

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

This month we have a mixed bag of articles for your pleasure, education and entertainment. Many of you will be familiar with the works and voice of Mel Blanc and his story is quite remarkable.

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EMPTY CHAIRS IN THE LODGE ROOM

We are familiar with the game of "Musical Chairs" in which those playing march around a group of chairs, one chair less than the number of players and when the music stops, the person that is unable to find a seat is out of the game. As the game progresses, a chair is removed so that there is always one chair less than the number of players. The winner of the game is the last person to be seated in the remaining chair. The Wrecking Crews of Shrine Temples have dreamed up many versions of it, as well as other groups and organizations.

How different is the game of life and the "Empty Chairs" in our Lodge rooms and Masonic temples, Instead of not enough chairs for the players, there are not enough players for the chairs. At times this is true even of the officer chairs. This sad fact is not confined to the Lodges with a small membership, many of their members being more faithful in attendance than members in larger Lodges. Of course if all of the membership of any Lodge were to be in attendance at a meeting, there would not be enough chairs for each. This would really be something to see and a pleasure to any Worshipful Master and his officers to be faced with this type of problem.

Recently, while attending a Scottish Rite Society Chapter meeting, it was necessary to set up another table to accommodate all in attendance. The chapter president, being nervous about the small confusion and delay that resulted, started to apologize. We told him that he was to be congratulated. We further advised him that instead, this is considered a sign of a successful meeting regardless of the planned program or even the food that would be served. It is definitely deemed a measure of success when more tables and chairs are needed to accommodate those present. Often there is an abundance of food, especially when ladies of the O.E.S., Amaranth, or White Shrine are in charge of the dinner.

Many things contribute to the "Empty Chairs" in our Lodges. Pressing business in this modern day and time causes Brethren to want to stay at home and relax at the end of their day in the business world. Many are prevented by health, distance and other obligations from being in attendance. Some are just, shall we say, lazy. Some, we feel, never learned the lessons of seeking more light in Masonry when they receive their degrees. Perhaps this is due to the manner in which the degree was conferred. Others have become disinterested for various reasons.

Attendance at meetings of Lodges can be increased in many ways. Often we hear the expression that "They don't do anything; just the same old open and close and pay the bills." Doesn't this give your Lodge officers an idea? One of the best ways to encourage enthusiasm is through the example set by officers of a Lodge; not only in their prompt attendance, but by good (creditable) performance in their stations and places. The officers should also know their duties and work in the degrees, performing their functions in a dignified and impressive manner so that the beautiful lessons of our beloved Fraternity are fully exemplified and taught to the candidates.

Many Brethren sitting on the sidelines have never heard the complete sections of the degrees given. Recently it was my pleasure to hear the second and third sections of the Master Mason degree given perfectly in a most profound manner to three newly raised Master Masons. As often as this writer has heard them and even given them myself in the past, I was duly impressed and considered my time well spent by being present for the lectures as well as the degrees.

If degree work is not scheduled, we suggest that you plan your meeting so that there is something of interest for everyone. A short talk on the Constitution and Code, our Masonic law, would be informative and interesting to many of the members, especially new Brethren.

Also, short talks on subjects that are not associated with Masonry. How about sports, current legislation, schools, programs, of civic clubs and other fraternal organizations, films on recreation and related subjects, unique businesses. The list is unlimited if you really search. State agencies have speakers and films available on nearly everything.

Do the unusual and watch the results. We can fill those "Empty Chairs" if we really try. Always plan so that there is no conflict with Masonic laws and customs in doing the unusual.

Editor Unknown

Seven Liberal Arts & Sciences

In the candidates progress through the Degrees of Freemasonry, he is admonished to conduct a study of the Liberal Arts, more especially that of Geometry. This paper is intended to offer not only a focus on Geometry but to take a closer look at all of the Seven Liberal Arts & Sciences. The intent here is to provide reference material for the serious student. Hopefully it will be of benefit.

Grammar teaches the proper arrangements of words, according to the idiom or dialect of any particular people; and enables us to speak or write a language with accuracy, agreeably to reason and correct usage.

Rhetoric teaches us to speak copiously and fluently on any subject, not merely with priority, but with all the advantages of force and elegance; wisely contriving to captivate the hearer by strength of argument and beauty of expression, whether it be to entreat or exhort, to admonish or applaud.

