



July, 2016 Issue

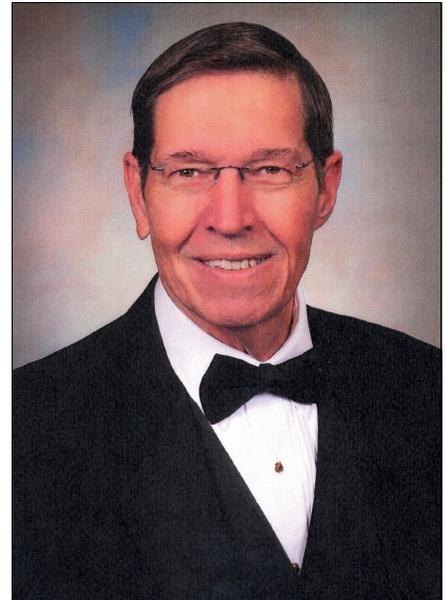
Grand Lodge of the State of Oklahoma

From the Grand Master

Brethren,

Welcome to the July 2016 edition of the Oklahoma Mason Magazine. Our Masonic Year is rolling along and many things are happening around the state.

The Perpetual Path Program has been very successful. The program allows an Entered Apprentice to get his Fellowcraft and Masters Degrees in one day if he buys a perpetual membership in his lodge. So far this year **through the Perpetual Path Program we have raised 178 new Master Masons** who are perpetual members of their Lodges. We also have raised **129 Master Masons the traditional way. This gives us a grand total of 292 new Master Masons.** If we keep going at this rate, we'll probably have positive growth in membership for 2016. That would be a wonderful event, so I encourage each Mason in Oklahoma to seek out those men who you know would be good Masons and invite them to your breakfasts, dinners, friends' nights and other open events. The Pathway Packet is an excellent way to introduce a prospect to Masonry.



Matching Funds x2 Our latest report from the Masonic Charity Foundation shows that many Lodges have been very active in their participation in the Matching Funds program. This program gives Lodges a way to increase their support of charitable activities in their local communities. If your lodge hasn't been taking advantage of this great program, I encourage you to do so. But, I also want to point out the fallacy that seems to influence some Brothers. Just because a Lodge uses all of its matching funds before the end of the year, that doesn't mean your charitable endeavors must stop. All it means is that we don't double our contributions – so we may have to work harder to reach our goals. It should be the goal of every Lodge to utilize 100% of their matching funds.

A new program which I am going to make available on our web page is The Oklahoma Masonic Mentor Program. This is a voluntary program which helps a Lodge to provide new candidates and new members with a structured education program which will help them to get more out of Masonry and also to make them better Masons. One of the goals of this program is to encourage new Masons to become active members and to establish their participation in the Fraternity. One of the disappointing facts about Oklahoma Masonry is that a significant percentage of our Entered

Apprentices and Fellowcrafts do not ever become Master Masons. For these “drop-outs” Masonry has not provided something that they expected. They have wasted their money and we have not gotten a participating member. I am hopeful that the new Mentoring Program may fill this gap in our process. One of my inspirations for this program is a similar program in Michigan which has had outstanding success in retaining new Masons in the Fraternity for those Lodges who have chosen to use that program. It will be on the Grand Lodge website in the near future and I encourage you to read through the program and see if it could be incorporated into your Lodge’s candidate education process.



During recent months, several members of our Masonic Family have made Oklahoma proud by their accomplishments in their respective organizations. I want to congratulate Mekaila Carey who will serve as Acting Supreme Worthy Advisor for the upcoming Supreme Assembly Session of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls to be held in Providence, Rhode Island in July. Mekaila is our Junior Past Grand Worthy Advisor for the Oklahoma Grand Assembly of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls.

Hearty congratulations are in order for Braden Zimmerman who was elected the 50th International Master Councilor of DeMolay International for 2016-2017. Braden is our current State Master Councilor of Oklahoma DeMolay.



I also want to congratulate Jeanne Milton who was installed Supreme Royal Matron of the Order of the Amaranth.

I also want to congratulate Ron Minshall who was elevated to Grand Senior Councilor of the International Supreme Council of DeMolay International. Ron is our current Executive Officer for Oklahoma DeMolay. These are just a few of the outstanding members of the Oklahoma Masonic Family who have distinguished themselves in their orders this year.

In closing, I want to remind all Master Masons that Grand Lodge Session is coming on November 11 and 12 with the Grand School on November 9, 10, and 11. Every Master Mason is encouraged to attend Grand Lodge and Grand School. Only Worshipful Masters, Wardens, and Past Masters have voting privileges; however all Master Masons can come and observe. There will be several important resolutions to amend our Constitution and Law and it is important that each Lodge be represented. It is a constitutional requirement that Worshipful Masters and Wardens attend Grand Lodge or be represented by a proxy and I hope that every Worshipful Master and every Warden takes this requirement seriously.

I invite you and your family to the Grand Master’s Banquet which will be held on Friday, November 11, in the Guthrie Scottish Rite Ballroom. Tickets can be obtained from the Grand Lodge Office for \$35 each. I hope to see you there.

