



# GRAY LODGE 329

## NEWSLETTER



What's going on at your Lodge?

November 2007

### Happy Holidays!

Please continue to send me your suggestions and I will endeavor to include your ideas and articles. send to: [master@gray329.org](mailto:master@gray329.org)

Please stay up to date on all Gray Lodge news by subscribing to our e-mail list...send an e-mail to: [gray329-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:gray329-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

### Useful Links:

- [Gray Lodge](#)
- [HMLMF](#)
- [Grand Lodge of TX](#)

### November Stated Meeting: 11/7/07 @ 7pm

We are honored to have Bro Nadeem Naik, Past Master of [Memorial Lodge #1298](#), here with us for our November stated meeting. He will give a presentation on the [Kabbalah](#). This promises to be a fascinating insight into this ancient tradition. Please invite your family and friends for the open program...we will conduct the business meeting afterwards. Dinner is at 6pm



### December Stated Meeting 12/5/07 @ 7pm

This stated meeting will be closed, however we will be holding a traditional Table Lodge after the business meeting. This promises to be a fun night and will be open to all EA's, FC's and MM's. Watch out for next months newsletter for more details.

### Degrees

We have several new candidates and therefore a lot of degree work coming up. If you would like to participate, please contact our Junior Deacon ([rmsh13@yahoo.com](mailto:rmsh13@yahoo.com)) and he will let you know what the degree schedule is. If you need to brush up on your floor work, contact the JW, Bro Darrin Pitts ([dpitts36@yahoo.com](mailto:dpitts36@yahoo.com)) and he will inform you of our rehearsals and degree team instruction.

### GRAND LODGE

If you have not already done so, please call the Hotel Waco and ask for Debbie Lowe to reserve your room. 254-753-0261

### Line Officers 2007

WM: Lex Leckie  
SW: Greg Weisinger  
JW: Darrin Pitts  
SEC: Michael Moore  
TR: Doug Hissong  
SD: David Cousins  
JD: Roberto Sanchez  
MA: Randon Reaves  
MC: Paul Anderson  
SS: RW Butch Boggess  
JS:  
CH: Craig Johnston  
TI: David Woodard

### FROM THE EAST

Rudyard Kipling was a writer, poet, journalist and Freemason. He lost his son in World War One, so had a first hand experience of the cruelty of war. Traditionally, the closest Sunday to November the 11th each year in the UK is called Remembrance Sunday...and is when most of the population of the United Kingdom take time to honor and remember those who paid the ultimate price while in the service of their country. The Poppy is worn as a symbol of commemoration.



In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.  
— John McCrae

For those of us who were fortunate to come home safe from war, it is a solemn and humbling experience to read the names and remember the faces of our friends who did not make it back. There are tears. Regardless of our individual political opinions on the current conflicts, we should never forget that the young men and women who are in harms way are just as worthy of the title "Hero" as any other veteran

from another era.

Getting back to Kipling...he pointed out that in his English society, people looked on the average "Tommy" (GI) as a necessary evil. Today's America is much more supportive of our troops, but we could do more. As Freemasons, I feel it is our duty to go the extra mile. I leave it to your conscience and the internet to find out what you can do this holiday season to bring a little cheer to those serving far from home.

*Fraternally, Lex Leckie, WM Gray Lodge #329.*

### THE TRUE ARTIST

Bro Rene Canales

Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegories and illustrated by symbols. This is the capital phrase that every "widow's son" (Enter Apprentice, Fellow Craft, or Master Mason) develops during his own meditation. However, do we know their real significance? Do we understand the difference between allegory and symbol?

If a Freemason does not investigate, he becomes just another furniture in the lodge. Remember we are true seekers of light and wisdom.

Our tradition and heritage tell us that in order to reach plenty light we have to follow our respective degrees: Enter Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. Each degree has different matters of investigation and study that will help the candidate in different manners.