Logic teaches us to guide our reason discreetly in the general knowledge of things, and direct our inquiries after truth. It consists of a regular train of argument, whence we infer, deduce, and conclude, according to certain premises laid down, admitted, or granted, and in it are employed the faculties of conceiving, judging, reasoning, and disposing; which are naturally led on from one graduation to another, till the point in question is finally determined.

Arithmetic teaches the powers and properties of numbers; which is variously effected by letters, tables, figures, and instruments. By this art reasons and demonstrations are given for finding out any certain number, whose relation or affinity to others is already known.

Geometry treats of the powers and properties of magnitudes in general, where length, breadth, and thickness, are considered. By this science, the architect is enabled to construct his plans; the general, to arrange his soldiers; the engineer to mark out ground for encampments; the geographer, to give us the dimensions of the world, delineate the extent of seas, and specify the divisions of empires, kingdoms, and provinces; and by it, also, the astronomer is enabled to make his observations, and fix the durations of times and seasons, years and cycles. In fine, Geometry is the foundation of architecture, and the root of the mathematics.

Music teaches the art of forming concords, so as to compose delightful harmony, by a proportional arrangement of acute, grave, and mixed sounds. This art, by a series of experiments, is reduced to a science, with respect to tones and the interval of sound only. It inquires into the nature of concords and discords, and enables us to find out the proportion between them by numbers.

Astronomy is that art by which we are taught to read the wonderful works of the Almighty Creator in those sacred pages, the celestial hemisphere. Assisted by astronomy, we observe the options, measures the distances, comprehend the magnitudes, and calculate the periods and eclipses, of the heavenly bodies. By it we learn the use of the globes, the system of the world, and the primarily law of nature. While we are employed in the study of this science, we perceive unparalleled instances of wisdom and goodness, and through the whole of creation trace the glorious Author by his works.

There are great truths at the foundation of Freemasonry, truths which it is its mission to teach and which is constituted very essence of, that sublime system which gives the venerable institution its peculiar identity as a science or morality, and it behooves every discipline diligently to ponder and inwardly digest.

By: William Preston 1812

LEVEL



In Latin **libra** was a balance, the root of our libration, equilibrium; **libella** was the diminutive form of the same word, and from it has come our level, an instrument by which a balance is proved, or by which may be detected the horizontal plane. It is closely associated in use with the plumb, by which a line perpendicular to the horizontal is proved. The level is that on which there are no inequalities, hence in Masonry it is correctly used' as a symbol of equality. "We meet upon the level" because Masonic rights, duties, and privileges are the same for all members with-out distinction.

Source: 100 Words in Masonry

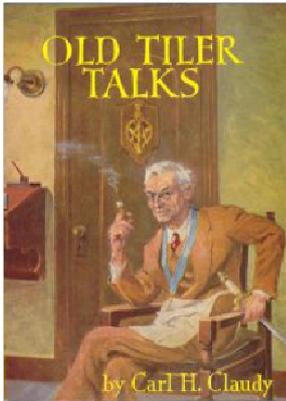
Lodge Birthdays

Derek Butterfield	37 (J HM)
Jock Hannaford	37 (J HM)
Doug Bailey	10
Kevin Green	6
Jim Woodford	5

News from the South

Congratulations to Bro. Garry Jordan & wife Theresa on the birth of their new daughter on 11th January in Tasmania.

Preparations are well in hand for the Installation meeting in March.



Old Tiler Talks— Bluff

"You are the only man in the lodge I can talk to and say what I think!" announced the New Brother to the Old Tiler.

"Do you think me the only one with understanding, or am I the only man stupid enough not to take exception to your remarks?" smiled the Old Tiler.

"I don't exactly know," confessed the New Brother. "You are not offended when I say that which you don't agree. For instance, I think there is a lot of bluff about Freemasonry. You won't get offended with me; you'll probably convince me I don't know what I am talking about."

"Assuredly I am not offended," answered the Old Tiler, "but give me some examples of Masonic Bluff. To me, the fraternity seems honest, upright, aboveboard, simple, sincere."

"Oh! It intends to be," rejoined the New Brother, impatiently. "But it does bluff. For instance, we prate about 'Masonic light,' 'further light,' 'more light,' yet Masonry never gives it to you!"

