



THE TRESTLEBOARD



Volume 4, Issue 6

Davy Crockett Lodge #1225 A.F. & A.M.

January 2012

****From The East****

By Patrick Giles Worshipful Master

Fraternal Greetings Brethren,

I hope everyone had a safe and joyous holiday. I spent Christmas in Tennessee with my family. My thanks go out to our Senior Warden who covered for me in my absence and did a very good job from all reports. Special thanks to Bro. Olaf Emblem for the fund raiser for the San Antonio Children's shelter, I was away on business, however it is my understanding there was a good turnout. Thanks to the ladies of Alamo Heights and San Antonio Radiant for sharing their Christmas program with us. As with most holidays, now that they are past, we must return to our labors. We have a lot coming up. In January we have a degree, DDGM official visit, "Bring a Friend Night" and as usual some very good programs lined up. Between February and May we also will have a lot going on and some of the dates are still TBD by the Fund Raising Committee (Annual Chili Cook-Off & Pancake Breakfast & Brisket sale) as we are trying to schedule them so they do not coincide with other events, however I do know one will be in March and the other in early June. Service awards will be in February. Texas Public Schools week is March 5 – 9 however the Lamar Awards will be the last week of March to avoid interfering with TAKS testing. More as we settle on time and dates. And as always you're welcome in lodge come see us! Until next time, blessings upon all.

Davy Crockett Lodge # 1225 A.F. & A.M

Stated Meetings— 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, Meal at 6:30;
Open Lodge at 7:30 for Business Meeting Masonic Philosophy and History during meeting.
Ritual Practice and Instruction 2nd & 4th Tuesdays.
Lodge of Instruction 4th Wed. 6:30 to 8PM
Join Us For Exceptional Fellowship and Instruction!!

Upon the Secretary's Desk!

by Chris Williams

I hope this communication finds you sufficiently recuperating from the hustle and bustle and stress of the holidays. Just know that you have eleven and a half months to fully heal before you have to do it all over again. Sorry. I want to put in a plug for the "Bring a Friend" night on the 31st of this month. We all know men who we know without a doubt are good men and would make good Masons but we go years and years without giving them the opportunity to be a Mason. Everyone loses in this scenario and as a Mason you have to know this. I got so frustrated one time with a man that I said to him, "I really cannot understand why you are not a Mason. You are searching for all the things that Masonry gives a man." Guess what? He is now a Mason. The point is that you have to talk about the Craft. They don't know that they have to ask and they don't know what we are and who we are. Please do your friend and your Lodge a favor and bring them to the Lodge on the 31st. He said he figured that he wasn't qualified because I had never said anything. I never realized that all I had to do is say it.

This Month's Humor

An old Marine Pilot sat down at the Starbucks, still wearing his old USMC flight suit and leather jacket and ordered a cup of coffee. As he sat sipping his coffee, a young woman sat down next to him. She turned to the pilot and asked, 'Are you a real pilot?' He replied, 'Well, I've spent my whole life flying planes, first Stearmans, then the early Grumman.... flew a Wildcat and Corsair in WWII, and later in the Korean conflict, Banshees and Cougars. I've taught more than 260 people to fly and given rides to hundreds, so I guess I am a pilot, and you, what are you?' She said, 'I'm a lesbian. I spend my whole day thinking about naked women. As soon as I get up in the morning, I think about naked women. When I shower, I think about naked women. When I watch TV, I think about naked women. It seems everything makes me think of naked women.' The two sat sipping in silence. A little while later, a young man sat down on the other side of the old pilot and asked: "Are you a real pilot?" He replied, 'I always thought I was, but I just found out I'm a lesbian.'

*******STATED MEETING PROGRAMS *******

**Stated Meeting 1-3-12
Program**

**"Are You Leading a Double Life?"
"Are You Accepting or Rejecting Masonry?"**

**Presented By
PM Bro Chris Williams**

**Stated Meeting 1-17-12
Program**

**Is Masonry a Charitable Organization?"
"The answer may surprise you"**

**Presented By
Brother Olaf Emblem**

**Stated Meeting 2-7-12
Program**

**"The River Jordan, the Sea of Galilee"
"The Dead Sea ~ and Freemasonry"**

**Presented By
PM Brother Bill Gulick**

Light Reflected

A monthly "opinion" by
Brother Bradley Kohanke, 32

It's been a busy Holiday season and a hectic time at work...and frankly, that 's part of the reason why I am providing you with a copy of my opening remarks from our program in November. But, there is another reason. You see, there were only 53 people in Lodge that day...and more than half of those were not members of the Lodge. Additionally, although I have posted the videos of the talk presented that night on our Facebook Group Page, we currently only have 16 Brethren as members and they are the only ones who are able to see it. So...since only approximately 30 to 40 Brothers have actually seen and/or heard the speech given that night, I thought I would provide the links to Parts 1 & 2 of the presentation given by Victoria Garcia that night. I encourage you to watch by copying and pasting the links into the "http:" section of your browser and enjoy. My opening remarks went something like this:

Those who know me, know that I love controversial topics. They've read my articles and listened to me give presentations about my opinions quite a bit, and frankly they're probably getting a little tired of me by now. But...here I go again...

