

The Oklahoma Mason

THE GRAND LODGE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Vol. 3 • Summer 2013



In the span of two weeks at the end of May, Oklahoma was hit by a series of tornadoes from Carney and Little Axe, to Moore, to El Reno, and beyond. I became almost numbed by the constant weather alarms ringing in my home, wondering who was in the path of the next storm and fearing another story of those who lost everything, including their lives.

It was not two hours after the Moore tornadoes that I received my first out of state call from masons asking what they could do to help. Our Grand Lodge office and the Masonic Charity Foundation were inundated with calls from those ready to come help or provide whatever we needed. You cannot know how thankful we should be for the dedication of our Grand Lodge and the Masonic Charity Foundation staffs for their efforts. If you see them – thank them! They immediately created special website pages for those who wanted to donate and provided contact information for those wanting to help. Moore lodge itself kept an updated webpage with information on needs and contacts for those in the immediate area.

After the fifth or sixth Grand Lodge communicated with me, I felt it necessary to contact the Masonic Service Association in Washington, DC to consolidate and put out a national appeal for assistance. Grand Lodges know how to work with the MSA, and they provide a single point of contact for donations: to date we have received \$165,000 from the MSA. You should be proud to have not only PGM Lanny Sander serving on the board of the Masonic Service Association but also our State Representative PGM Randy Rogers for their service with that organization.

And monies continue to flow in. Lodges and brothers donated thousands of additional dollars, bringing total donations to more than \$300,000.

Within a month of the disaster more than 20 Master Masons, their families and Order of the Eastern Star members received immediate \$1000 direct grants. And there is a Promises Matter Tornado Relief grant application for those who need additional assistance. (see www.mcfok.org for information).

You should be proud of the caring shown by your brothers. If perhaps you

or a masonic widow or OES member suffered during the May tornadoes and have not contacted the Charity Foundation or your local lodge – please do so!

This type of disaster also shows where improvements can be made in disaster planning. How do we contact masons in areas when there has been a disaster? Do we have good addresses and phone numbers for masonic widows? How do we handle brothers from out of state who want to come and ‘lend a hand’? When should events be cancelled in the case of a possible severe weather outbreak?

By working together, we will come through these events with a stronger masonic bond. The loss of life and devastation were heartbreaking, and I thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and assistance during that trying time.

Bruce Richter

From the Grand Master

It's summer! I hope you are enjoying a fun and productive summer.

You may notice that this third issue of the Oklahoma Mason is a bit shorter than the first two. We've worked hard to produce your Oklahoma Mason in the most cost effective manner – and for the greatest efficiency in printing an issue must be either 8 or 16 pages. Because we will be sending you a fourth issue by the end of September with all the information for Grand Lodge, this summer issue is a bit shorter – but no less informative!

Here are just a few of the good news items I've observed during the last couple months:

On May 31st John Logan, Executive Director of our Masonic Charity Foundation, informed me the final tally of funds from the OETA drive this spring shows we raised \$55,476! This amount is the highest donation total since we began our relationship in 1996. Thank you all!

I had the opportunity to attend a Masonic Widow's Night and 50-year pin presentation at Kingfisher lodge #52. They had seven widows attend the dinner and short program, during which the lodge presented each with a Widow's

pin and card. I was heartened to see a lodge care for its widows and know that we can all do a better job of staying in touch with them. Their husbands joined masonry knowing that we all pledged to support their widows; let us not now forget that pledge.

Apache Lodge #223 placed a very nice "Happy Father's Day" ad in their local paper. In the ad, they spoke to fathers about their role in their family. A very nice way to say thank you, and also to raise the visibility of the local lodge. Great Job!

In January, I asked the Worshipful Masters of each lodge in Oklahoma for three goals for their year and asked you to make some personal goals. With the year half-way complete – how are you progressing with those goals? How is your lodge doing? Next time you attend lodge, ask your Worshipful Master what you can do to help your lodge meet its goals.

Looking ahead I have designated September as Blue Lodge Reunion Month. Take the opportunity to visit your local lodge. I hope that each lodge will organize a homecoming. You don't need to try and remember passwords, or be



inspected on the ritual – just come and spend fraternal time with your brothers. And if you live out of state, attend a local lodge wherever you are! (By the way, if you haven't received a dues card in a while, contact your home lodge.)

I hope to see you during my travels over the next few months. I am heartened by stories of lodges performing degree work, fixing their lodge rooms – and taking care of each other. That is what it is to be a mason.