Fraternally,

Ridge Smith
Ridge Smith
Grand Master



From the Deputy Grand Master

It is hard to believe that it is already time for the 3rd quarter article for the Oklahoma Mason. It does not seem like it could have possibly been all that long since I wrote my first article as your Junior Grand Warden and now here I am, your Deputy Grand Master, with time drawing close to the possibility of making what is one of the greatest most exciting and frankly nervous steps of my life. I already know that there are so many things about Grand Lodge and Masonry that I do not know. I have spent the last two years learning but still there are going to be things a person is going to need help on.

That is why I have put together what I think is an example of one of the greatest teams in Masonry. I have asked various experienced brothers to stand with me through this year and be there when I will need their council on matters. The need for council in this job comes in many forms. It could be constitution and code or masonic history or protocol or just tough questions that I will have to decide. I will not hesitate to decide these issues, however I will solicit the opinions of my officers and select others. That is why I have put the officer team together that I have.

A word about the 2016 leadership conference. I sincerely hope that at least one of the officers from your lodge attended the conference. The speakers all did an excellent job. M.:W.: Bobby Laws again did a superman job not only at the conference speaking but also the physical labor part of putting together all those binders that were passed out to those that attended the conference. The other dedicated Grand Lodge employees I know also had a big part of putting this thing together. Many long hours were dedicated to the project and there is just simply no way I can thank them adequately.

The speaker that we had come in from Texas brought his "A" game with him. He has many words of wisdom on leadership and if you missed him your lodge lost a great opportunity to have a chance to better itself and make a better lodge for your members.

Brother Bob Davis brought a message that every mason in the state needs to hear. He told us why Oklahoma Masonry has such a wonderful chance to grow in the next few years, if we are willing to work at it. **At my request, he has provided a written version of his remarks which are printed later in this issue of *The Oklahoma Mason Magazine*.**

The speakers of budget, calendar, protocol, every one of them gave great instructional presentations.

Brethren were there working registration, making sure everyone got all the material they needed, and selling Grand Lodge Store items. A few months ago I asked Brother John Church if he would make sure and take care of the registration table, and the Grand Lodge store went off without a hitch. I could not have been happier with the way those went. John did a great job getting his team together. Scott Vincent was one of those team members that sat at the desk registering people for two days. It doesn't matter what you ask Scott to do for you, he and Nancy show up to give a hand and do what needs to be done. They are a great asset to Grand Lodge. We have come to know Cecil Walker this year as the Grand Marshall. He is an amazing Grand Marshal and volunteered to jump in whole heartily on this job too. He spent the conference like the others; doing the heavy hauling of materials for the conference, setting up tables and working those tables. I cannot thank all these brothers and ladies of the office enough for everything they contributed to this.

2016

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This brings us to Dr. Jim Tresner and his contributions. Dr. Tresner is a national treasure that we are lucky enough to have living right here in Oklahoma. Everything he does has the Master's touch to it. This leadership conference was no different. He is the one that puts together all those wonderfully informing teaching tools you received in your binders. To try to adequately thank Dr. Tresner for what he does for Grand Lodge and Grand Lodge line officers is very nearly impossible. However Dr. Tresner is a man that does not worry about or solicit thanks for all he does. His interest lies in informing and teaching other members of the craft such as you and me.



It will take work over the coming years for our lodges to be successful. The coming programs are designed to help but they have to be worked at. Not just the Grand Lodge officers but every Mason in the State has to give it his best. Your best chance at building your lodge and being as effective as possible at that task is to make sure you or someone in your lodge attends the leadership conference next year. Once again all the persons that I just mentioned plus some new ones will be working hard to make sure to give you information to take back to your lodge.

This coming year I plan to work as hard as I can on programs that I hope help you help Masonry. My prayer is that you will work with me on these and existing programs as hard as you can. Our

lodges deserve the best we can give them. Masonry deserves the best effort we can give it. Hope to see you all in Grand Lodge. The perfect place to kick off a year of giving Masonry our best.

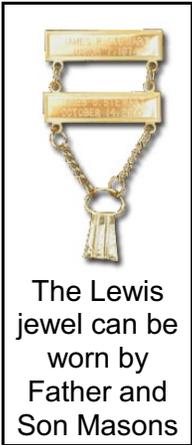
Richard Allison, Deputy Grand Master

New Masons

Cache
Valley
#530



From the Senior Grand Warden



The Lewis jewel can be worn by Father and Son Masons

The Lewis Jewel

The other day I was spending time reading some Masonic articles on the internet and came upon one on the Lewis Jewel. I thought I would share with you. All Masons probably know of this device—Jewel as it is called—and it is worn with pride. The author wasn't listed so there wasn't much to research backwards on the author or the article. The article goes somewhat like this; *"The Lewis Jewel Whence is the word derived?"*

Q: *What's a Mason's Son's Name? - A. Lewis [The Wilkinson MS—c 1730 / 1740]*

Masonic historians conclude that the term came into use in the 18th century. The lecture in the Second Degree published by William Preston in the 1780s contain a lengthy discourse on the

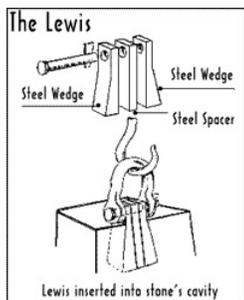
Lewis.