Before I introduce our Guest Speaker, I want to share another seemingly controversial opinion that I think is relevant, particularly this evening. Freemasonry and its appendent bodies are at war. They always have been...even before were referred to ourselves as Freemasons. We are at war with ignorance...we are at war with intolerance...and we are at war with tyranny. Ever since people have known the difference between good and evil, there have been men and women who have found ways to promote good in the world. At times it was easy, and at times it wasn't. When evil uses ignorance, intolerance, and hate to oppress people, it is difficult to publicly promote good. Hence, we have things like the symbolism of Freemasonry to keep alive the ideals of integrity, honor, honesty, freedom of thought and freedom of expression.

And...whether you choose to admit it or not, it is no coincidence that these ideals are the founding principles of the United States of America. After all, our Founding Fathers were primarily Freemasons. Now...today...each and every one of you is a soldier in that war. How do we fight? By living our lives as examples to others...and by holding true to those principles we know to be good...not for the promise of some unforeseen reward or because of the threat of some unspeakable terror, but because we know them to be good and true.

Oh sure...every once in a while, evil may win a battle and drive us into hiding for a time. But ultimately we are always victorious. Even if it means escaping to a safer place for a time...so that those ideals are kept alive for future generations.

And this, my friends...is what I would like for you to keep in mind this holiday season...and tonight, as we listen to our guest speaker. At some point in your past, one or two of your ancestors had the courage...the foresight...and the fortitude to give up everything they knew and move to this glorious place...so that YOU, a descendent they couldn't have even dreamt of...could live free.

The links to Parts 1 & 2 of the Youtube videos from that night are:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwxqcjJ_UA0

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0Z2SykuPck>

For those of you who haven't been back to Lodge in a while...things have changed a little. We are endeavoring to provide entertaining and educational programs like the one above at each stated meeting, and our Stewards are the best cooks of any Lodge in San Antonio. So, come on back...we'd love to see you!

Warmest wishes to you all for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon

It was going to be (hopefully) a good night. I had been trying to talk my Brother John for a year into coming into town and going to a Lodge meeting at my Lodge. Well he had finally agreed and was supposed to show up tonight. I had checked the bank account to make sure we could buy enough to feed him and put the Stewards on high alert. After I told Doug and Tim who was coming to dinner they started stressing out worrying what to serve and how much to make. Once the shock had worn off a bit I heard them grumbling about hazardous duty pay..... heck they don't get paid now but I understood their worry. John came by the shop to ride with me to the meeting and we made small talk on the way mostly about what happened at the Grand Lodge earlier in the month. He was in a pretty good mood and kept asking me what was on the menu for dinner. I told him I didn't know but our Stewards were the best and I was sure he would have trouble keeping his eyes open during the meeting after he filled his belly. I don't know how they did it but Doug and Tim had come up with the perfect dinner for John. They must have been reading John's column and knew what to fix. When we crossed the threshold into the Lodge the distinct smell of frying chicken was the first thing that met us and I thought I saw John's eyes roll back in his head. I introduced him all around but it was clear that our Stewards were at the top of his buddy list. Pretty soon all was ready and the Worshipful Master asked Bro Vic our Chaplain for a prayer. The WM announced that our visitor would be first in line which was actually unnecessary because John was already grabbing a plate.... no, two plates and had begun filling both. The guys had done well. There was a huge mound of fresh fried chicken and next to that was a big bowl of mashed potatoes and gravy. One of Toni and Olaf's awesome salads was next and that was followed by some mouth watering dinner rolls. He ended up with so much food on his plates that he had to come back to get his drink and eating utensils. He sat down and his table filled up quickly with guys who were, well, curious.

Next Panel

. Some of them attempted to strike up a conversation with him which was doomed to failure. The most they got out of him was a nod and a grunt from time to time. It didn't take him long to finish off the first two plates and head back for more. I have to say it was pretty darn good and I was starting to worry that I wouldn't be able to stay awake in the meeting. Not surprisingly he went back for a third time and I think it was the first time that there was not a speck of food of any kind left at a Stated Meeting. I saw several of the Brothers shaking their heads in disbelief as we all wandered into the Lodge Room for the meeting. Patrick assumed the East and got the Lodge opened and everyone introduced including his rotundness and thanked him for making the Stewards look good. John, carrying at least thirty pounds extra with considerable effort hauled himself to his feet and after being recognized said, "Worshipful Master, These fellers don't need me to make them look good. Heck that was probably the best meal I have ever had in a Lodge and one of the best anywhere. I make a motion that they be given the title of Stewards for Life." Immediately Doug and Tim started waving their hands and shaking their heads and I thought I heard a second from someone. Luckily the WM headed the motion off at the pass and thanked Brother John again. After the pledges to the United States Flag and the State Flag of Texas the meeting settled down into a normal pace. Most of the regular business was handled and we came to the part of the meeting where we always have a Masonic Education Program presented by our "Light Brigade Committee" Brother Brad had the program for this meeting and he had prepared a different and unique program for us. The title was "The Generation Gap. What a Bunch of B.S." None of really knew what he was planning until he set up a CD player for music.Go to page 5...