"Don't you mean it never gives it so an ignorant and unintelligent man can understand it? I have been Tiler for more years than you have lived. I have grown old and gray in Masonry, always getting a little more light through its gentle ministrations. Now you try to tell me it is all a bluff!"

"There, there, old chap, don't get sore! I am puzzled as to why we promise so much and give so little."

"I think we promise much and give more!" retorted the Old Tiler. "We give the path at the end of which the light shines in glorious brightness. Masonry is not a school, a college, a university. It doesn't attempt to hold classes, to use textbooks, to pump the young and uninformed mind full of information. It veils its truths and their application in symbolism and allegory. Masonry points the way to study, to new vistas, to a new beauty to life, a new truth to philosophy, a new meaning to religion.

"The simple facts and the simpler faith of the ritual are learned in a couple of lessons. But the inner meaning requires many lessons. Earnest students have spent their lives trying to reach the bottom of the well of information which is Masonry, nor ever plumbed its depths. Masonry teaches men how to think, and to think for themselves. Masonry teaches men the real beauty of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Masonry instills into men's minds a new conception of God. It makes no difference what religion you follow; Masonry amplifies it, clarifies it, and helps you to understand it. No man with a heart in his breast and a brain in his head can stand before a Masonic Altar without a new conception of his relations with his fellow men. If he hears with deaf ears he is a Mason in name only.

"Masonry's ritual is a key by which to read the symbols. If you are lazy, or unable to think, Masonry safeguards herself by requiring effort of you. If she wrote every truth she has, she would cast the pearls of her wisdom before the swine of brethren who cannot appreciate her. The winding tortuous road of knowledge is difficult; Masonry's wisdom is only for those with the brains and the perseverance to pursue her secrets through her symbols into the broad light of understanding."

"You mean that if I find the 'further light' of Masonry a bluff the fault is in me and not in Masonry?"

"Absolutely! That so many learned men devoted their lives to fathoming Masonry should show the young Mason that when he is entitled to wear the square and compasses he has just begun! Masonry has vast knowledge, but only for those who look. Masonry gives a wonderful reward, but only for those who are willing to follow where she leads.

"The bluff in Freemasonry is in the minds of brethren who expect all and give nothing; who try to appear Master Masons when they are but lodge members. The bluff is not in the system of philosophy we call Masonry, but in the unthinking, dull-witted, unimaginative, and non-useful members of the lodge who are Masons in name only!"

"Ouch!" cried the New Brother, "I shall go away from this company to hunt the library!"

A MASON'S WIFE

From active Masons, resolute,
Our wives and families we salute;
We surely know the price you pay,
Who sit alone while we're away.

No high degrees on you conferred,
In Lodge, your name is seldom heard;
You serve our cause though out of sight,
While sitting home alone tonight.

Masonic papers list our names,
Awards are given, fit to frame;
But yours is absent...you who strive,
To keep our fortitude alive.

You're part of every helpful deed,
On your encouragement we feed;
Without your blessings, how could we,
Continue acts of charity?

And so, this poem, we dedicate,
To every Master Mason's mate;
And offer our undying love,
Rewards await in Heaven above.

WHICH ARE YOU?

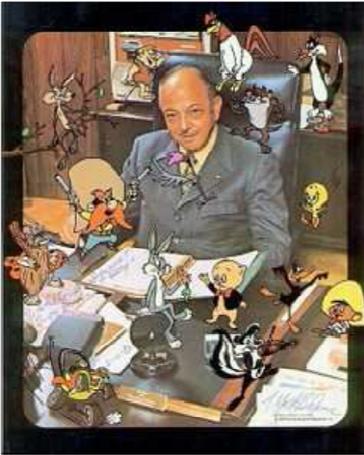
Some members keep a group so strong,
While others join just to belong,
Some dig right in; serve with pride,
Some go along just for the ride.

Some volunteer to do their share,
While some lie back and just don't care,
Some do their best, some help, some make;
Some do nothing, only take.

Some greet new members with a smile,
And make their coming so worthwhile,
While some go on their merry way,
No greeting or kind word to say.

Some help the group to grow and grow,
When asked to help they don't say "No!"
Some drag, some pull, some don't, some do:
Consider, which of these are you?