Fraternally,

Brad Rickelman, Grand Master

WAH-SHAH-SHE LODGE #110 IN PAWHUSKA, OK, has been making major renovations to their Lodge building. One of Oklahoma's historic Lodges, the 1906 structure had served well, but was in need of help. The Brethren removed what furniture they could and built plywood boxes around the rest to protect it. The ceiling beams had cracked, and new, specially-engineered steel beams were created to support the structure. A crane, mounted outside, lowered a cable through holes cut in the roof to slowly raise the beams into position. More work remains to be done, but all Oklahoma can be proud of the Brethren and the effort they are making.



GOOD NEWS!

From the Grand Secretary

Preserving our History

Any time you visit a lodge, you can find the Past Master's pictures hanging on the wall. Just looking at the picture gives you some idea of the fashion of the time, and looking at the name sometimes gives you a 'hint' of some legacy within the lodge or town.

Anyone who wants to know more about the Masonic history of these brothers can call Grand Lodge to find out when they were initiated, passed and raised, what other offices they held or what other lodges they belong to. But beyond that, what do you know?

Try this experiment. Go to the wall of pictures and start with the most recent W.:M.: and name his occupation. Then continue working your way backward as far as you can go. Did you make it to five Past Masters? Ten? Twenty?

Each of our lodges has an elder who remembers more Past Masters than most of us will ever know. They knew many of these men well back into the past century and they can regale you with stories that are both touching and humorous. But once they are gone, no one will remember.

It is important that we start recording and preserving the stories and memories of our lodges. It can be as simple as creating a list of Past Masters and put-

ting their professional occupation beside their name. You can include wife's name and children if you are really good at that level of information. As simple as this list may be, it can be invaluable when you are putting together a centennial program for your lodge or just trying to make your members a little smarter about who came before them. You may be amazed at the number of judges, doctors, professors, architects, truly learned men, who have passed through your lodge doors. You may also discover a farmer or rancher who, through their creativity, did something that was passed down through their profession for years as well.

The next stage is to have one of your older members do an oral/video history of the Past Masters as far back as they can go. At Frontier Lodge, we had our oldest brother sit down and recount all the stories he knew about the Past Masters of the lodge while we video-recorded him. It was amazing how far back he went, and how funny some of his stories were. Sadly, he passed away a few months later. But we have him, and his memories, recorded.

The ultimate step for recording lodge history is to sit down with your elder brothers and just have them record their own memories and stories about the lodge. There is nothing like a first-hand account of what happened when and



R.:W.: Steve Singleton

to whom when you are trying to learn more about your lodge than to ask someone who was there. The 70s and 80s may seem like last week to some of us, but to a growing number of our members, that is ancient history!

As our nation becomes more nomadic, moving to the far corners of the country, the odds of having lodge brothers stay in one lodge for a life-time decrease significantly. Capture memories while you can, because you never know when the opportunity is lost.

R.:W.: Steve Singleton
Grand Secretary

BROTHER PAUL GILLIAM, SENIOR WARDEN OF BLANCHARD LODGE #395, was speechless (which his Brethren describe as a rare condition) when he was presented with the DeMolay organization "Hats Off" Award for rendering outstanding service to the Heart of Oklahoma DeMolay Chapter. Following that, the Capitol Hill York Rite Masons presented him the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons 2012-2013 Adult Leadership Medal. Only one medal is presented in each State. Congratulations, Brother Gilliam, on honors well merited!



From the Deputy Grand Master

Come to the Lodge Leadership Workshop

August 2, 3, 4 are the dates for the 2013 Leadership Workshop/Warden's Retreat. We especially urge Junior and Senior Wardens to attend, but ALL Master Masons are welcome to attend. Leadership in Masonry is a little more involved than some people think, and the more prepared you are, the more your Lodge will benefit during your term. Topics such as conflict resolution, budgets, calendars, education and much more will be covered.



A special presenter at the Workshop will be W.: Cliff Porter, Chairman of Education for the Grand Lodge of Colorado and Chairman and Director of Education for the Scottish Rite Orient of Colorado.

He is the author of *The Secret Psychology of Freemasonry: Alchemy, Gnosis, and the Science of the Craft*, and *A Traditional Observance Lodge: One Mason's Journey to Fulfillment*, in addition to numerous articles and blogs. A member of the El Paso County [Colorado Springs] Sheriff's Department, one of his topics will concern investigative committee reports and techniques.

The Workshop will be held at the India Shrine Temple, 3601 Northwest 36th Street, in Oklahoma City. Registration will be from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM.