Masonic Did You Know?

By W. Bro. Dwight Seals

Leroy Gordon Cooper, Jr. (Colonel, USAF, Ret.)

NASA Astronaut (Deceased) PERSONAL DATA: Born March 6, 1927 in Shawnee, Oklahoma. His interests included treasure hunting, archeology, racing, flying, skiing, boating, hunting and fishing. Gordon Cooper passed away on October 4, 2004, at his home in Ventura, California, at the age of 77.

EDUCATION: Attended primary and secondary schools in Shawnee, Oklahoma and Murray, Kentucky; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) in 1956; recipient of an Honorary Doctorate of Science degree from Oklahoma City University in 1967.

ORGANIZATIONS: The Society of Experimental Test Pilots, The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, The American Astronautical Society, The Blue Lodge Masons, The York Rite Masons, The Scottish Rite Masons, The Royal Order of Jesters, The Sojourners, The Rotary Club, The Daedalians, The Confederate Air Force, The Boy Scouts of America, The Girl Scouts of America.

SPECIAL HONORS: The Air Force Legion of Merit, The Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross, The Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross Cluster, The NASA Exceptional Service Medal, The NASA Distinguished Service Medal, USAF Command Astronaut Wings, The Collier Trophy, The Harmon Trophy, The Scottish Rite 33, The York Rite Knight of the Purple Cross, The DeMolay Legion of Honor, The John F. Kennedy Trophy, The Ivan E. Kincheloe Trophy, The Air Force Association Trophy, The Primus Trophy, The John Montgomery Trophy, The General Thomas E. White Trophy, The Association of Aviation Writers Award, The University of Hawaii Regents Medal, The Columbus Medal, The Silver Antelope, The Sport Fishing Society of Spain Award.

EXPERIENCE: Cooper, an Air Force Colonel, received an Army commission after completing three years of schooling at the University of Hawaii. He transferred his commission to the Air Force and was placed on active duty by that service in 1949 and given flight training.

His next assignment was with the 86th Fighter Bomber Group in Munich, Germany, where he flew F-84s and F-86s for four years. While in Munich, he also attended the European Extension of the University of Maryland night school. **NASA EXPERIENCE:** Colonel Cooper was selected as a Mercury astronaut in April 1959.

On May 15-16, 1963, he piloted the "Faith 7" spacecraft on a 22-orbit mission which concluded the operational phase of Project Mercury. During the 34 hours and 20 minutes of flight, Faith 7 attained an apogee of 166 statute miles and a speed of 17,546 miles per hour and traveled 546,167 statute miles.

Cooper served as command pilot of the 8-day 120-revolution Gemini 5 mission which began on August 21, 1965. It was on this flight that he and pilot Charles Conrad established a new space endurance record by traveling a distance of 3,312,993 miles in an elapsed time of 190 hours and 56 minutes. Cooper also became the first man to make a second orbital flight and thus won for the United States the lead in man-hours in space by accumulating a total of 225 hours and 15 minutes.

He served as backup command pilot for Gemini 12 and as backup commander for Apollo X. Colonel Cooper logged 222 hours in space. He retired from the Air Force and NASA in 1970.

**Brother Leroy Gordon Cooper, Jr. belonged to
Carbondale Lodge #82, Carbondale, Colorado.**

Symbolism Corner

The Square and Compasses are the oldest, the simplest and the most universal symbols of Masonry. Nearly everywhere in our Ritual, as in the public mind, the Square and Compasses are seen together. If not interlocked, they are seldom far apart, and the one suggests the other. And that is as it should be, because the things they symbolize are interwoven. In the old days when the earth was thought to be flat and square, the Square was an emblem of the earth, and later, of the earthly element in man. As the sky is an arc or a circle, the implement which describes a Circle became the symbol of the heavenly, or sky spirit in man. Thus the tools of the builder became the emblems of the thoughts of the thinker; and nothing in Masonry is more impressive than the slow elevation of the compasses above the Square in the progress of the Degrees. The whole meaning and task of life is there, for such as have eyes to see. Let us separate the Square from the Compasses and study it alone, the better to see its further meaning and use. There is no need to say that the Square we have in mind is not a Cube, which has four equal sides and angles, deemed by the Greeks a figure of perfection. Nor is it a the square of the carpenter, one leg of which is longer than the other, with inches marked for measuring. It is a small, plain Square, unmarked and with legs of equal length, a simple try-square used for testing the accuracy of angles, and the precision with which stones are cut. Since the try-square was used to prove that angles were right, it naturally became an emblem of accuracy, integrity and rightness. As stones are cut it fit into a building, so our acts and thoughts are built together into a structure of Character, badly or firmly, and must be tested by a moral standard of which the simple try-square is a symbol.