W.:M.: – Brother J.:W.:, How were the sons of craftsmen named?

J.:W.: To the son on whom these honours were bequeathed, the appellation of Lewis was given, that from henceforth he might be entitled to all the privileges which that honour conferred, W.: Sir.

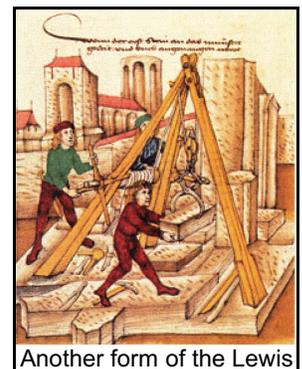
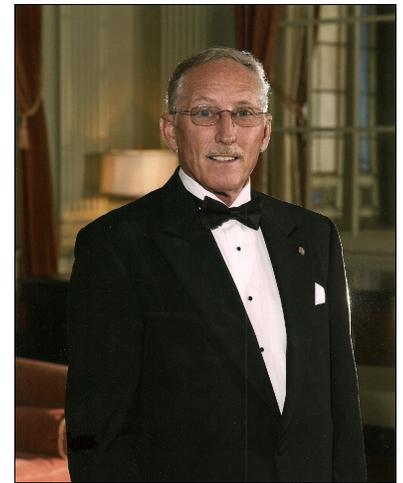
A doggerel verse in "The Deputy Grand Master's Song" printed in the second edition of Anderson's Constitutions published in 1783, written as a sort of "loyal toast" to be sung by the Brethren around the festive board:

*"Again let it pass to the ROYAL lov'd NAME,
Whose glorious Admission has crown'd all our fame:
May a LEWIS be born, whom the World shall admire,
Serene as his MOTHER, August as his SIRE"*



The article went on to explain that a paragraph in a version of the Junior Warden's Lecture used in the Grand Lodge of England dating from 1801 gives this instructive explanation. *"The word Lewis denotes strength, and is depicted by certain pieces of metal dovetailed into a stone, which forms a cramp, and enables the operative Mason to raise great weights to certain heights with little or no encumbrance, and being able to fix them into their proper bases. Lewis, likewise denotes the son of a Mason: his duty was to bear the heat and burden of the day from which his parents, by reason of their age, ought to be exempt; to help them in times of need and thereby render the close of their days, happy and comfortable. His privilege for doing so was to be made a Mason before any other person however dignified."*

I could not think of any better way to honor my Father, who has now passed, than to become a Mason. My father was a good man, like the man to whom I now look to for mentoring as a father. I strive to make him proud. In the days of operative Masonry, it was a great source of pride when a son followed in his father's footsteps and was Entered as an Apprentice, his name 'entered' on the rolls, and thereby admitted to the Lodge. Now able to study his father's skills and learn to use his father's tools, he was able to give expressions of the greatest honour and esteem a son could pay. In those days it was common to carry on the tradition through several generations in the same families.



Another form of the Lewis

It's a heart-warming day when a young man first shows interest in Freemasonry and asks his father how he might become a Mason. I know I was when my youngest asked, and it was a prouder day when that son, in the fullness of time was Raised and admitted to my Lodge. I cannot even fathom the pride that W.: Brother Warren McConnell has in his heart for his sons, sons in law, oh yes, even his grandsons. May God Bless you and your entire family.

Remember as you travel to Be Your Brother's Keeper, stop by and visit a Brother this week.
Fraternally and Respectively,


C.W. "Corky" Grigsby Jr. Senior Grand Warden



Generosity of Air Force Friends Makes New Computer Possible

For many years, the warriors of the 56B OCS held a reunion each year. But recently, time having taken its toll on the friends, they voted to stop meeting. A fund had been accumulated over the years to cover the costs of the reunion.

W.: Brother Glynn L. McCoy, Jr., the Chairman of the CHIP Committee of the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma had served for many years as the Treasurer of the group's reunion funds. The group voted to donate those funds to the CHIP program to purchase an additional computer and equipment. We are proud to list the fine men and women here, to acknowledge their generosity. It will make it possible to expand protection against abduction to even more Oklahoma children. We thank them for their service to our Country, our Fraternity, and our State's children. Very special thanks to Glynn McCoy, Jr, and Lucile who donated the balance of the funds to make the purchase possible.

BEATRICE B. AVERY, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
WILLIAM L. FLUTY, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
ARCHIE HENDERSON, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
GLYNN L. MCCOY, JR., CLASS 56B USAF OCS
THOMAS W. STINSON, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
WALTER WILLIAMS, CLASS 56B USAF OCS

JAMES M. COOPER, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
WALTER E. GREENE, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
WALTER L. LINDSEY, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
WILLIAM F. MILLER, CLASS 56B USAF OCS
JOHN W. TIBBS, CLASS 56B USAF OCS

The **CH**ild **I**dentification **P**rogram uses cutting-edge technology to provide parents with a sure means of identifying their child in the case of abduction or other emergency in which positive ID is essential. The importance of such identification can hardly be overstated.