First, it will help him to understand who we are and where we are coming from. Second, to understand each piece or fragment of his respective work. Finally, to distinguish true from false, symbol from allegory, artist from artisan. The Enter Apprentice should investigate issues related with man and humanity (History, Anthropology, etc). Fellow Craft's favorite subject should be science and the mysteries of nature (we also include social sciences as Ethics) while Master Masons should investigate about "transcendence." But how do we apply these disciplines to the Mason's concept of life? A Mason should always use the allegories in order to understand the real significance of the symbol. In Operative Masonry the Enter Apprentice polishes the *rough stone*, with the tools that were provided to him, to give it form and to separate it from the rest of stones. In other words, he is looking for the perfect ones, only those that will become useful. In Speculative Masonry it is essential understanding the disciplines related with history, man, and humanity. Here, the Enter Apprentice Mason will be able to seek the perfection of character. The Fellow Craft receives the *polished stone* and makes sure that it is squared and leveled. He has received the tools that would help him to find symmetry in life; therefore, it becomes important that he understands the mysteries of science and nature and applies them to his previous knowledge. This is the practice of pure reason. Finally, the Master Mason will put them together into one common mass. He has learned the transcendence and is able to answer the questions related with God, universe, and man. A simpler way to describe these steps is by understanding the different significance of the letter G according to the different degrees.

The same way the Operative Mason labors in front of the stone, the Speculative Mason is obligated to perform and build his "Masonic Edifice". First, he should cut and curve the stone seeking for the perfect length (Man and Humanity); immediately, he will be looking for the height (Science and the Mysteries of Nature); finally, he will be interested in the depth of the stone (transcendence). This is allegory, but it is important to understand it. This allegory is related with Jacob's ladder where the first step is *the common sense*. In this first step we acquire a natural position that provide us the capacity to distinguish the most basic things in life. On the second step we require something more systematic to distinguish true from false, *a method*. A system provided only by science. On the third step we look for the essence and questions that are strictly circumscribed within the boundaries of *pure knowledge*. This is philosophy. On the fourth step we seize something beyond knowledge that cannot be explained by common sense or by a method. This is *faith*. Fifth step, everything previous, everything learned is involved in a peculiar behavior ruled by a conduct, man himself, by his relationship with other men, his environment and established by regulations. This is *ethics and morals*.

While this process is ascendant, we do not want to impose a hierarchic manifestation. Remember we are builders. We are speculative masons. We are artists; therefore, we are looking for beauty, how to express beauty, and how to admire beauty. Masonry is not philosophy, Masonry is not religion, Masonry is not dogma. Masonry is art. Since the beginning of the first architecture *collegiate* in Rome to the medieval guilds until the beginning of Speculative Masonry in the XVIII century, we were always artists. Our common sense gives us equanimity. Science provides us with a systematic keenness of mind to distinguish true from false. Philosophy helps us to examine the answers to questions related with man and the universe. Theology helps us to sustain our natural attitude when our questions go beyond the boundaries of our reason. With the morals and ethics we witness man as an active individual regulated by his different actions. If we put all that together we produce art. The Art of Life that put us closer with the Supreme Architect of the Universe. This is Real Art, our integrity, our dignity, and our Masonic essence.

Elie Faure in his book History of the Art proposes: "The real artist does not love the allegory. **When the allegory is imposed**, he will dominate it and null the form, taking out of the form **the real significance that is involved**. The false artist instead is dominated by the allegory and does not learn from the form.

The allegory is the caricature of the symbol. While the symbol is the real face of the realized abstraction, the allegory is limited to point the presence of the abstraction using the attributes of the exterior."

The real mason is always practicing the REAL ART. His objective is to find the significance, **The Symbol**. Allegorically each degree is related with a subject. In the first degree: Time. In the second degree: Space. In the third degree: The Infinite. These items should be study in all their matters in each degree and it is very important to follow the sequence described above to comprehend the symbolic meaning of G. Only following this way, Masons would be able to answer what Freemasonry is and to feel a Real Practitioner. This answer will come from the point of view of history, science, and the transcendence. It is not until that moment that he will be able to love the splendid art. It is impossible to love something that you do not know. The man is immersed in time, space, and infinite. It is based in this knowledge that he would be able to say and feel truly:

### A History of Freemasonry

Freemasonry is the world's oldest and largest fraternity, charitable by nature, benevolent in character, more ancient than history can record, that teaches the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. It accepts as members good men of all faiths.

#### THE OPERATIVE CRAFT:

The real historical roots of Freemasonry are lost in the mists of time. The operative craft, that is the art of building monumental architecture out of quarry stone, originated among the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The medieval architects and builders that constructed the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe were called "freemasons" because they worked in freestone, a type of quarry stone, and because they were free men, and not serfs, bondmen, or indentured servants.

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#### TRANSITION TO A SPECULATIVE FRATERNITY:

The speculative fraternity grew out of the operative craft of freemasonry in the British Isles. The oldest written record of the fraternity is the 12th-century Fabric Roll of Exeter Cathedral in England. The medieval Freemasons achieved a level of expertise in the application of geometry that produced a visual and structural harmony akin to the mathematical harmony found in music.