At the December 20th Stated Meeting Brother John Lorch was presented his certificate and pin from the Sam Houston Hall of Fame for his support of the Grand Lodge Masonic Library and Museum by Brother Wes O'Neill WM Protém and Chris Williams DDGM Dist 39-B.

From page 3... He then asked the Worshipful Master if he could rearrange where some of the Brethren were seated in the Lodge and after getting permission he proceeded to move the youngest Brothers and have them sit next to the oldest Brothers. He explained that the generation gap was created by advertisers who created the message that what was ok for a previous generation was not good for the next because it was old and the new generation needed its own identity. He wanted to prove his point by using music. He had prepared two songs from each of the past seven decades. He then read some of the lyrics from the two songs from the 1940's and then played the songs so we could hear the lyrics in the songs. He did the same thing for every decade to the present. His contention which was evident early on was that in seventy years the words to songs have remained pretty much the same but the packaging is what had changed. It was a very good program and as the music was played in each decade I looked at the Brothers who were in their teens and early twenties during that decade and there was pure nostalgia in their faces. I myself was lost in memories of several of the decades and from the looks of many of the other Brothers I was not the only one. I thought it was fantastic but I had no idea of the surprise Brad had for us. He reiterated that the generation gap was mostly made up and then asked the Worshipful Master to raise the Lodge and said, "If you want to know the power that music has to unite us" and he pressed the play button and as one all the Brethren turned, placed their hands on their hearts, and faced the flag as the "Star Spangled Banner" played. It was very moving and then to accommodate our two British Brethren he played, while they sang, "God Save the Queen". I will tell you that there were a lot of Brothers wiping their eyes as they applauded the program. But our Brother Brad wasn't through as he said to all of the Brothers, "I want each and every one of you to grasp the hand of the person sitting next to you with the strong grip of the Lion of the tribe of Judah ...and I don't care if they have long hair, short hair, gray hair, or no hair...look them in the eye and know, (next panel)....."

. "This is my Brother." After all, in the life of an immortal soul, what difference does a few decades make?" Wow, what an ending. It didn't take long to cover the remaining business and tell a couple of funny stories to send the Brothers home smiling before closing the Lodge. I knew there was dessert to have before we left and I hoped John was not starving (wishful thinking) and we could get on home. No such luck though as he made a hard right turn coming out the Lodge Room door as if he was being pulled by some unseen force towards that big chocolate cake on the counter. All I could do is relax and enjoy it because he surely wasn't leaving until he had ~~some~~ a lot of that cake. It was a darn good cake and by the time John had finished with his socializing and eating it was getting pretty late. The only consolation is that I had time to finish transcribing all my minutes which put me ahead of the game for the week. We said goodbye to everyone and we started heading back to his truck. The cake had me all pumped up but he was strangely quiet and when I asked him what the problem was he got real serious sounding and said, "Brother Chris, I cannot tell you how happy I am that I came to visit your Lodge on this particular night." "Why is that, John," I replied. There was a few seconds of silence before he spoke and when he did it was in that slow and deliberate way he talks when something has seriously affected him. I was a little puzzled at what could be wrong when he finally said, "That program that your Brother Brad gave tonight was one of the most profound lectures I have ever heard. It was completely non-Masonic in content but at the same time completely Masonic in meaning. It was dripping with the kind of symbolism and lessons that defines Masons and Masonry." Well I was a little confused but I let him talk....like I had much of a choice. "The allusions to Brothers being "on the Square" with each other no matter what our .. next page..."

“packaging”, old or young, rich or poor, strong or weak was readily obvious,” he continued. “And I saw that most of the Brothers in the Lodge could see that right off the bat. But to the Brother who’s mind was prepared to receive them there were some not so obvious messages and lessons. There was a warning about making sure to always look past the obvious (the internal, not the external) in dealing with people and situations in life, to not judge a book by its cover. The lyrics of one song “call on me Brother, if you need a hand... we all need somebody to lean on”. Not about Masons and Masonry at all..... yet totally describes Masons and Masonry.... exactly what we are and who we are. I saw the Brothers who saw what I saw and I saw them transported back in time. I saw them smiling at the music and I saw them mouthing the words. I saw their foot tapping to the beat and I saw the tears of fond memories forming at the corners of their eyes. Oh yes the Brothers listened and the Brothers understood. Some of them more than others but all in their own way. And it affected me in a big way. It took me back to times and places from long ago.... good times and bad times both, and I realized that all these people today including myself are pretty darn near the same as they were 50, 60, even 70 years ago. We all have the same basic thoughts and dreams, and needs as we did back then and our kids have the same concerns as we did. It was great in so many ways and I won’t forget this night. Heck, I didn’t want it to stop and then he played the National Anthem and I lost it. I haven’t cried in a while my Brother but I did then and I wasn’t the only one. And when he asked every Brother to shake the hand of the Brother next to him with the strong grip of a Master Mason it was a fitting way to end a fantastic program.” Dear readers I just sat there in awe and I have to confess that I was humbled and ashamed that I had not seen all John had. It had affected me also but not to the extent that it had John. The truth be known I was a little angry at myself for not seeing what he saw. .next panel.....