You will need to bring a current copy of the Constitution and Code, or purchase one at the door for \$15. The cost is \$100, which includes materials, donuts and snacks for Saturday, Saturday lunch and Saturday evening banquet. Incidentally, if you cannot be there Friday evening, come Saturday morning—we'll catch you up. Your wife is welcome to attend. A special fashion show, with discount coupons and other "goodies" will be



R.:W.: Ron Chambers

provided for her.

A registration form was sent to your Lodge Secretary, or you can download a form from the Grand Lodge website www.gloklahoma.com. Please send in your reservations as soon as possible so we can arrange catering.

R.:W.: Ronald Chambers MOH
Deputy Grand Master

From the Senior Grand Warden

TRUTH

English is an amazing language. It is how we communicate with each other in our daily lives, our business arrangements, our formal interactions, and our political discussions. It is how our parents and grandparents spoke, the method of communication George Washington and Benjamin Franklin used, and so many others in earlier times. It is the language Masons have used from time immemorial. But, it is also amazing how many times a word can be misunderstood when using this "simple" language. How easily it is to hear one thing and think another.

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, we learn that one of the tenets of our profession is Truth. We are told in the Third Section Lecture that Truth is the foundation of every virtue and the first thing we are taught in Masonry. But, what is "truth"? A book I recently read,

"A Treasury of Truth and Wisdom" by Frederick Slicker, states that "Truth is factual, objective and provable." Well, that sounds good and reasonable and fits in pretty well with the EA lecture. Further on in the EA lecture, we are told that "To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry". Being factual, objective and provable sound like good traits, they don't really seem to be primary in my vision of Masonry. So I suggest we look a little closer at the word "Truth".

Many times I am asked what a particular word in our ritual means. How does it apply to the degree being presented? Usually the brother and I look the word up in a dictionary and try to see how the definition fits with the meaning of the degree or lecture. But, as we all know, many of our words have changed in usage over the years. What a word infers now usually is not what it inferred



R.:W.: Gary Beisly

a hundred years ago. "Truth" today usually makes us think of something as being the fact, an actuality, a reality, the state of being the case. However, "truth" or "true" comes from an Old English word relating to "faithful". With this thought of "true", the phrase in the lecture now becomes:

"To be good and faithful is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry" This is a much better thought as to what the

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Only Chance This Year to Join the ORDER OF THE SACRED WHITE BUFFALO

The annual POW-WOW for the Order of the Sacred White Buffalo will be held at the Grand Lodge Building in Guthrie on Saturday, August 10, 2013.

The Degree is always conferred by our own World Renowned Oklahoma Masonic Indian Degree Team in full Native American dress. It is a most impressive sight to behold.

The Order of the Sacred White Buffalo is an organization with two purposes: to recognize and honor the importance of the Native American tradition in Oklahoma Freemasonry, and to support the Grand Lodge Endowed Building Fund. The White Buffalo is a symbol of special significance to our Native American Brethren. It was a symbol of deliverance in time of need--of the special connection between man and nature.

To be eligible for membership, the applicant must be a Master Mason, a

member of a Master Mason's family, or a member of an Affiliated, Appendant, or Other Masonic Body in good standing. The Initiation Fee of \$100 and 1st year's dues of \$50 (\$150 total) must accompany the application. Dues are \$50 annually. Both husband and wife and children over 14 years of age may join.

Perpetual Memberships are available after you complete your degree for \$500 (10 X \$50 dues). This is another good way for us to support Oklahoma Masonry and maintain our beautiful Grand Lodge building which houses a big part of our history.

Memorial Memberships are available for a one-time cost of \$50. It is a good way to honor deceased brethren or their spouses. A certificate will be sent to the person purchasing the Memorial Membership which may be displayed in the lodge or given to the brother's family.



Registration will start at 11:00 AM with a meal at noon. The charge for the meal for members will be \$10. The degree will start at 1:15 PM. Dress is casual, but please no shorts. Applications should be sent to the Grand Lodge ASAP; however, walk-ins will be accepted. (Meals may not be available without prior registration.)

For a petition for the Order of the Sacred White Buffalo, call the Grand Lodge {405-282-3212} or e-mail us at okmason1@coxinet.net Or visit the Grand Lodge Website at gkoklahoma.com.

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lecture is trying to impress upon us. So, when you wonder what a phrase in our ritual means, look it up in a dictionary. Not just one dictionary, but several if you can; and, the older the dictionary the better.

