job, you nailed that one". So let's work on doing it right so we can teach these lessons to the candidate correctly and if our egos get stroked a little, consider that a bonus.

In the light

R. Gene Blackmore



## Saint Valentine's Day

### A Short History

Through the ages, many cultures have paused to celebrate love and romance mid-February.

We may owe our observance of Valentine's Day to the Roman celebration of Lupercalia, a festival of eroticism that honored Juno Februata, the goddess of "feverish" (febris) love. Annually, on the ides of February, love notes or "billets" would be drawn to partner men and women for feasting and adult game playing.

To moderate this behavior and turn this "feast of the flesh" into a "ritual for romance", the early Church selected St. Valentine (Valentinus) to compete with the pagan goddess Juno. And since Valentinus had been martyred on February 14, the Church could preempt the annual February 15 celebration of Lupercalia by a day. The only problem was Valentinus was a chaste man, unschooled in the art of love.

To make the chaste Saint more appealing to lovers, the Church "embellished" his life story a little bit. According to legend, Valentinus ignored a decree from Emperor Claudius II that forbade all marriages and betrothals of young men eligible for military service. Caught in the act, Valentinus was imprisoned and sentenced to death for secretly conducting these wedding ceremonies.

While imprisoned, the future Saint cured a blind girl (the jailer's daughter). The poor girl fell madly in love with Valentinus, but could not save him. On the eve of his execution, Valentinus managed to slip a parting message to the girl. The note, of course, was signed "From your Valentine."

Despite the efforts of the Church, Valentine's Day continued to echo Lupercalia in at least one respect - men and women, married or single, would draw lots to select a "valentine." Once paired, the couples exchanged gifts

and sometimes love "tokens."

The custom of lottery drawings to select Valentines persisted well into the eighteenth century. Gradually, a shift took place and no longer did both parties exchange gifts. Instead, gift-giving became solely the responsibility of the man.

This new twist brought to an end the random drawing of names, since many men were unhappy about giving gifts (sometimes very costly) to women who were not of their choosing. Now that individuals were free to select their own Valentine, the celebration took on a new and much more serious meaning for couples.

The first written valentine is usually attributed to the imprisoned Charles, Duke of Orleans. In 1415, Charles fought his lonely confinement by writing romantic verses for his wife. By the sixteenth century written valentines were so common that St. Francis de Sales, fearing for the souls of his English flock, sermonized against them.

Valentines cards, decorated with Cupids and hearts, appeared near the end of the eighteenth century. A valentines card became the most popular way to declare love during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Miniature works of art, the cards were usually hand painted and were often lavishly decorated with laces, silk or satin, flowers (made from the feathers of tropical birds), glass filigrees, gold-leaf or even perfumed sachets.

Did you know that the current popularity of St. Valentine's Day owes much to the modern postal service? Until the mid-1800's, the cost of sending mail was far beyond the means of the average person. Even worse, the postal service demanded payment from the recipient, not the sender, of the letter. Until the advent of the penny post, most valentine cards were hand delivered by the prospective suitor.

Happy Valentine's Day.

## The Chuckwagon



February is the month to show your brotherly love and affection to the two people who cook and clean-up

after you week after week and never complain if you come home late...your Stewards.

February dinner menu:

**3 - Tex-mex casserole**

**10 - Smothered pork chops**

**17 - Chicken Noodle Soup**

**24 - Chili**

### Scripture for February

#### On Brotherly Love:

**John 15: 12-17**

**I John 4: 7-14**

#### Submission to civil authority:

**I Peter 2: 13-20**

#### On women:

**Jeremiah 31: 22**

# Masons in History — George Washington

## Source:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/gw1.html>

On April 30, 1789, George Washington, standing on the balcony of Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York, took his oath of office as the first President of the United States. "As the first of every thing, in our situation will serve to establish a Precedent," he wrote James Madison, "it is devoutly wished on my part, that these precedents may be fixed on true principles."

Born in 1732 into a Virginia planter family, he learned the morals, manners, and body of knowledge requisite for an 18th century Virginia gentleman.