I guess I was just a little jealous of his level of understanding. He must have sensed that in my silence and said, “You know Brother Chris, everyone sees things just a little different than anyone else. The things I see tonight I might not see another time where you might. This really is the beauty of our system of freethinking. Masonry doesn’t tell people what to think or how to think, it instead gives them the tools to think and reason and create and discover on their own.” “Thanks for trying to make me feel better,” I replied with a smile. “But I still wish I had seen the things you did. But now that you have said them I can see them now.” “Brother Chris, you guys should do that program for a family night or somewhere where everyone can see it,” he said. “It is something everyone should see.” He thanked me once again for inviting him as we shared the grip of a Master Mason. I told him he needed to come back after we replenished the kitchen and the treasury. He just smiled knowingly. Y’all have a great month and keep living your Masonry.



"I see the newspapers are suggesting that Freemasons get preferential treatment again."

Calendar for January and February

January 3rd – Stated Meeting (The Program for this meeting will be “Are You Leading a Double Life?” A chance for you to look at your relationship to Masonry through your own eyes.)

January 10th—EA Degree

January 17th – Stated Meeting ... DDGM Chris Williams’ Official visit. (The Program for this meeting will be “Is Masonry a Charitable Organization?” Presented by Brother Olaf Emblem. Olaf says that “Nobody will like the answer. Should be interesting.)

January 24th – Practice or Degree

January 25th – Davy Crockett Lodge of Instruction resumes. Hosted by District Instructor 39B Keith Reynolds and DI 39A Paul Bosenberry.

January 31st -- Bring A Friend Dinner. There will be a short program on Masonry. This is the night to bring someone who you know should be a Mason.

February 7th – Stated Meeting (The Program for this meeting will be The River Jordan, the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea ~ and Freemasonry presented by PM Brother Bill Gulick.)

February 14th – Practice or Degree

February 21st – Stated Meeting _ (The Program for this meeting will be 47 th problem of Euclid, and it about the The Pythagorean Theorem and its relationship to Masonry. Presented by Brother Chris Drzymala)

February 28th -- Practice or Degree

January Birthdays

David Richter

Phillip Atiyeh

John Bowers

J.A. Jones Sr.

John Lee

Fabian Mercado

Donald Starr

George Robbins

Ralph Thomas

Ronald Baker

Wiley Gillit

William Jones

Kenneth Lynn

John Middlestorb

David Tedder

Bob Cox

Louis Bauer

Peter Gerdeman

Bradley Kohanke

Dale McCreight

John Newman

Dan Miller

Julian Cano

Sidney Berkman

Jose Hinojosa

Garry Kosinski

Mark Shaw

James Pollard

Franklin Wright

Happy Birthday Brothers!!

More Humor

A married couple went to the hospital to have their baby delivered.

Upon their arrival, the doctor said that the hospital was testing an amazing new high-tech machine that would transfer a portion of the mother's labor pain to the baby's father. He asked if they were interested. Both said they were very much in favor of it.

The doctor set the pain transfer to 10 percent for starters, explaining that even 10 percent was probably more pain than the father had ever experienced before.

But as the labor progressed, the husband felt fine and asked the doctor to go ahead and kick it up a notch. The doctor then adjusted the machine to 20 percent pain transfer.

The husband was still feeling fine. The doctor then checked the husband's blood pressure and was amazed at how well he was doing.

At this point they decided to try for 50 percent. The husband continued to feel quite well. Since the pain transfer was obviously helping the wife considerably, the husband encouraged the doctor to transfer ALL the pain to him.

The wife delivered a healthy baby with virtually no pain, and the husband had experienced none. She and her husband were ecstatic.

When they got home they found the UPS man dead on the porch.

“Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.”

Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

**A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops.
On my desk, I have a work station.**

*******The Sunday Masonic Paper*******

Thanks to: Wayne Anderson, FCF, MPS

Hiram & Santa

By Jimmy Stevens, 32°

Past Master Garner Lodge #70112

Santa Claus and Hiram Abiff are two legendary figures with which Masons around the world are familiar. As adults, Santa usually evokes in us a smile, fond memories, lighthearted feelings, and serene mental pictures. Hiram calls to mind darker more serious thoughts relating to our mortality and our relationship with the Supreme Architect of the Universe. Nevertheless, both of these legends have quite a great deal in common that may not be immediately obvious. Of course, we know there was actually a very real Santa Claus. He was a man known as Saint Nicholas (left), who was born during the third century in a village in what is now Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering.

But today Santa Claus, his modern representation, has evolved into a mythological figure that serves as a symbol for charity, and love for our fellowmen. So, in Santa Claus we find a progression of stages. As children we understand Santa as a gift-giving kindly old man. As we grow older and began to appreciate the physical impossibilities of Santa Claus' nocturnal journey, we learn the history and mythology behind that figure. Then eventually in time and with age and experience we understand the true meaning of the symbol. Hiram Abiff parallels the same progressive stages.