And now that we have "translated" and rethought the meaning of the word "true/truth" and have a better understanding of the lecture, to whom are we to be "faithful"? We can discuss that in the next issue. Remember, in the Entered Apprentice interrogatories we are told that "Masonry consists of a course of hieroglyphical and moral instruction..." So think ahead and see if we come to the same conclusion.

R.:W.: Gary L. Beisly
Senior Grand Warden



RINGWOOD LODGE #554
According to the last census, Ringwood, Oklahoma has a population of 496— which makes it even more impressive that 13 young men this year have completed the Degrees of Freemasonry. A man petitioned, told his friends, they told their friends, and off they went. They studied as

GOOD NEWS!

a group, but each man received his own Degrees and memorized the categorical lectures. Brethren from several parts of the state came to help confer the Degrees, including the Yellow Jackets and the Oklahoma Masonic Indian Degree Team. Since a total of 39 Degrees had to be performed, it was no small task. Thanks to Brother Jimmy Dean Hartzell and all the Brethren who worked so hard to make this possible.

September is Blue Lodge Reunion Month

September...summer break is over, students returned to school, vacations are done, and lodges who struggled to find enough members to open during the summer are meeting once again with good attendance.

Blue Lodges are the foundation of all Masonry and it is important we maintain that foundation that supports all the Oklahoma Masonic Family.

To that end, I declare September Blue Lodge Reunion Month. I call all Oklahoma Masons when able, to go to their local blue lodges for a September meeting.

If you haven't been to lodge in a while – don't worry. You won't be barred at the door and demanded to restate your cat lectures! You will be greeted with friendship and good cheer. If it's an open meeting you won't need passwords, signs, or tokens—it's just a chance to reconnect with your Brothers and have a good time.



I have asked the Grand Secretary to assist the local lodges so they have good records of their brothers and request lodges to plan for visitors during September. Worshipful Masters should plan to have some refreshment and accommodations for the visiting brothers.

Many of you live far from your home lodge or may not know where the closest lodge is to be found. NO PROBLEM – use our Grand Lodge website

locator <http://www.gloklahoma.com/lodgelocator/5search.php> to search by your city, zip code or county in Oklahoma. Or use your local phone directory for masonic lodge, or call the Grand Lodge office at 405-282-3212 and ask where the closest lodge is located.

If you are living outside of Oklahoma, find your local lodge through that state's Grand Lodge. If you haven't received a dues card in a while, it's a good opportunity to contact your home lodge to be sure you are listed correctly in the database and your dues are current. (If a perpetual member, you should still be issued a current dues card each year).

If you don't know where you live, you probably need to ask someone!

I personally guarantee your brothers will be happy to see you.

Fraternally,

Brad Rickelman, Grand Master

AVAILABLE FOR ELECTION

These Brethren have made themselves available for election at Grand Lodge. Their biographies will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

For Junior Grand Warden

W.: Richard "Rick" Allison

W.: John E. King

For the Board of the Masonic Charity Foundation

M.:W.: E. Keith Liles

M.:W.: Johnny Onkst

W.: Warren McConnell

M.:W.: Charles Belknap

GRAND MASTER'S CALENDAR

AUGUST

- 2-4 – Warden's Retreat/Officers Training weekend
- 10 – Order of White Buffalo
- 15 – Trustees Meeting
- 16 – Jurisprudence Meeting
- 17 – Past Commanders Association [GM Anniversary]
- 22 – RGLO, D-25, Stillwell
- 23-25 – Lapland (OK/Kansas group – meet in Enid)
- 24-28 – 2013 Biannual Session SR Supreme Council (Washington, DC) – GM out of state
- 27 – GM Wife's Birthday
- 29 – Statewide "College Lodge Open House"
- 30 – RGLO, Comanche

SEPTEMBER [BLUE LODGE REUNION MONTH]

- 7 – Jones Outdoor Degree (GL confer)

- 13-15 – GM travel with Indian Degree Team, Ohio
- 17 – State Teacher of Year Presentation
- 20 – Trustees meeting
- 21 – Cornerstone Darlington 100yr Celebration
- 24 – D-37 RGLO, Tishomingo
- 25 – MCF Board Meeting
- 27 – D-33 RGLO, Lawton
- 28 – GM York Rite Field Day, OKC #36

OCTOBER

- 5 – Install Oklahoma Lodge of Research
- 10 – GM night @ Akdar Shrine, Tulsa
- 12-13 – Guthrie Scottish Rite
- 19-20 – McAlester Scottish Rite
- 20 - 23 OES Annual Meeting
- 26-27 – Tulsa Scottish Rite

The Oklahoma Mason is a publication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, of the State of Oklahoma. Offices are located at 102 South Broad Street, Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044. Business hours are 8:30 - 12:00 & 1:00 - 4:30 weekdays. Telephone 405-282-3212. Editor, Jim Tresner

From the Junior Grand Warden



R. W. Ridge Smith

My Brothers,

Many times over the years that I have been a Mason, I have wondered why I am so attracted to this great fraternity of ours, and conversely,

how can we attract more good men to join us in our endeavors. I haven't quite figured out the second part of that question, but I have distilled three of the many reasons that I love Masonry.