Famous Freemasons—Mel Blanc



People of my generation long before the television became readily available will remember the Saturday morning matinee, the local picture house that took us on a two hour journey of the magic of the silver screen and introduced us to the likes of the Lone Ranger, Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers overcoming the bad guys in the old Wild West. (Did you know that the good guys always wore white hats?) Flash Gordon was busy fighting Emperor Ming trying to save the Universe, and Buck Rogers was waking up after a 500 year sleep to find the Earth was ruled by the ruthless Killer Kane. These 12-part serials kept us on the edge of our seats with the weekly episode ending in a cliff-hanger which would keep us in suspense, wondering if Dale Rogers who was tied to the railway tracks would be rescued in the nick of time as the train came thundering down on her, or if Flash Gordon would be able to escape from his spaceship as it was hurtling out of control and speeding towards the ground and certain death.

The following Saturday would show Roy Rogers galloping down at the last moment to save Dale, and Flash waking up just in time to prevent the spaceship crashing. Great stuff, the adventure serial would normally be followed by a one-reel film, sometimes two, and then for many the highlight of the Saturday morning, the animated cartoons of Merrie Melodies and Looney Tunes, starring Bugs Bunny, Woody Woodpecker, Daffy Duck, Sylvester the Cat, Foghorn Leghorn and Pepe Le Pew to name just a few, and anyone who has seen these Warner Brothers cartoons over the years has heard the voice of Brother Mel Blanc, the man of a 1000 voices, voices that are instantly recognised by countless millions around the world.

Melvin Jerome Blank was born in 1908 in San Francisco, California. The family moved to Portland, Oregon where Mel attended school and was raised. It was during his formative years that he changed the spelling of his name to Blanc because a teacher told him *'he would amount to nothing, and be like his name a blank.'* This made him more determined and he started 'entertaining students and teachers, getting big laughs, but lousy grades.' It was in these early days as a teenager at high school he created the cackle that would later become the familiar sound of Woody Woodpecker. When Mel reached 17 in 1925 he was initiated into the Order of DeMolay at the Sunnyside Chapter in Portland.

The Order of DeMolay, is an organisation for young men between the ages of 12 and 21 and is modelled on Freemasonry, Mel would remain active in the Order for the rest of his life and in 1987 he was inducted into the DeMolay Hall of Fame. He said this at the time; *"I have been a member of DeMolay for sixty-three years. I thank God and DeMolay for helping me become kind and thoughtful to my parents and all my friends. I had many opportunities to do the wrong things, and I might have done them, if it were not for DeMolay. God bless them."*

On leaving High school at the age of 19 he started out in show business, he was an accomplished musician able to play the bassist, violin and sousaphone and appeared with various orchestras until he became known as a 'voice actor' appearing on local radio shows where his ability to mimic and create different voices was soon in big demand. In 1931 aged 23 he joined Freemasonry in Portland Midway Lodge No.188, and continued to take an active part in the Craft all his life, although it is probably his work in the Shriners Organisation that Mel is best known for, he joined the Shriners in 1951.

He married Estelle in 1933 and began his own radio show and it was at this period that he began to specialise in comic voices. In 1935 Mel and Estelle moved to Los Angeles and continued to work in radio, he soon joined 'The Jack Benny show' where he was a regular cast member for 20 years. Mel would later make the transition to television in 1950 with Benny. In 1936 after trying for 18 months to get work with Warner Brothers he eventually was taken on and worked on their animated cartoons, his first major role was Porky Pig, and then he created perhaps his most famous voice Bugs Bunny the next year. The producer of Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies Leon Schlesinger knew he had a gold mine in Mel Blanc and signed him to an exclusive contract in 1940 and soon the infectious laugh of Woody Woodpecker was being heard in cartoons all over the world.

Other voices came following and Mel created all the memorable cartoon voices he ever did, including Sylvester, Tweety, Daffy Duck, Foghorn Leghorn, Woody Woodpecker, The Road Runner, Speedy Gonzales, Tasmanian Devil, Pepe LePew, Marvin the Martin and one which is maybe not so well known, the voice of Barney Rubble in the Flintstones. The voices he created are still well known to this day, 7 decades later. Mel Blanc's career rise was meteoric, and he was in constant demand in radio, television and commercials, and 1950 saw him release a record, "I Tawt I Taw a Puddy Tat." The song was sung by Mel in the voices of Tweety Pie and Sylvester, and sold over 2 million records reaching number 9 in the USA and number 1 in the UK. In 1962 in the Pat Boone "Speedy Gonzales" record, Mel voiced Speedy Gonzales, 'The fastest mouse in all Mexico,' which was a huge hit.