When we are first introduced to Hiram, he is presented as a real person and Master Architect. Hiram, was in fact a skilled artisan who helped beautify and adorn King Solomon's Temple as recorded in the Book of First Kings. Like Saint Nicholas, Hiram evolves into the mythological figure Hiram Abiff and the details of his story are related to us through ritualistic degree work. At first we only see what is on the surface. As we grow in Masonry however, we realize that quite a lot of the story has been invented and is presented to teach us moral lessons. Eventually, through a virtuous Masonic education, our own endeavors and the help of the

Supreme Architect, we understand the true meaning of the Hiramic legend and how it relates to our growth as Masons and men.

Understanding Santa Claus and understanding Hiram Abiff are both growing processes by which we arrive at the real meaning of each legend. Another parallel to Santa can be seen in how Hiram is struck down and how Santa Claus "dies" in our minds. We are told that Hiram was struck in the throat, the place of our voice. Is it not by word of mouth from our school classmates or older siblings that Santa Claus is also first struck? Hiram was also struck in the chest or heart, the place of our affections. Once our suspicions about Santa are confirmed by our parents or our own sensibility doesn't it almost always break their hearts? We are growing up, but who among doesn't wish Santa really exists, as we first perceived him? Finally, Hiram received a blow to the head, the place of our intellect. Similarly, children who are aware of the true nature of Santa kill the jolly old elf in the minds of other children by ridiculing, with blistering logic, those who still believe in him, until finally there is no belief. After that, it is only with personal growth and acquired wisdom that a person can obtain a full realization of the symbolism of Santa Claus.

This understanding takes time, thought, and guidance from others. But this eventual understanding is what actually inspires us to perpetuate the Santa Claus myth with our own children. Santa Claus, like Hiram Abiff, has life after death, albeit a different life. Is it any wonder that the Christmas tree, like the acacia, is evergreen? Finally, how did you first hear about Santa Claus, and Hiram Abiff? You heard it from the mouth of a person who cared about you and wanted to share a wonderful tradition with you. They probably enjoyed sharing it as much as you enjoyed receiving it. Both legends are perpetuated and passed along generation to generation by word of mouth from parents to children and from Master Masons to candidates.

Santa Claus and Hiram Abiff were two actual historic figures. Their lives inspired legends that have lived for centuries and enriched the lives of those who sought to learn from them. They were two very different men, but their legends contain several parallels and we can be better men and Masons by following their examples.

Every Mason needs to read this!!!!

Fidelity, Masonry and Christmas - A Story

There it sat, wrapped in green paper with drawings of little candy canes, surrounded by a carefully-tied broad red ribbon. The smell of the cookies inside the package lingered in the air. The Master's wife had baked several dozen of the Christmas treats and put them into little parcels to be delivered to the widows of members of the Lodge. The Master had driven around to drop them off, along with a card and a holiday wish from their late husband's brothers in Masonry. But one package remained on the dining room table.

"All of the guys jumped up and volunteered at the last meeting to take these to the widows, but I'm the only one who's been doing it," thought the Master to himself. "I know! I'll call around and see who can deliver the last one."

He punched some numbers into his cell phone. The Senior Warden answered. "Dave, it's Rick," said the Master cheerfully. "Mrs. Wilson's cookies are over here and I was wondering if you could drop them off? We talked to her a few days ago and told her we'd do it tonight, and..."

"Yeah, I'd like to," replied the Senior Warden, "but tonight's a really bad night. You know Thursday's my Warcraft night and I'm kicking ass."

"Can't you play some other night?"

"Not now. I'm the middle of this. Maybe tomorrow, if I'm not at a new level in a few hours."

The Master thanked him and put a call in to the Junior Deacon. "Steve, remember you said you could help deliver the widows' Christmas presents? Mrs. Wilson's is sitting here..."

"I'm sorry," said the Junior Deacon. "I know I said that, but my office Christmas party is tonight and I have to go to that. The boss kind of expects it."

"Can't you say 'no' to him?"

"Well, you know he doesn't have a high opinion of us to begin with because he wants me to work late all the time and I can't if something with the Lodge is happening. Besides, drinks are free. Talk to you next meeting."

The Junior Deacon hung up. Somewhat forlornly, the Master tried a few other members, all of whom had promised they would personally hand out gifts to the widows. But one was going out with some buddies that night. Another was too tired after work. Yet another said the widow lived too far out of the way for him. Still another had a concordant body meeting he wanted to go to. Finally, the Master tried the last person on his list, a Past Master of the Lodge.

"I need your help. Last meeting you said you'd help deliver the widow's gifts. Mrs. Wilson's is sitting here and..."

“Wilson?!” he interrupted. “Did you know her husband? He dumped on me the whole year I was in the chair. He kept giving me hell for all kinds of little things.”

“That doesn’t have anything to do with his widow. It’s a Lodge tradition we go out and deliver...”

“And another thing,” butted in the Past Master. “Last meeting you came down to the altar at the wrong time. And you gave the wrong knocks to close the Lodge. Can’t you follow traditions? Don’t you pay attention at practices or know what’s in your ritual book?”