He pursued two intertwined interests: military arts and western expansion. At 16 he helped survey Shenandoah lands for Thomas, Lord Fairfax. Commissioned a lieutenant colonel in 1754, he fought the first skirmishes of what grew into the French and Indian War. The next year, as an aide to Gen. Edward Braddock, he escaped injury although four bullets ripped his coat and two horses were shot from under him.

From 1759 to the outbreak of the American Revolution, Washington managed his lands around Mount Vernon and served in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Married to a widow, Martha Dandridge Custis, he devoted himself to a busy and happy life. But like his fellow planters, Washington felt himself exploited by British merchants and hampered by British regulations. As the quarrel with the mother country grew acute, he moderately but firmly voiced his resistance to the restrictions.

When the Second Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia in May 1775, Washington, one of the Virginia delegates, was elected Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. On July 3, 1775, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, he took command of his ill-trained troops and embarked upon a war that was to last six grueling years.

He realized early that the best strategy was to harass the British. He reported to Congress, "we should on all Occasions avoid a general Action, or put anything to

the Risk, unless compelled by a necessity, into which we ought never to be drawn." Ensuing battles saw him fall back slowly, then strike unexpectedly. Finally in 1781 with the aid of French allies--he forced the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Washington longed to retire to his fields at Mount Vernon. But he soon realized that the Nation under its Articles of Confederation was not functioning well, so he became a prime mover in the steps leading to the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia in 1787. When the new Constitution was ratified, the Electoral College unanimously elected Washington President

He did not infringe upon the policy making powers that he felt the Constitution gave Congress. But the determination of foreign policy became preponderantly a Presidential concern. When the French Revolution led to a major war between France and England, Washington refused to accept entirely the recommendations of either his Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, who was pro-French, or his Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, who was pro-British. Rather, he insisted upon a neutral course until the United States could grow stronger.

To his disappointment, two parties were developing by the end of his first term. Wearied of politics, feeling old, he retired at the end of his second. In his Farewell Address, he urged his countrymen to forswear excessive party spirit and geographical distinctions. In foreign affairs, he warned against long-term alliances.

Washington enjoyed less than three years of retirement at Mount Vernon, for he died of a throat infection December 14, 1799. For months the Nation mourned him.

## Calendar of Events for February

### Plano Lodge Events

**Feb 3** - Stated Meeting

**Feb 10** – TBD degree

**Feb 17** – TBD degree

**Feb 24** – TBD degree

**Feb 26** – George Washington Dinner

### Events for the Super-Mason

- Scottish Rite Valley of Dallas stated meeting Feb 14th.
- Hella Shrine stated meeting Feb 17th.
- Plano Assembly Rainbow #320, Feb 8th & 22nd.
- Plano Chapter #703 Order Of Eastern Star Feb 21st.
- Plano Shrine Club meeting Feb 24, 6:30 Los Rios CC

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<p><b>George Washington Dinner</b></p> <p>Saturday, February 26</p> <p>Plano East High School Cafeteria</p> <p>3000 Los Rios Blvd (East of 75, North of Park)</p> <p>Doors open at 5:00PM.</p> <p>Food served at 6:00PM.</p> <p>Al Drew's famous Bar-B-Q will be served. This event is open to everyone so bring your family, friends, and anyone you think may be interested in Masonry...or just wants to eat a great dinner.</p> <p>Cost: Free.</p>	<p><b>Blood Drive</b></p> <p>Saturday, April 30</p> <p>Plano Lodge</p> <p>First bleeding at 7:00AM.</p> <p>Last bleeding at 3:00PM.</p> <p>Breakfast and a Bar-B-Q lunch will be served.</p> <p>The Gift of Life Blood Drive for the Scottish Rite Hospital is very important to the lodge. Please take the time to come give blood for the children.</p> <p>Contact JJ Miller for more information.</p> <p>Cost: Free. (You cannot beat the cost.)</p>	<p><b>Adopt a Chair Program</b></p> <p>The Adopt-A-Chair Program is still available.</p> <p>Chairs are \$100.00 each.</p> <p>This is an excellent way remember a loved one and/or leave a little something of yourself in your lodge forever.</p> <p>If you would like to purchase a chair, see Larry Kester.</p> <p>He also has Lodge name tags available for approx. \$6.75.</p>
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