During Mel's early time with Warner Brothers, 'voice artists' on cartoons were not given any screen credit, and he suggested to the producer they could add his name as a 'Voice Characterisationist' rather than give him the rise in wages he wanted. The producer readily agreed as it would save money and from then on, only Mel Blanc's name as a voice actor was seen in the end credits of those that had worked on the cartoon. The publicity that created quickly brought Mel to the public's eye and brought him even more work on the Radio, then eventually television. In the early 60's Warner Bros., decided to move away from animated cartoons and Mel went to Hanna-Barbera and worked on The Flintstones, providing the voices of Barney Rubble and Fred's pet dinosaur, Dino. He also worked on most of the popular Hanna-Barbera cartoons of that period. It was while working on the Flintstones that Mel was involved in a near fatal car accident, and ended up in a coma.

The doctors treating him tried without success to get him to come out of the coma, until a doctor fan of the cartoons said, "Bugs? Bugs Bunny? Are you there?" The doctors treating him tried without success to get him to come out of the coma, until a doctor fan of the cartoons said, "Bugs? Bugs Bunny? Are you there?"

The producers of the Flintstones desperate that the show should remain in production set up recording equipment in Mel's hospital room and with the rest of his co-stars recorded the soundtrack for the episodes from his bed!

In 1975 along with his son Noel, Mel branched out and formed his own Production Company, continuing to work in Cartoons and did more work on Television Commercials where his voice characters were in great demand. One of his last performances was in the 1988 feature film "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" when he provided the voice of Daffy Duck, and when Mel Blanc passed away at the age of 81, in appreciation to him, Warner Brothers ran a colour ad showing Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Foghorn Leghorn, Tweety Pie, Sylvester, Yosemite Sam and a few others, all with their heads bowed and voices stilled. His gravestone in Hollywood is inscribed, "That's All Folks."

Mel Blanc 'the man of 1000 voices' is best remembered for his voice, and the cartoon characters he portrayed, but the work he did for the Show Business Shrine Club of Al Malaikah Temple when he put on the Masonic Fez and helped children in need is legendary, he speaks of his association with the Craft in his autobiography, 'That's not all Folks!'

"I'd always tried to help others as much as I could; now I was truly determined to perform more mitzvahs, the Yiddish word for good deeds, especially for incapacitated children. As soon as I was able to get around, I stepped up my number of appearances at Masonic and Shriners' children's hospitals.

I had become a Mason in 1931, when I was still living in Portland, and a Shrine Mason in 1951. Because its 850,000 members wear black-tasseled red fezzes, or tarbooshes, and belong to the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, all sorts of misconceptions persist about the Shrine. It is not some Middle Eastern religious cult but an international fraternity founded in New York over a century ago.

Four presidents have been prominent members, including Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman. And what of the Masons' and Shriners' foreign-sounding salutation "es Selamu Aleikem"? It simply means, "Peace be with you." The Shrine is dedicated to philanthropy, operating a network of free orthopedic hospitals and burn institutes for kids under eighteen. When I was a teenager, I used to pass by the Portland Shriners hospital, located not far from my parents' home. Hearing about the work they did with crippled children was what initially piqued my interest in the fellowship and prompted me to seek admission.

I've visited many of their facilities and have spent countless hours with the youngsters. I don't know who appreciates whom more, me or them. "Do Bugs Bunny!" "Do Tweety!" they never fail to shout excitedly. Hopefully I'm able to bring them laughter and a respite from their pain. But it in no way equals the untold enrichment they bring to my life with each smile. There isn't a time that I walk out of their rooms without tears in my eyes. Honestly, sometimes I don't know how I manage to blink them back until I'm out the door. One thing I do know: Visiting these brave kids makes you count your blessings, and your own troubles seem very small by comparison.

Returning to the Los Angeles Shriner's Hospital for the first time since my accident was very emotional for me. I'd always taken my talent for granted before, but as I sat talking in Sylvester's voice to a darling little girl; I thanked God for not revoking this undeserved gift."