Formed into lodges, rather than guilds, the early Freemasons divided their members into three classes: Apprentices, or laborers; fellowcrafts, skilled stonecutters and squarers; and Master Masons who served as overseers and architects. The principles of the craft and the secrets of their art they carefully preserved and guarded from the uninitiated. In their ceremonies and rituals of initiating and passing from one degree to another they inculcated a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by the symbols and tools of the craft.

By the 16th century lodges in Scotland had begun "accepting" members who were not operative Freemasons. The acceptance of these gentlemen speculative Freemasons into the ancient fraternity gave rise to the name "Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons."

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#### THE GRAND LODGE ERA:

From Scotland the practice of accepting non-operative members spread to England. During the early 18th century, after the Scottish uprising of 1715, the fear among some London lodges that their Scottish origins might cast doubts on their loyalty to the royal house of Hanover became a motive for them to sever any historic ties to the older lodges of Edinburgh and Scotland.

In doing so, four lodges in London came together on 24 June (St. John's Day) 1717 and formed what they called a "grand lodge." It is interesting to note that this grand lodge did not call itself "The Grand Lodge of England." In fact, it did not attempt to exert jurisdiction outside of London and Westminster or even consider itself to have a "geographic" jurisdiction. Rather it simply considered itself to be the grand lodge for the lodges under its control. Different historians refer to it in different terms, such as: "the premier grand lodge," "the grand lodge of 1717," or simply as "the grand lodge," as there was no other grand lodge in London for the first 34 years of its existence.

This meeting, held at the Goose & Gridiron Alehouse in the area of London known as St. Paul's Churchyard, marked the beginning of "the grand lodge era" and an increased public interest in the formerly quiet fraternity. No longer operative as of old, Masonic lodges continued without interruption to observe and preserve the customs and traditions of the fraternity for the benefit and enlightenment of mankind.

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#### ANCIENTS & MODERNS:

A good many lodges in London did not join in the formation of this new "grand lodge" but chose to remain independent. Throughout the 18th century the two groups became increasingly estranged as the independent lodges, clinging to more elaborate ceremonies and old-fashioned traditions, called themselves "the Ancients" and derisively labeled the lodges under the new "grand lodge" as "the Moderns."

But the idea of a central governing body, a "grand lodge," insuring a uniformity of practice among allied lodges, was an idea whose time had come. The Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed between 1725 and 1730 (although some historians argue for a date prior to 1717!), and the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed in 1736. In 1743 the first of several grand lodges was formed in France.

Finally, in 1751, six of the independent lodges of London joined to form the "Grand Lodge of England According to the Old Institutions." This second London grand lodge was more popularly known as "The Ancients' Grand Lodge," or "The Grand Lodge of the Ancients." The formative meeting of the Ancients' Grand Lodge was held at the Turk's Head Tavern in Greek Street, Soho, a popular and well-known meeting place in that part of the city, on 17 July 1751.

The two grand lodges in London continued to operate separately and independently for over 60 years until 1813 when the two grand lodges merged and became The United Grand Lodge of England.

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#### YORK AND SCOTTISH RITES:

The degrees and rituals of Freemasonry in the British Isles reflected a sublime simplicity characteristic of the British attitude toward the practical application of the lessons of Freemasonry.

On the continent of Europe Freemasonry took on a much more complex nature reflecting a more philosophical application of the ritual lessons. These two divergent streams are represented today in the so-called York and Scottish Rites of Freemasonry.

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AMERICAN FREEMASONRY:

During the 18th century, Freemasonry spread to the American colonies. The early colonial lodges were chartered by the grand lodges of Scotland, England, and Ireland. Many of the founding fathers of our country and their allies were Freemasons: George Washington, Ben Franklin, John Hancock, Paul Revere, John Paul Jones, the Marquis de Lafayette, Baron von Steuben and others.

Franklin was Past Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (Moderns) at the time of the American Revolution, and Washington, Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22, presided at the Masonic ceremony of leveling the cornerstone of the National Capitol on 18 September 1793.

But Freemasons did more than just set the Capitol's physical cornerstone. Using the symbols of Freemasonry and the principles they represent, they helped form the symbolic foundations of the new Republic and what the inscription on the Great Seal calls a "New Order of the Ages."

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If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please contact [master@gray329.org](mailto:master@gray329.org)