From the Junior Grand Warden



Masonry has a long tradition of “keeping our light under a bushel.” A survey a few years ago found that fewer than 35% of males in the United States have ever heard the name “Mason” or “Freemason”.

In the late 1950's Oklahoma had in excess of 90,000 Master Masons on our rolls. Since that time we have experienced a steady decline in membership numbers. In the last 10 years alone we have lost over 10,000 members. At the present time our numbers are under 22,000, which includes all the plural memberships. The actual headcount is somewhere just over 17,000 individuals

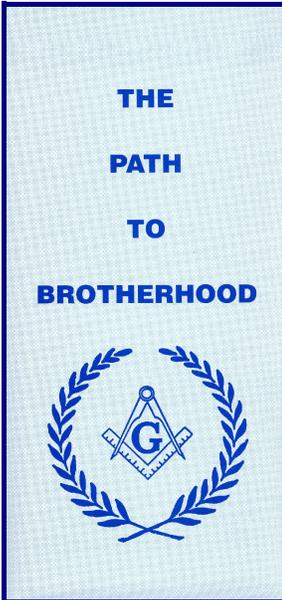
I am a third generation Mason and grew up in Adair, Oklahoma, a small rural community where everyone knew everyone. I knew that Dad went to lodge a couple of times a month and that most of the men in my community also went to those lodge meetings, but that was it! Dad or those other Masons didn't talk about Masonry or what went on at those lodge meetings. I knew and respected all those men in the community who were Masons and I wanted to be a part of that group of men. When I asked for it, Dad gave me a petition without any explanation, only saying that things would be explained to me if I were accepted for membership. Fortunately, I was accepted and have been a Mason for well over 30 years and some of my best memories of my Dad are of things we did together in Masonry. I have heard tales of Masons who would not give a man a petition until he asked specifically for a “petition”, the word “application” or asked “how could he join” was not sufficient. I heard stories about a Mason who would not give a man a petition until the individual asked three times for a petition. It was his way of being sure the individual was serious about becoming a member of an organization which the individual knew very little about. We continue to keep our light under a bushel!

In the past, several Grand Masters have had various “one day” membership programs. Today we have the Grand Master's Perpetual Path Program, which is being met with great success. However, as with other “one day” programs, it is not intended to grow our ranks by large numbers, but to not leave behind those brothers, who for various reasons, have not advanced in their degrees. As successful as many of these programs have been, our numbers continue to decline each year. Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neil once said “all politics is local”. **Well I believe that membership is local also. It is up to each and every one of us as individuals to find and bring good men into our fraternity if Freemasonry is to continue in our state.**

Many of you have heard our Deputy Grand Master R.: W.: Rick Allison talk about solicitation and what it means in regards to seeking out potential candidates for Masonry. R.: W.: Allison explains that we should not solicit individuals by badgering them to become a Mason, etc. R.: W.: Allison suggests that we can be a more creative in how we seek out and approach individuals who would be good Masons. Recently, I was at a meeting where a 60-year Mason addressed the meeting. During his comments, he said that he became a Mason only because a friend of his said “I can't ask you to join the Masons, but I can ask why you are not a Mason.”



Who are today's potential "new brothers"? They can be parents of the youth in ball teams, FFA Chapters, school bands, soccer teams, etc., in our communities. They can be civic leaders in our communities, members of our churches, or other organizations that we participate in. Potential new members are all around us, sometimes we simply tend to overlook the obvious or are afraid to ask someone a simple question, have you ever thought about becoming a Mason?



Grand Master Smith often tells about a Rainbow Assembly that requires each of its members to carry a petition in their purses. He then asks for a show of hands from the Masons in the room, if someone should ask for one, how many of you have a petition readily available. Not surprisingly, too many times not a hand in the room will go up. For the last several years I have made it a practice to carry several Pathway Packets with me. They are available from the Grand Secretary for \$2.00 each. These are wonderfully prepared packets with short material's that do an excellent job of explaining Freemasonry and answer the most common questions about Freemasonry. A petition for membership is also included in each packet. Pathway Packets make it very easy for those of us who may not be able to explain Masonry or answer sometimes difficult questions about Masonry. When I come across a man that I think would be a good Mason, I simply say, "You know that I am a Mason and I would like to give this to you to look over. If you have any questions or are interested in more information, just let me know," and I just leave it at that. On several occasions that man, after reading the materials in the Pathway Packet, has asked for assistance in becoming a Mason.

My hope is that each and every one of us will make membership a personal issue, letting the light of Freemasonry shine. Taking it upon ourselves, as individuals, to seek out and assist those good men that are in each and every community and help them find their way to membership in the greatest fraternity in the world. We can stop the decline in our ranks and turn the corner to growth!

Fraternally,

Michael L Dixon

Michael Dixon, Junior Grand Warden

Composite Lodge #107

March 5th



From the Grand Treasurer



The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions.

WINSTON CHURCHILL



Ethics is defined as the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment. The word "ethics" is derived from two Greek words that mean "moral" and "character". Ethical behavior is often unconscious and based on well thought-out principles.