With acknowledgement to SRA 76

EPITAPH

It matters not, whatever your lot
Or what your task may be,
One duty there remains for you,
One duty stands for me.
Be you a Doctor skilled and wise,
Or do your work for wage,
A labourer upon the street,
An artist on the stage;
One glory still waits for you,
One honour that is fair,
To have men say, as you pass by:
"That fellow's on the Square."

Ah, here's a phrase that stands for much,
'Tis good old English, too;
It means that men have confidence
in everything you do.
It means that what you have, you've earned,
And that you've done your best,
And when you go to sleep at night
untroubled you may rest.
It means that conscience is your guide,
And honour is your care;
There is no greater praise than this:
"That fellow's on the Square."

And when I die I would not wish
A lengthy epitaph;
I do not want a headstone large,
carved with fulsome chaff.
Pick out no single deed there be,
To engrave upon my monument,
For those who come to see.
Just this one phrase of all I choose,
To show my life was fair:
"Here sleepeth now a fellow,
Who was always on the square."

The Old Sea Captain

I sailed my ship for many a day
Across the stormy sea,
Many a ruffian I have carried
Never refused but three.

They met me on a summer day
And saw my gallant ship,
Seeking passage to the other side
Upon a hurried trip.

They offered all the gold they had
Mixed with a little sass,
That made me kinda hesitate
And ask them for a pass.

They deemed a pass unnecessary
For men of their degree
And insisted that I take my ship
And put it out to sea.

An old man who was standing by
Noted what they said,
Saw them kick me in the ribs
And strike me on the head.

He heard them say they would steal the boat
And put it out to sea,
And sail across to the other side
To some strange country.

But "No," the coward of the bunch,
The one you would think was brave,
Suggested that they turn again
And hide in the mountain cave.

As the days went slowly by
I heard the truth in time.
I found that they were murderers
And guilty of a crime.

Now, as I sail my gallant ship
Until my life has ceased,
I know not who my friends may be

MASONIC WAGES

Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold or silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another; sympathy begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness begets helpfulness, and these are the wages of a Mason.

Bro. Benjamin Franklin, Grand Master of Pennsylvania 1790.

The Entered Apprentice

They made me an Entered Apprentice; they gave me my first degree;
They gave me a base for an honest pride, and took some conceit from me.
I thought I should have attendants whose station and rank were high,
That they who should give me instructions would cater to such as I-

So they made me an Entered Apprentice; and good were the words they said;
Their speech was the speech of wisdom, the lore of the heart and head.
And one was an humble person, a man of the everyday,
Whom oft I had passed by proudly on meeting him in my way.
He spoke, and my bigness dwindled, and out of the circling sky
There seemed to come down a message for me to be measured by.
I got me a newer learning, an inkling of some great plan-
They made me an Entered Apprentice in the building of a man.

And one was a kindly scholar whom many a day I'd seen,
With speech that was firm, yet gentle, and a countenance all serene;
He taught me a wealth of learning that never yet was in schools
And showed me the grief they garner that walk in the way of fools.
The simple, eternal precepts they put in my mind and heart-
They made me an Entered Apprentice and bade me to do my part.

They made me an Entered Apprentice- I was not so proud a man,
A pride that was deeper, newer, that all meaner things must ban
Took place of the old vainglory, and all for my soul's own good,
As dimly the patient teachings began to be understood.
They made me an Entered Apprentice; they gave me my first degree;
They gave me the base for a decent pride, and took some conceit from me.

GAVEL

The common gavel is one of the working tools of an Entered Apprentice. It is made use of by the Operative Mason to break off the corners of the rough ashlar, and thus fit it the better for the builder's use, and is therefore adopted as a symbol in Speculative Freemasonry, to admonish us of the duty of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and impurities of life, thereby fitting our bodies as living stones for that spiritual building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It borrows its name from its shape, being that of the gable or gavel end of a house; and this word again comes from the German gipfel, a summit, top, or peak the idea of a pointed extremity being common to all. The true form of the gavel is that of the stonemasons hammer. It is to be made with a cutting edge, as in the engraving, that it may be used to break off the corners of rough stones, an operation which could never be effected by the common hammer or mallet. The gavel thus shaped will give, when looked at in front, the exact representation of the gavel or gable end of a house, whence, as has been already said, the name is derived. The gavel of the Master is also called a Hiram, because, like that architect, it governs the Craft and keeps order in the Lodge, as he did in the Temple.



Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry

The Almoner

On the occasion of his investiture the Almoner is told that the jewel of his office is a scrip purse upon which is a heart. This is to remind him that the practice of charity is one of the principal objects of our institution. Elsewhere it is stressed that, of all the virtues, charity is selected for the honour of being denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart.

It is not by accident that the dispensing of material assistance and a heartfelt concern for his fellow creatures are linked by the jewel in this manner when describing the Almoner's role. All charity, of whatever its nature, must emanate from or be actuated by the heart if it is to have any real effect.

To paraphrase the prolific writer Paul, in his letter to the men of Corinth, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poorand have not charity" it is of little avail; and again, "Though I speak with the tongues of Angels and have not charity, I become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal".

So, whichever way we look at it, we see the Almoner's role as one of total concern which means that he himself as an individual must be a man of understanding and compassion. He must be concerned about the material well-being of those of his brethren who have fallen on hard times, and about those in the community at large who are in distress. But he must also be concerned for those who are lonely, who are sick, who are frail, are in any way immobilised.

Above all he must be concerned for those who just need a brother's love and understanding. He must be concerned with a continuing concern, for the widow and the fatherless. Indeed, there should be no limit to his compassion. However, in order to carry out his onerous, but very rewarding task, the Almoner must be continually fed up-to-date information by the brethren of his Lodge. No single Almoner could reasonably be expected to be personally aware of the health, the problems, or the difficulties being encountered by all individual members of his Lodge.

This has always been true, but never more so than in these days of a shifting population, when members, once part of a closely-knit community, by force of circumstances may now be scattered far and wide. This makes it all the more important that each brother accepts his personal responsibility to feed the Almoner with every scrap of relevant information which becomes known to him. So often called 'good report' of the Almoner, good because he has nothing to report. Apparently indicating that "God is in His Heaven, and all's right with the World" is merely an incomplete report, showing that the Almoner has not been kept appropriately informed.

There are other sources of information available to the Almoner. For instance, there is the attendance book (assuming he can decipher the signatures) from which he will be able to note absences not accounted for, and which he may follow up. Certainly no resignation of a member of the Lodge should ever be received without the Almoner first being informed so that, where he thinks it appropriate, he may make enquiries to satisfy himself that the reason for resignation is not something which the Lodge may be able to rectify.

This, properly pursued, could result in a potential loss to the Lodge being converted into a revitalised and active member. It is a good idea for the Almoner to keep an up-to-date "Lodge Widows Book" so that the welfare of the widows of deceased brethren may be continually monitored. You see, what were good health and adequate financial circumstances, say, ten or so years ago may not be satisfactory or adequate these days and, indeed, the need quite often grows greater as the years go by. May we all, in our hearts and by our acts, be an Almoner.

Many thanks to Bro. Tom Stirling who supplied this very interesting report from the archives of the Grand Lodge of Victoria.

Humour

Here are the 10 first place winners in an International Pun Contest:

1. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, "I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger."
2. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says, "Dam!"
3. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.
4. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, "I've lost my electron." The other says, "Are you sure?" The first replies "Yes, I'm positive."
5. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.
6. A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?" they asked, as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess-nuts boasting in an open foyer."
7. A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Ahmal." The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him "Juan." Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Ahmal. Her husband responds, "They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmal."
8. A group of friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened up a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to "persuade" them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that only Hugh can prevent florist friars.
9. Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and, with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. This made him (Oh, man, this is so bad, it's good) a super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis.
10. And finally, there was the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. **No pun in ten did**

FIFTY SHADES OF CHOCOLATE—Mr. Cadbury met Miss Rowntree on a Double Decker. It was just After Eight when they got off at Quality Street, and he asked her name. 'Polo: I'm the one with the hole,' she said with a Wispa. 'I'm Marathon, the one with the nuts,' he replied. He touched her Cream Eggs which was a Kinder Surprise for her, then he slipped his hand into her Snickers which made her Ripple. He fondled her Jelly Babies and she rubbed his Tic Tacs. Soon they were Heart Throbs. It was a Fab moment as she screamed in Turkish Delight ... but 3 days later his Sherbet Dip Dab started to itch. It turns out that Miss Rowntree had been with Bertie Bassett and he had Allsorts ...