“We were talking about Mrs. Wilson...”

“Wilson. The hell with him.” With that the cell went dead.

The Master prepared to pick up the lonely little parcel when the phone rang unexpectedly in the other room. He picked up the receiver.

“My name is Mrs. Lane,” the feeble old voice at the other end quavered. “I live next door to Gladys Wilson. I thought I’d better call you. She has been taken to the hospital.”

“What!?” answered the stunned Master.

“I had invited her over for dinner tonight, but she said she couldn’t come because she was waiting for the Masons. She got a little tired while waiting and went to call someone to see if there was a problem, but she slipped on the carpet and fell. I think she had been on the floor for awhile. It looks pretty serious. I thought I’d better call you.”

“My father was a Mason a long time ago,” Mrs. Lane went on. “He didn’t talk about it much, but all I know is when I was a girl during the Depression, the Masons helped us. One Christmas we had nothing. And there was about two feet of snow. But a bunch of the Masons came over with a tree and a huge baked turkey. They put up the tree and decorated it, then we ate the turkey and they sang Christmas carols to me and my three sisters until it was bedtime. It was so wonderful. I learned then that when times are tough, you can depend on the Masons.”

“Thank you for calling me, Mrs. Lane,” said the Master.

“It’s just too bad someone didn’t get here a little earlier because this probably wouldn’t have happened,” added the old woman. “But God bless you Masons.”

“Yes, thanks again,” replied the Master, and gently hung up the phone.

And as the Master put on his jacket, and picked up the little wrapped parcel to take to the hospital in the clear, moon-lit evening, he wondered if the Masons today really were as dependable as their forefathers. Or, if the admonition of not letting “public and private avocations” interfere with Masonry had turned into nothing more than a convenient excuse.

Brethren, this is one I have used before but it is something that needs to be read again from time to time.

The Seven Blunders of the Masonic World

Reprinted With Permission Of The Author Brother Terence
Satchell - The Banks of the Euphrates

- 1. Ritual without Meaning**
- 2. Fellowship without Frivolity**
- 3. Quantity without Quality**
- 4. Education without Philosophy**
- 5. Charity without Connection**
- 6. Frugality without Discretion**
- 7. Leadership without Competence**

Ritual Without Meaning -- Too many times, we are more concerned about performing the ritual perfectly without understanding what it means. I know many men that give great lectures, but will confide that they don't even know what something means. Ritual for the sake of tradition is worthless. Ritual for the sake of enlightenment is valuable. An understanding of the ritual's meaning is far more important than just memorizing it.

Fellowship without Frivolity -- Whenever Masons decide to hold a function for fellowship, a discussion typically ensues about how to make the function have the smallest impact on the lodge's coffers and the wallets of the members. This results in paper plates, meager meals, and boring events. To spend money wisely in order to make fellowship a grand time is wise for the lodge that wants to be successful.

Quantity without Quality -- A lodge with seven great men that believe in the Masonic ideals and actively labor to improve themselves—and therefore the lodge—is far better off than a lodge with one hundred men that show up to lodge just to show up to lodge.

Education without Philosophy -- Many times, we think of Masonic education as being a lesson on the local lodge's history, a famous Mason, the history of the world wide fraternity, or how to do the ritual properly. But if no philosophy is covered in Masonic education, then little self improvement is accomplished. Discussing Masonic lessons in terms of philosophy, ideas, and a man's conduct is what truly transforms men into Masons. It is important to discuss topics that are foreign to a lodge's membership and it is sometimes even necessary to challenge our preconceived ideologies through Masonic education.

Charity without Connection -- Big institutional charities often require that fund raisers be conducted and large checks written to the people that actually perform the charity. This type of charity is devoid of self improvement because it has no real connection. If we extend our hands to our needed Brethren and devote our own skills and time to their problems, then we are engaging in true, meaningful charity.

Frugality without Discretion -- Frugality is not a tenet of Freemasonry, a cardinal virtue, or a Landmark. It is okay for the lodge to spend its funds on worthwhile activities that will enhance the Masonic experience of its Brethren. Not everything should be done in the cheapest way, a habit to which we have become accustomed.

Leadership without Competence -- A man does not deserve to be Master of the lodge solely because he has spent a certain amount of years in the lodge. We elect leaders without any regard for the skills that they possess to function in that capacity. Only competent, qualified men should be elected to preside over the Craft.

Another good one.

'Let me explain the problem science has with religion.'

The atheist professor of philosophy pauses before his class and then asks one of his new students to stand.

'You're a Christian, aren't you, son?'

'Yes sir,' the student says.

'So you believe in God?'

'Absolutely.'

'Is God good?'

'Sure! God's good.'

'Is God all-powerful? Can God do anything?'

'Yes'

'Are you good or evil?'

'The Bible says I'm evil.'

The professor grins knowingly... 'Aha! The Bible! He considers for a moment. 'Here's one for you. Let's say there's a sick person over here and you can cure him. You can do it. Would you help him? Would you try?'