Personal ethics is the most difficult concept to outline. People develop their code of personal ethics throughout their lives and the ethical code is often undertaken subconsciously. However, a MASON'S personal code of ethics is the most important part of the ethical foundation that encompasses legal, professional, fraternal and personal ethics. As MASONS we must make decisions consciously so we do not forget any part of our Masonic obligations.

It should be obvious that legal, professional, fraternal and personal ethics are closely moored together to form the foundation that all MASONS should stand on. Ethical behavior should not be something learned for academic credit, it should be something practiced each and every day. The best way to consistently behave ethically is to make it a lifestyle through inner determination and outer checks and balance. Using sound ethical behavior will enhance and protect our Fraternity.

When we as MASONS use poor judgment and are unethical, we hurt our fraternity, our brethren, our Lodges and ourselves.

"If a person would not like to be treated dishonestly, he will not treat others that way."
CONFUCIUS



David G. David

David G. David, Grand Treasurer

Perpetual Path Program
Yukon Lodge #90
March 12th



From the Grand Secretary

I am very pleased and excited about the results of the Perpetual Path Program. Since the first conferral on January 30, 2016 until the date of this writing, this program has allowed **178** Brothers—who otherwise might not have ever completed their degrees because of time obligations or other valid reasons—to become Master Masons. And they are not only Master Masons, they are Perpetual Members.

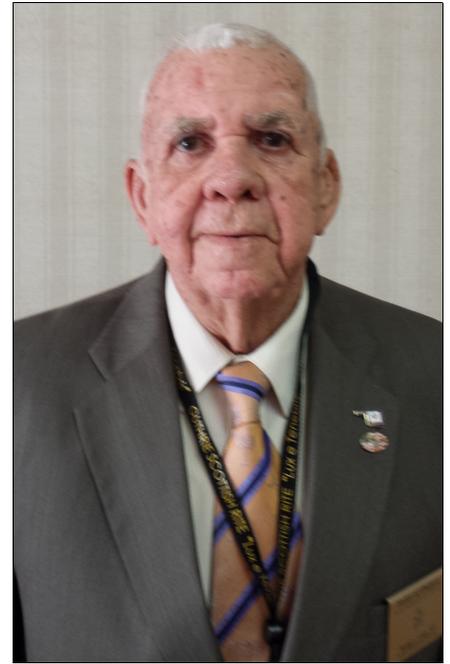
Most of you know that I am a diehard ritualist; but we must realize that not everyone wants to be, or can be, a ritualist. But they do want to be a Mason and they assist us in many other ways of service to our Lodges and Communities.

I do not want to take away from the Traditional Path which has resulted in 129 raisings thus far in in 2016, but the two methods combined, in my humble opinion, can turn the annual losses we have been experiencing for many years into something positive. I want to thank the twenty-one (21) Lodges who have either hosted or scheduled to host a future Perpetual Path Conferral Day. Every Lodge that participates in this program will be recognized in the 2016 proceedings.

This office can provide your Lodge with a complete list of the Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts that have not advanced from whatever years you desire. I urge you to avail yourselves of this opportunity to grow your lodge and increase activity in your community by involving new blood.

Bobby L. Laws

M.: W.: Bobby L. Laws, Grand Secretary



St. Alban Lodge #192

April 16th

12 Master Masons



From the Grand Lecturer

Greetings brethren,

I hope this finds you all well (and hopefully in the shade or air conditioning).



The year seems to be going by fast and it's almost time for "Tough School" in Atoka. Remember this is held at Oklahoma #4 in Atoka, Ok on the second Saturday of August.

The explanatory lectures have been given for the second time and there remains two more times to be given on the fifth Wednesday of the month.

The Perpetual Pathways are going very strongly, and I am happy to see this helping many who haven't the time to join in the traditional way to join our great fraternity.

Please remember that Grand School will be held on Wednesday, Thursday, and half a day on Friday before Grand Lodge which is in November. Also there are many resolutions and some ritual work to be voted upon by the Craft at our Annual Communication.

I hope to see you all at a school or somewhere throughout the state, **and for sure at Grand School and Grand Lodge.** Let me or any of the Deputies know if we can help in any way.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Ronnie Wray".

Ronnie Wray Grand Lecturer

The Order of the Sacred White Buffalo

The Order of the Sacred White Buffalo has 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 Annual POW-WOW for the Order will be held at the Grand Lodge Building in Guthrie on Saturday, August 13. That's when new members can join.** 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!

Eligibility and 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 (\$150.00 total) must accompany the application. Dues are \$50 annually. Both husband and wife and children over 14 years if age may join. Your dues cover the cost of the meal at the meeting at which you join. Meals at following meetings will be at your own expense. Registration will begin at 11:00 AM with a meal at noon. The meal is being catered by Gages Steakhouse in Guthrie. Charge for the meal is \$15. The Degree will start at 1:15. Dress is casual, but, please, no shorts or flip-flops. Applications should be received by the Grand Lodge no later than July 30th. Walk-ins will be accepted, but meals may not be available without prior registration. **For an application, visit the Grand Lodge website at gloklahoma.com.**



You Make a Difference in the World through the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma

Not all Oklahoma Brethren know the extent of Masonic charity in Oklahoma. In point of fact, we have one of the largest Masonic charitable foundations in America. Most Oklahoma Brethren know about the Matching Funds Program, which matches money raised by Lodges for local charitable projects, but there are other important projects and partnerships as well.



