



GRAY LODGE 329

NEWSLETTER



What's going on at your Lodge?

December 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

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- [Gray Lodge](#)
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December Stated Meeting: 12/5/07 @ 6.30pm

This will be a closed meeting. On completion of the business meeting, we will close and then have a traditional Table Lodge. There will be food, speeches, toasts and various other ceremonies. This promises to be a fun event!

Please note the early opening of the business portion and that the Table Lodge will follow afterwards. There will be no dinner at 6pm! We will eat the meal during the Table Lodge.



December

Gray Lodge will be "dark" during the month of December as usual. This means there will be no School of Instruction until January 3rd 2008

January Stated Meeting 01/02/08

We will be having another open program on the composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Please mark your calendars and invite your family and friends.

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) 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) 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

Brethren, Just a short note wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hope to see y'all at the Table Lodge which follows our Stated Meeting on December 5th.

We will open the Stated Meeting at **6.30pm**, as allowed for in our by-laws, to enable us to conduct the business portion, have the Table Lodge and allow everyone to get home at a reasonable hour. Please help me pass the message along to our brethren whom you think may attend and do not have e-mail.

See you there!

Fraternally, Lex Leckie, WM Gray Lodge #329.

From time immemorial, Freemasons have enjoyed meeting about a "Festive Board" loaded with the fruits of their labor. Special emphasis was placed on the Summer and Winter Solstice, late in June and and December, which were, and are, St. John the Baptist (June 24th) and St. John the Evangelist (December 27th). The twentieth century has found Masonry ignoring, and often ignorant of, both the "Festive Board" and the Festivals. Is this as it should be? The answer may be partially revealed in the following recount of the history of the Table Lodge.

Man has been continually seeking some noble purpose to pursue even centuries ago, when life was perhaps more perilous and severe, feasting became a major diversion, as much for social desires as to satisfy the needs of the inner-man.

The feasts which are probably the oldest of all Fraternal repasts were those of the "Mysteries" of ancient Egypt, the so-called "Sons of Light." The oldest of Masonic origin, of which we have any reliable record, were the feasts upon being "Entered" and "Passed" to a Fellow of the Craft. These go back far beyond the records of organized Masonry.

The Masonic desirability of a social dinner is as old as the Freemasonry we know. In 1717, when the mother Grand Lodge was formed to revitalize the Lodges in and around London, one of the reasons given was to revive the Quarterly Communication and to hold the Annual Feast. Many historians claim this annual banquet was the most important move made by the new body. A short time later, the Grand Master directed there be installed the old, regular and peculiar toasts and health's of Freemasons.

Lawrence Dermott, the author of the first "Ahiman Rezon" (*Constitutions of Masonry*), remarked about the Table Lodge: *"It was expedient to abolish the old custom of studying Geometry in the Lodge, and some younger Brethren made it appear that a good knife and fork, in the hands of a dexterous Brother,*

over proper Materials (food), would give great satisfaction and add more to the conviviality of the Lodge than the best Scale and Compasses in Europe."

From the idea of the feast, and the desire to promote a greater degree of fellowship and kinship in Masonry, was born the Table Lodge. Both the affection of friends and the love for the Fraternity flourished within its walls. Its Communications were more like a reunion than a Regular Lodge meeting, and it became a center of relaxation, celebration and inspiration of Freemasonry.

The Table Lodge had a most unusual pattern. Its meeting was conducted around the table, and the helpings of food and beverage were served in such a way they did not interfere with the other concerns of the Lodge. There were many toasts and the lusty voices of the Masons rang out with Masonic songs. The Table Lodge was traditionally a tiled Entered Apprentice Lodge, followed by the peculiar ritual used only in a Table Lodge, so all Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts could participate in the fellowship of the Lodge. As all business is usually conducted in the Master Mason Degree, then called to refreshment, at which time all Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts could be admitted and the Table Lodge opened, using the suggested ceremony provided by the Committee on Work.

In our colonial days, the Table Lodge was Freemasonry's greatest asset. It buoyed up the spirit of the colonists who were members of the Craft when they were at their lowest ebb. While the repast was undoubtedly limited and meager, the fervor and zeal were there. Once the Table Lodge was opened, the objects in the room took on a military flavor. Everything that was used changed its name:

Table... Trestleboard; Table-cloth... Standard; Napkins... Flags; Plates... Tiles; Dishes... Platforms; Spoons... Trowels; Knives... Swords; Forks... Mattocks; Bottles... Barrels; Glasses... Cannons; To "Charge"... Fill-up; Lights... Stars; Chairs... Stalls; Food... Materials; Bread... Rough Ashlar; Red Drink... Strong Powder; Water... Weak Powder; Salt... Sand; Pepper... Dust; Mustard... Paint; To Eat... Masticate; To Drink... "Fire" or Discharge Cannon

That the Table Lodge was an enjoyable experience, no one who has read the skimpy records can doubt. Dr. George Oliver, an early Masonic historian, wrote of the Table Lodge in his memoirs: *"Their song appears to have more zest than in privated company, the toast thrilled more vividly upon recollection, and the small medium of punch with which it was honored, retained a higher flavor than the potation if produced at a private board."*

Although alcoholic beverages did contribute to the festivities of the Table Lodge in days long gone, they were not a necessary adjunct. Wine was the libation, but that was changed when the 18th Amendment was adopted, so Masons would not violate the law. Although prohibition was subsequently repealed, Freemasonry did not follow suit. It retained a substitution, mainly out of respect for Brethren who practiced abstinence. Today, fruit juices and punches are used for the toasts. Actually, it is not what the glass contains, but the concept it offers.