First, I enjoy the fellowship that I find in our Fraternity. I have visited Lodges around this state, and in other states and countries, and I find it heartwarming, and a little surprising, that every Lodge truly welcomes me as a Brother. In today's society where we tend to be stand-offish with strangers and often look askance at those who would try to get close to us, it is wonderfully refreshing to sit down in a Lodge with strangers and

be accepted as one of them. In my father's and grandfather's days, the Lodge formed the social center of the town and allowed men to form bonds of friendship with other men. Today, much of that socializing has become a thing of the past and we often don't know our own next-door neighbors. However; I believe that today's young men also feel that need for company of other good men in their lives and that they are attracted to fraternities to fill that need. I am excited to hear of the fine young men that are joining Masonry all over this state and I feel that we are looking at a bright future for Oklahoma Masonry.

Second in my list is the ritual. When I first joined the fraternity in 1986 I was greatly impressed by the ritual work. My Lodge was blessed with many Class A Certificate Lecturers and I was inspired by their work and tried to emulate them. At our recent Grand School, I was designated as a Lifetime A Certificate Lecturer. That is one of my greatest honors and that award is hanging

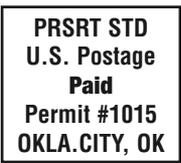
on my office wall in a place of honor. Our ritual teaches great moral truths and we owe it to every new Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason to give them the best degree that we can possibly present. We need to insure that our new members feel that their time and money are well spent by joining our Fraternity.

Last on this list is service to others. I believe that all good Masons share an altruistic feeling toward their fellow men, not just Brothers in Masonry, but for all who are in distress. In my travels since being elected Junior Grand Warden, I have been gladdened to hear of the efforts of our Lodges to assist needy Brothers through the Promises Matter program, and to help their communities through the Matching Funds program. Oklahoma Masonry has a tremendous resource available to us through our Masonic Charity Foundation, and I encourage every Lodge to participate in these programs.

R. W. Ridge Smith
Junior Grand Warden



Westville Lodge #549 is a major supporter of baseball and softball teams in their community, along with providing scholarships and other activities. Often, the Lodge is the center of smaller Oklahoma towns, and Westville is no exception. Thanks to Brother Robert Pruitt for sharing the pride.



Address or Name Change (please print)
Lodge # _____ Date Address Effective _____
Name _____
Street or Box address: _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Send to *Address Change update, The Oklahoma Mason, P.O. Box 1019, Guthrie, OK 73044*

From the Grand Treasurer



R.:W.: John Alexander

our Masonic brethren and their families have suffered substantially from our spring tornado throughout the mid part of our State. It is so gratifying to be part of a fraternity that has contributed to the relief of these families from our Brethren, the Masonic Charity Foundation, the Masonic Service Association and many of the Lodge members that have joined Oklahoma in reaching out,

The year 2013 has brought new challenges to the Masonic Fraternity and the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma. The Boards of Trustees have been notified that several of

that hand of Masonic fellowship to a brother in need.

The Boards of Trustees continually review the Investments of the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma. Though the first seven months, the overall revenue is 115 % of budgeted income through May 31,2013. Our expenses for the same period are operating at 80.6 % of budgeted expenses. The monthly income and expense are amortized over the 12 months of operation and to date is well within the guidelines of the approved Budget. The Perpetual Endowed Membership fund has more than \$ 6,000,000 in NAFA Capitol Market account in GNMA Bond Funds. Currently these PEM Endowed funds are earning 8.0 % interest, which is less than in 2012, due to the current U.S. Economy. The question continually comes up, it this still

a good investment? My answer is Yes! You cannot earn this high of interest anywhere else and it is an investment in the future of your Lodge.

At this time of year when we celebrate our Nation's Independence and Freedom from oppression, we are reminded of President Lincoln's address at the battlefield of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania that in part said -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom

May God continue to Bless this beautiful Nation.

R.:W.: John Alexander
Grand Treasurer