'Yes sir, I would.'

'So you're good..!'

'I wouldn't say that.'

'But why not say that? You'd help a sick and maimed person if you could. Most of us would if we could. But God doesn't.'

The student does not answer, so the professor continues. 'He doesn't, does he? My brother was a Christian who died of cancer, even though he prayed to God to heal him. How is God good? Can you answer that one?'

The student remains silent. 'No, you can't, can you?' the professor says. He takes a sip of water from a glass on his desk to give the student time to relax. 'Let's start again, young fella. Is God good?'

'Er... Yes,' the student says.

'Is Satan good?'

The student doesn't hesitate on this one. 'No.'

'Then where does Satan come from?'

The student falters. 'From God'

'That's right. God made Satan, didn't he? Tell me, son. Is there evil in this world?'

'Yes, sir..'

'Evil's everywhere, isn't it? And God did make everything, correct?'

'Yes'

'So who created evil?'

The professor continued, 'If God created everything, then God created evil, since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then God is evil.'

Again, the student has no answer. 'Is there sickness? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All these terrible things, do they exist in this world?'

The student squirms on his feet. 'Yes.'

'So who created them?'

The student does not answer again, so the professor repeats his question. 'Who created them?'

There is still no answer.

Suddenly the lecturer breaks away to pace in front of the classroom. The class is mesmerized.

'Tell me,' he continues onto another student.

'Do you believe in God, son?'

The student's voice betrays him and cracks. 'Yes, professor, I do.'

The old man stops pacing. 'Science says you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Have you ever seen God?'

'No sir.. I've never seen Him..'

'Then tell us if you've ever heard your God?'

'No, sir, I have not..'

'Have you ever felt your God, tasted your God or smelt your God? Have you ever had any sensory perception of God?'

'No, sir, I'm afraid I haven't.'

'Yet you still believe in him?'

'Yes'

'According to the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God doesn't exist... What do you say to that, son?'

'Nothing,' the student replies.. 'I only have my faith.'

'Yes, faith,' the professor repeats. 'And that is the problem science has with God.. There is no evidence, only faith.'

The student stands quietly for a moment, before asking a question of His own. 'Professor, is there such thing as heat? '

'Yes.'

'And is there such a thing as cold?'

'Yes, son, there's cold too.'

'No sir, there isn't.'

The professor turns to face the student, obviously interested. The room suddenly becomes very quiet.

The student begins to explain. 'You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, mega-heat, unlimited heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat, but we don't have anything called 'cold'. We can hit down to 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can't go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold; otherwise we would be able to go colder than the lowest -458 degrees.

Everybody or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-458 F) is the total absence of heat. You see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it.'

Silence across the room. A pen drops somewhere in the classroom, sounding like a hammer.

'What about darkness, professor. Is there such a thing as darkness?'

'Yes,' the professor replies without hesitation.. 'What is night if it isn't darkness?'

'You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is not something; it is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light, but if you have no light constantly you have nothing and it's called darkness, isn't it? That's the meaning we use to define the word. In reality, darkness isn't. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?'

The professor begins to smile at the student in front of him. This will be a good semester. 'So what point are you making, young man?'

'Yes, professor. My point is, your philosophical premise is flawed to start with, and so your conclusion must also be flawed.'

The professor's face cannot hide his surprise this time. 'Flawed? Can you explain how?'

'You are working on the premise of duality,' the student explains.. 'You argue that there is life and then there's death; a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science can't even explain a thought.' 'It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood either one. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life, just the absence of it.'

'Now tell me, professor.. Do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?'

'If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, young man, yes, of course I do.'

'Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir?'

The professor begins to shake his head, still smiling, as he realizes where the argument is going.

A very good semester, indeed..

'Since no one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and cannot even prove that this process is an on-going endeavor, are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you now not a scientist, but a preacher?'

The class is in uproar. The student remains silent until the commotion has subsided. 'To continue the point you were making earlier to the other student, let me give you an example of what I mean.'

The student looks around the room. 'Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen the professor's brain?' The class breaks out into laughter. 'Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor's brain, felt the professor's brain, touched or smelt the professor's brain? No one appears to have done so. So, according to the established rules of empirical, stable, demonstrable protocol, science says that you have no brain, with all due respect, sir..' 'So if science says you have no brain, how can we trust your lectures, sir?'

Now the room is silent. The professor just stares at the student, his face unreadable. Finally, after what seems an eternity, the old man answers. 'I guess you'll have to take them on faith.'

'Now, you accept that there is faith, and, in fact, faith exists with life,' the student continues.

'Now, sir, is there such a thing as evil?'

Now uncertain, the professor responds, 'Of course, there is. We see it everyday. It is in the daily example of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil.'

To this the student replied, 'Evil does not exist sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat or the darkness that comes when there is no light.'

The professor sat down.

If you read it all the way through and had a smile on your face when you finished, mail to your friends and family with the title 'God vs. Science'

PS: the student was Albert Einstein Albert Einstein wrote a book titled God vs. Science in 1921..