The Table Lodge is a heritage of our past, which deserves consideration of revival. It has been stated that "The Table Lodge is the summary of Masonic Doctrine." It prescribed reverence for Divinity and the Moral Law. It strengthened the devotion that Masons held for the Lodge and Country. It increased the unity and fellowship of the Craft.

Bro Irving Berlin

With a life that spanned more than 100 years and a catalogue that boasted over 1000 songs, Bro. Irving Berlin epitomized Bro. Jerome Kern's famous maxim that

"Irving Berlin has no place in American music—he is American music."

And now "American Music's" face is on a 37-cent United States stamp. The stamp features a 1930s photo of the song-writer superimposed on a background of his manuscript for "God Bless America," by far his most popular tune.

Bro. Irving Berlin was born Israel Beilin on May 11, 1888. One of eight children, his exact place of birth is unknown, although his family had been living in Tolochin, Byelorussia, when they immigrated to New York in 1893. When his father died, Berlin, just turned 13, took to the streets in various odd jobs, working as a busker singing for pennies, then as a singing waiter in a Chinatown Cafe. In 1907 he published his first song, "Marie from Sunny Italy," and by 1911 he had his first major international hit—"Alexander's Ragtime Band."

Over the next five decades, Bro. Irving Berlin produced an outpouring of ballads, dance numbers, novelty tunes, and love songs that defined American popular song for much of the century. A sampling of just some of the Irving Berlin standards includes "How Deep Is the Ocean," "Blue Skies," "White Christmas," "Always," "Anything You Can Do," "There's No Business Like Show Business," "Cheek to Cheek," "Puttin' on the Ritz," "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody," "Heat Wave," "Oh! How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning," "Easter Parade," and "Let's Face the Music and Dance." In a class by itself is his beloved paean to his beloved country, "God Bless America."

At Home Writing For Broadway or "Pops" He was equally at home writing for Broadway and Hollywood. He wrote 17 complete scores for Broadway musicals and revues, and contributed material to six more. Among the shows featuring all-Berlin scores were The Coconuts, As Thousands Cheer, Louisiana Purchase, Miss Liberty, Mr. President, Call Me Madam, and the phenomenally successful Annie Get Your Gun.

Among the Hollywood musical classics with scores by Bro. Irving Berlin are Top Hat, Follow The Fleet, On the Avenue, Alexander's Ragtime Band, Holiday Inn, This Is the Army, Blue Skies, Easter Parade, White Christmas, and There's No Business Like Show Business. His songs have provided memorable moments in dozens of other films, from The Jazz Singer (1927) to Home Alone (1991). Among his many awards were a

special Tony Award (1963) and the Academy Award for Best Song of the Year for "White Christmas" in 1942.

An intuitive businessman, Bro. Irving Berlin was a co-founder of ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), founder of his own music publishing company, and, with producer Sam Harris, built his own Broadway theatre, The Music Box.

An unabashed patriot

An unabashed patriot, his love for— and generosity to—his country is legendary, and through several of his foundations, including The God Bless America Fund and This Is The Army Inc., he donated millions of dollars in royalties to Army Emergency Relief, the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and other organizations. His actions were acknowledged with such accolades as the Army's Medal of Merit from President and Bro. Truman in 1945, a Congressional Gold Medal for "God Bless America" and other patriotic songs from President Eisenhower in 1955, and the Freedom Medal from President and Bro. Gerald Ford in 1977.

Bro. Irving Berlin's centennial in 1988 was celebrated worldwide, culminating in an all-star tribute at Carnegie Hall benefiting the Hall and ASCAP, subsequently an Emmy Award-winning special on CBS, and featuring such varied luminaries of the musical world as Frank Sinatra, Leonard Bernstein, Isaac Stern, Natalie Cole, and Willie Nelson.

On September 22, 1989, at the age of 101, Bro. Irving Berlin died in his sleep in his town house in New York City. A widower since his wife of 62 years, the former Ellin Mackay, had died the previous year at the age of 85, Bro. Berlin is survived by three daughters, nine grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

Bro. Irving Berlin was a member of Munn Lodge 190 in New York City, and was active in both the Scottish Rite and in the Shrine

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If you wish to contribute to this newsletter, please contact master@gray329.org