One of the oldest and most successful is our Partners in Prevention partnership with Prevent Blindness Oklahoma. We have received notification that the organization is changing its name.



Prevent Blindness Oklahoma has made the decision to disaffiliate from our national umbrella, Prevent Blindness America. Our independence will provide us with greater autonomy and flexibility and will allow us to serve more children.

We will be making a major announcement about the name and logo in the media on August 11, 2016. By changing the name of the organization from Prevent Blindness Oklahoma, we are creating the latitude to broaden our mission and image from one primarily associated with health to one associated more with the education of children. By dropping the word "blindness," we can be clear about our mission to advance children's education through vision. We will be making a major announcement about the name and logo in the media on August 11, 2016.

Our partnership with the Masons has been a blessing for the 3.7 million Oklahoma children we have screened since 1986. We are looking forward to the next chapter in that partnership and advancing children's education through vision for years to come.

A chart showing the activity for the 2015-2016 school year follows.

Inaugural Oklahoma High School Ethics Bowl

(from the Charity Foundation website mcfok.org)

"[Recently], some of Oklahoma's outstanding high school students competed in the Inaugural Oklahoma High School Ethics Bowl event organized by the Oklahoma Business Ethics Foundation and hosted at OU. The Masonic Fraternity of Oklahoma is happy to be a sponsor of this valuable program." *The website has a link to an article in the Norman Transcript, which tells more about the program. Check it out!*



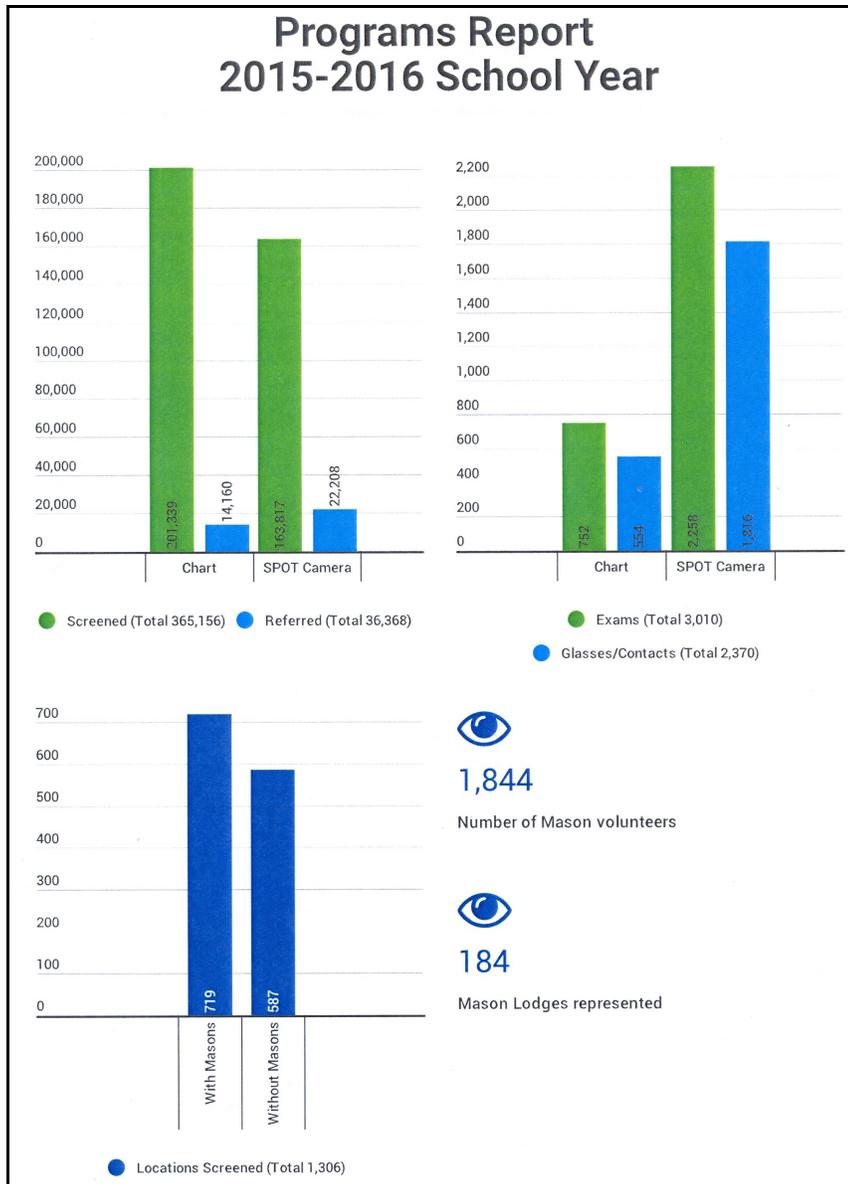
Masonry in Action Award

“Congratulations to this year’s Masonry In Action Award winners: **MARLOW LODGE NO. 103** and **GUTHRIE LODGE NO. 35**

“These lodges made concerted efforts to go above and beyond to care for the members of their lodge who had need. Whether it was roof repair, groceries, or help for Masonic widows, Marlow and Guthrie members took their Fraternal obligations seriously.

