

Gray Lodge No. 329 A.F. & A.M.

August 1st, 2006



© 2006 Gray Lodge No. 329 Lodge Room

From one Master to another;

The picture you see is of your lodge beautiful lodge room, Gray Lodge 329 Brothers. Since many of you may not have actually seen it in person yet, I will tell you that it is stupendously much more impressive when you are *actually* standing on it.

As your new WM of Gray 329 for the 2007 -2008 year, I want to invite all of you to come stand on the beautiful black and white checkered pavement and red tessellated border of your lodge room floor. The vaulted ceiling creates, and unexpectedly adds vibrant character to each and every voice that speaks. For you younger Masons - the room rocks!

Gray 329 stated meetings are every first Wednesday of each month and there is always somebody working on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. You are welcome to come by and check out the floor any time.

I have three items of business that I, as the new Worshipful Master of Gray 329, must take care of first and foremost.

My first order of business is to recognize and appreciate what a great job and tremendous contributions the most Junior Past Master Randall Slinkard has done for Gray Lodge 329 in the past Masonic year. I know that I, and all of the other officers and heavy worker volunteers that have contributed time and material, very much value his leadership and his ability to get up and get going earlier in the morning, and stay up later, than most mortal men

such as myself ever could. Jr. PM Randall was recently made the President of the Houston Masonic Library and Museum Foundation, so it is great to have him still very much around here and remaining active with the mowing and weed eating.

My second order of business as WM of Gray Lodge 329 is to look forward and thank in advance this year's officers and other significant contributors. I appreciate the amount of time that they have all committed for the coming year in their respective positions, commitments and responsibilities. So Brother Officers, let's have a great year in this beautiful new lodge and do well enough that we are a worthy standard by which all future officers of Gray Lodge 329 will be squared by.

My third order of business is to thank all of those brothers, brother's wives, relatives, mates and, of course the beautiful ladies of the Bluebell OES , that spend time on various committees, work parties and make the kinds of contributions that keep this whole operation running in good due form! Thank you and please don't stop, but let's not forget to enjoy ourselves and have fun. The secret reason that the word "Freemason" starts with an "f" is because the "f" stands for "fun". There, now you know and it is not a secret any longer. Let's all enjoy ourselves this coming year!

Some important lodge business tidbits are;

1. The August stated meeting is Wednesday August 2nd, 2006 at 7:00 in the room you see pictured above. Dinner is always served around six p.m. September 6th, 2006 is next stated meeting.
2. Gray 329 Lodge is located one block west of the northwest corner of Westheimer Road and State Highway 6, in west Houston, Texas. We are on the west side of Barker Oaks Drive at 3270, look for the flag poles. A map can be found on the Gray 329 www.gray329.org website.
3. The Houston Chronicle will again be running Masonic Lodge Notices.
4. Every Saturday morning there is a work crew working around the lodge building. We can always use help knocking down the weeds and running off the snakes. Breakfast, good coffee, gatorade, and tool shed full of serious landscaping implements are provided. Bring gloves and kids capable of working.

5. Gray 329's School of instruction (and other kibitzing) is every Thursday. Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

6. Please observe that parking in the back of the lodge is reserved for the stewards, deliveries and construction. If you are parked in the back of the lodge building you may be slowing down food being served!

The one thing that I would like to improve on for Gray Lodge 329 during this coming Masonic year, is family participation. It sounds silly sometimes, but if we all run around calling each other "brothers", then we are part of a family. Sure we sometime have our arguments and disagreements; but let's face it brothers, it isn't unusual for brothers' bonds to remain strong forever. A successful lodge today is also a family affair. So, I want to suggest and encourage your families to participate in Gray Lodge 329 by at least kicking you out of the house every Saturday morning for a couple of hours of hard lodge yard labor! Bring the kids, wife, cousin or just yourself, but it would sure good to meet and see you.

My Brothers, ours is a voluntary fraternity that provides different things and satisfactions for different people. There is no secret to understanding that by becoming better men ourselves, our family becomes better, our fraternity becomes laudable, our environment improves, our communities become healthier and eventually the entire society becomes a more tolerant and enlightened place to live.

As with anything, we can always be better, if we really want to. Great achievements have been made in the last few years for Gray Lodge 329. We can do it, and we have to, because nobody else can do it for us.

WM Bill Ehmling
Gray Lodge 329 A.F.&A.M.

Did You Know That?

Any Holy Book must be opened upon the altar before a Masonic Lodge may be opened. Since Freemasonry is not concerned with doctrine, dogma, sect or denomination, but only with "that natural religion in which all men agree.", there is no exclusive religious or holy book that is revered. All of the worlds Holy Books are called several things, including the Volume of Sacred Law or the Book of the Laws. If the members of a Lodge are Christian, Moslem, Jewish or Buddhist, the book of their particular belief is opened upon their altar. The book is, therefore, a symbol of the revealed will and teachings of a Great Architect of the Universe - a name under

which any Freemason can worship that Deity in Whom he puts his faith and trust. (From "One Hundred and One Questions about Freemasonry" The Masonic Service Association, 1955

Bet you Masons didn't know these factoids either –

Brother Edwin E. (Buzz) Aldrin, Jr., a member of Clear Lake Lodge # 1417 in Texas, when he stepped onto the surface of the moon, carried a special deputation from his Grand Master to claim the moon as being in the territorial jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Texas. And so it is. - "Fraternal Review", (Southern California Research Lodge.)

Out of fifty-one Grand Lodge jurisdictions in the United States, twenty-seven have eighteen years old as their minimum age requirement to become a Mason. Six have nineteen years old, and eighteen have twenty-one years old as their minimum age requirement.

The Republic of Texas had four Presidents: David G. Burnett, 1836; Sam Houston, 1836-1838; Mirabeau B. Lamar, 1838-1841; Sam Houston, 1841-1844; Anson Jones, 1844-1846. All were Freemasons. ("One Hundred One Questions About Freemasonry" Masonic Service Association, 1955.)

History of the Craft

Modern speculative Freemasonry was founded more recently upon the structure, ceremonies, and symbolism of the lodge of operative or working freemen stonemasons, who are most well known for building the magnificent Medieval Gothic structures throughout much of Europe and England. Masonic lodges held knowledge as competitive secrets and only trusted, capable "brothers" were instructed in the craft -- and then only by degrees orally and through symbols, because of widespread illiteracy. During the late Renaissance period, lodges of free stonemasons, as they were originally called, began to accept as speculative masons those educated men who were attracted by the elegance and refinement of Masonic traditions for philosophic and social expression. In time these codes and habits were passed into the inner circles. Thus, the farmers of speculative Freemasonry began to describe a code of conduct through the symbolic nature of architecture and the stonemason's craft.

Visit www.gray329.org.