“Like many Oklahoma lodges, they also made a difference in their local communities. As part of a volunteer partnership doing school vision screenings with Prevent Blindness Oklahoma, Marlow’s members noticed that needy families in their area needed help with the cost of eyeglasses and follow up eye exams. They networked with a local eye doctor who arranged to provide exams and glasses at reduced cost for needy kids.

“Guthrie made notable contributions to support the youth in their community, including over \$10,000 raised for Peppers Ranch, a home for abused and neglected children. Guthrie lodge used the maximum Masonic Charity Foundation Matching Funds available



for Community projects in both 2014 and 2015.

“The Masonry In Action Award program was created in 2013 to recognize lodges who support their members, their communities, and the mission of the Masonic Charity Foundation. The program requires any lodge who wishes to be considered for the award to file an application, due March 31st each year.

“Two winning lodges are selected each year, representing one of two categories: "Large" lodges (with 100 or more members), and "Small" lodges (With less than 100 members). Each winning lodge is allotted \$5,000 in grant funds for distribution to the local charitable or educational cause of their choice.”

[from the Foundation website] For more Information about the Masonry In Action Award program: <http://www.mcfok.org/programs/direct-lodge-involvement/masonry-in-action-award/>

[from the Foundation website] “The Masonic Fraternity has long been a sponsor of the News 9 **Oklahoma’s Own Ride Against**



Childhood Hunger in support of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. The 2015 Ride occurred September 13, 2015 and took riders from Oklahoma City to Mulhall via Arcadia. The Masonic Charity Foundation - with support from Oklahoma lodges - contributed \$35,000 to the Regional Food Bank in support of this year's event.

"The Foundation will continue to match all lodge donations submitted in response to the Grand Master's Charitable Appeal to support this year's campaign. Donations in support of the Regional Food Bank and Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma result in direct assistance to communities all across Oklahoma. These food banks supply smaller food banks throughout the state with the food to fill their local pantries. Lodges are encouraged to respond to the Grand Master's plea in full force. A \$15,000 contribution to the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma was made in 2015 in response to the appeal."

There are many great stories on the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma's website mcfok.org — and they have a facebook presence as well.

The Resurgence of Freemasonry: How American Culture Today Favors the Resurgence of Freemasonry

Remarks of Robert G. Davis at the Leadership Conference

Based on the research of Dr. Mark Koltko River

Important! We do not need to plan Freemasonry's funeral!

A good Masonic friend of mine recently delivered a speech in New York City which turned out to be the most positive talk I have ever heard regarding the potential future of our American fraternity. Doctor and Brother Mark Koltko Rivera, an academic sociologist, used his



extensive knowledge of demographics and current cultural trends to outline an entirely different future than most of us have considered. His observations and reasoning are worth repeating because they can inspire us to take another look at the potential we have in not only turning our downward trend around; but creating the largest membership we have ever seen over the next 20 years. This is important because those who are entering the fraternity today will make it happen if they have the vision and determination to take advantage of the social factors which currently favor Masonry's resurgence. With the exception of the analysis relating to Oklahoma, which I added, this essay is Mark's work. First, we have to understand that the special postwar conditions which led to huge growth in the Fraternity in the 1940s and 1950s simply don't apply now. In fact, there are four special circumstances which *are* now taking place that create significant opportunities for us:

- Population Growth in the United States
- Availability of the Internet
- The new culture of men and their interests
- The current vacuum in moral direction

Let us briefly examine each of these:

Population Growth

In mid-2016, the population of the United States is estimated to be about 323.7 million. This is about 83% larger than that of the U.S. on July 1, 1959, the year that American Freemasonry reached its highest number of members at 4.1 million men. **Thus, the potential pool of candidates is much, much larger in 2016 than it was in 1959—by something like 36 million men when age is taken into account.** This alone is an important factor in making the resurgence of Freemasonry possible.

The Internet

The universal availability of the Internet, cheap web hosting, and website development aids means that almost any group or individual can have an attractive multi-page website online to tell their story to the world within a single afternoon. Your own, or your lodge's website, as well as your YouTube or Vimeo channels, or your podcast—can now reach a global audience; certainly everyone in your vicinity who has questions about Freemasonry.

Popular Culture

Freemasonry is in the public conscious again, after a long absence. This is being fueled by motion pictures, a variety of novelists, events, broadcast television, academic studies, and digital venues of all kinds. In the eleven years before the publication of *The Da Vinci Code* (2003), the median annual rate of membership decline was 3.2%; while during the next 11 years, that rate of decline fell to 2.8%. Dropping the rate of decline by only one-eighth may not seem like much—but it amounted to 32,000 more members in America who became Masons between 2004 and 2014. One can only imagine what this figure might have been if the reality of Masonry had lived up to its ideals; and this reality had been accurately portrayed in popular culture!

The Vacuum in Moral Direction

It is clear that organized religion holds far less sway on our young population than it did on their parents and grandparents. The nature of this change, and the reasons for it, are important to understand—because they open opportunities for the Fraternity.

In 1972, only 11% of American adults said they never attended religious services. Among adults under 30, that figure was only 14%. In 2014, a much larger proportion of all American adults—26%—said that they never attended religious services among young adults, that figure expanded to 33%. Thus, fully one-third of today's American young adults never attend religious services at all.

And yet, although one-third of American young adults are essentially without organized religion in their lives, this does not mean that they have no spiritual beliefs. One-fifth of U.S. young adults who never attend religious services nonetheless believe in an afterlife, as do 80% of all young adults. Although 28% of today's young adults say that they are “not religious at all,” only 19% say that they are “not at all spiritual.”

Rivera's research suggests there are several reasons for this:

- * an upbringing motivated by fear to get you to do something without logical reasons why you should or should not be doing something,
- * many young adults feel that their churches are shallow and self-centered. Most young people lack a deep understanding of their faith.
 - * There is an anti-science attitude, or intolerance toward science, which is an issue. Millions of young Christians perceive Christianity to be in opposition to modern science. Too many churches teach that one cannot believe in both science and God. Many young people feel that religion is exclusive in its dogma. It's an insider-outsider mentality that flies in the face of collective values of the young generation.
 - * Tolerance has been the guiding star for most of their upbringing. Their values are more than aspirations. They develop friendships and experiences in a multicultural world.
 - * Any dogmatism which takes the position that certain beliefs cannot be questioned or explored is a real problem for young adults. They do not feel free to ask the most pressing questions in a church venue.

A vacuum in Moral Authority that distances young people from their faith is the very reason that these same young adults might be attracted to Freemasonry

Freemasonry motivates its members by holding out the hope of personal improvement, greater knowledge, and help in becoming a mature, capable human being. This is part of the symbolism of the Masonic journey in every degree in Masonry.

When Freemasonry functions as it should, Masonic symbolism is not only explained, but its application to one's life is illuminated through the process of Masonic education.

From the Middle Chamber lecture to our celebration of Masons' roles in founding the Royal Society in England, Freemasonry has demonstrated for centuries an affinity for the sciences.

One of Freemasonry's basic tenets is Brotherly Love. We are not to consider religion, politics, race, ethnicity, national origin, or social status when it comes to selecting members or officers. There is no dogma in Freemasonry beyond the assertion of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Thus, if Freemasons make the effort to communicate these aspects of the Fraternity to American young adults, Masonry has the opportunity to step into the gap of moral leadership created as these adults have distanced themselves from their churches.

Freemasonry can provide a moral and intellectual framework for the spiritual and personal development of these young men. In turn, this may help our young brothers either to return to their churches, or find other religious organizations that are more suited to them, or form their own independent approaches to their personal spiritual development.

These are four social trends that favor the resurgence of Freemasonry. The question we should ask is: What if Freemasons actually took advantage of this situation? How strong could Freemasonry actually become?

Let us say that Freemasons avail themselves of these opportunities. Further, let us say that, because of these efforts, Masonry does indeed resurge—and to a strength greater than any previous peak. What could the results look like in 20 years?

How many will come?

First, let us remind ourselves that our basic pool of prospects are males of proper age who believe in a Supreme Being, and are of good report. But how many men fall in these categories? Many more than you might think. In fact, we can determine a reasonable estimate from what we already know. Here are the essentials:

We start with the total American population estimate for 2036 (372.4 million residents)

Of these, 50% will be male

Of these, about 75% will be the proper age

Now, in 2016, between 70% and 78% of adults believe in a Supreme Being, with 70% being typical of those under 30 years of age

A conservative estimate is that about 60% of men of proper age and belief are of good report by our fraternal criteria

It's now a simple matter of calculation:

In America:

372.4 million in the U.S. population in 2036

times 50% who are males

times 75% of proper age

times 70% for believing in a Supreme Being

times 60% being of good report

The question before us, then, is not the plausibility of reaching this level of membership, but whether we can achieve it in only 20 years. How is it possible that Oklahoma Masonry could grow between 1.8 and 6 times its current membership in 20 years? First, American Freemasonry has already done this once (between 1826 and 1856, when the Morgan Affair decimated 75% of the lodges in the northeast). We now have public access television that any lodge or Grand Lodge can use. We have the internet, we can post online videos shot with our smartphone; we can have YouTube and Vimeo online video channels all our own; we can have regular podcasts (an internet radio show); we can publicize all our productions effectively by Facebook and Twitter.

Anyone—a Grand Lodge or a Lodge, even an individual Mason—can reach an audience of ten million people in 2016 with substantially less effort than it took to reach 1,000 folk in 1922—all at no special cost!

Yes, it will take some technical expertise (a moderately nerdy high school senior will do), and a little savvy about publicity. It will not be hard to attract a sizeable audience of people interested in spiritual growth, moral development, and intellectual stimulation.

But it will require all of us in leadership positions to have the vision and the will to believe we will grow instead of die. We will have to move beyond the status quo we created for ourselves in the last century. **The task which is left for us to actually realize a positive future in Oklahoma Masonry is a collective spirit of mind and an honest effort.**

If we build it, they will come.