

The Square and Compasses.

A newsletter for the Grand Lodge of South Africa. No. 47 December 2015



Most Worshipful Brother Geoff Edwards OSM.

Brethren – Now is the Time!

Some months ago a much respected Brother was advised that his cancer was too advanced to medically reverse and that his future was limited. The story itself is not uncommon – and neither, I suspect, was my reaction. My immediate concern was for my Brother and those close to him and I sincerely hoped that, with the help of the GAOTU, they would be able to face the difficult challenges ahead. I also realised, however, how easily it could be me. Our Brother is an exceptional Freemason. He still labours with us daily and, despite his medical condition, fights on and remains admirably optimistic. The truth is, that none of us really know how much time we have!

But Brethren, my message is not about our Brother and his challenges - it's about us, and ours. You see, when I consider the contribution our craft can make to the world we live in, I really do believe that we have more to offer than we really appreciate. Our basic precepts of Truth, Morality and Brotherly Love lay the type of foundations from which only the strongest communities would rise. Our focus on charity and sincere caring provide the corner-stones which would breed trust and respect throughout the world. I firmly believe in the well-worn adage, that if all men applied our Masonic principles, the world would be a far, far better place to live in.

In my view, Freemasonry really can make a difference and yet, in far too many cases, numbers are declining and little is being done to reverse this trend. We spend too long analysing the reasons why we aren't making progress and not long enough exploring ways in which we could share our message.

Brethren, I won't be so naive as to try to tell you exactly what you should do if your Lodge is not

growing as it ought to be. Each Lodge is unique and will have its own unique plan and there are various ideas which you could apply to promote your Lodge and the craft. Remember, however, that our Order has become far more open nowadays and, within sensible limits, promoting our craft is much encouraged.

Certain factors are, however, common to all of us. Firstly, you have to firmly believe that Freemasonry is really worth the effort, that it can make a real difference and that its light can no longer afford to be hidden. Secondly, you have to believe that there are good men out there who are waiting for your message and that you owe it to them to see that they hear it. Thirdly, Brethren, you have to be willing to make the time available to ensure that the task is attended to without any further delay.

And it's time, Brethren, which I believe presents us with our biggest challenge. All of us have so much to do and, even when we relax, there are so many options. But the real issue is not about whether we have the time, it's about how we allocate it. The other day I read a quotation from H Jackson Brown. It goes : "Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson and Albert Einstein". I guess that says it all.

Brethren, my message is not to try and persuade you to jeopardise that which is important to you or your families by inappropriately allocating time to Masonic commitments. It is rather to urge you to look at the time you are allocating to our craft and to satisfy yourself that it is realistic and well spent. If Freemasonry is to grow, there is work to be done and it's vital that each of us endeavours to play our part. We cannot afford the luxury of waiting until tomorrow to address that which should be done today.

Time, Brethren, is precious. None of us know how much we have or what future restrictions may be placed on our ability to effectively make use of that which has been allocated to us. I firmly believe, however, that each of us who love the craft has a duty to ensure that we do everything we can to preserve it for the generations to come. We cannot simply talk about what must be done, we have to take action - and the time is right now. A new year approaches and I urge you to use your Masonic time well.

Brethren, let me take this opportunity to wish you and all those you love and care for a joyous festive season and a new year filled with peace, health and happiness. May the GAOTU bless and keep you.

**MW Bro Geoff Edwards OSM
Grand Master**

The Annual Meeting of the Eastern Cape Division.



The Annual Meeting of the Eastern Cape Division took place at the Parliament Street Temple in Port Elizabeth on Saturday 14th November 2015. The Deputy Provincial Grand Master, Wor Bro Keith Hutton (front centre) reported on the recent challenges that the Division had faced. He expressed the disappointment felt by the Brethren in the Division after discovering that their trust had been betrayed. He stated, quite firmly, that they will not dwell on the past as there is a major opportunity for the Division to re-juvenate itself and to go forward with a new spirit

of cooperation. This was evident from the camaraderie shown by the GLSA Brethren present and the fact that all of the Sister Constitutions were present and represented by senior members. This has not been seen for many years.

Like the Phoenix, the crash and burn is now over and a bright future lies ahead. The Division has already structured itself to ensure that the Brethren have quality experiences and we are sure that this will provide a base for the all important membership growth initiatives that have been identified.

Lodge Libertas “Bush Bash.”

There is much truth in the adage that a “Lodge that plays together, stays together.” Conventional wisdom confirms this and we often find that our more successful Lodges have an active social program that involves the Brethren and their families.

After all, Freemasonry must be a family affair!

Every now and then, however, the “boys” take a little time off and let their hair down, (the younger ones at least) and bond the only way that guys can when they share a trip to the bush.



There is a rule of course that states; “what happens in the Bush, stays in the Bush,” but we could not resist publishing this one. With beer in hand, around the fire; a fabulous time was had by all.

“Do not go with the flow. Be the flow.”

Elif Shafak

Freemasonry - a Journey of Personal Growth.

Brethren; I am always somewhat taken aback when a Brother turns around and says “what is Freemasonry giving to me?” for, clearly, they have not managed to grasp even the most basic principles.

Freemasonry is about participation and you receive in proportion to what you contribute - and it's not about money or status. Grand Lodge's aim is to ensure that “every member shall receive a meaningful experience” from whatever he does on the square.

There are, however, some interesting side benefits. As an example, many young men come to us with little experience outside of a sheltered social and business life and lack the confidence to stand up in public and offer meaningful comment in an environment in which they do not feel comfortable. By performing ritual in an open Lodge where others

know it better than you do and receiving positive reinforcement when you “get it wrong” develops the confidence to stand up and be heard in public.

There is also a requirement in many Lodges that, as part of his progression assessment, an initiate must write a short paper outlining his experiences in the degree he has attained. Once again, this is just another one of the ways in which this confidence is developed. To expose yourself to the scrutiny of your Brethren on such a personal issue takes courage and hence, enhances your personal self growth.

We regularly receive copies of papers written by Brethren who are progressing on their Masonic journey and, while space prevents us from publishing them all, we include the commendable example which follows. Our Brother is clearly enjoying his Masonic experience and is benefiting from it in proportion to the amount of himself that he contributes.

Impressions of the Entered Apprentice Degree

I stand before you this evening as a humble Apprentice, I am at the bottom of the food chain as it were, I'm the least knowledgeable member of this Lodge, and still have a great deal to learn. The journey I started a few months ago has only just begun.

When I came into this Lodge on the evening I joined Freemasonry, everything of value I had on my person was taken from me. So when I walked into the Temple I had nothing, just as I came into this world and just as I will leave this world.

I came into the temple with questions and although I left the temple with many more questions, I received many answers.

Standing in the delivery room at my son's birth didn't make me nervous, but standing in front of the Deputy Grand Master and Provincial Grand Master made me so nervous that I couldn't take in the handshakes and passwords shown to me, I even made a few mistakes that evening.

The nervousness aside, what I saw that evening, what I experienced and what I learned changed my life. It made me realise that I am not the man I should be and I don't always handle my interpersonal relationships the way I ought to.

After the ritual experience, I did a great deal of soul searching and realised that I had to make things right with a lot of people, before I could go around calling myself a Freemason.

So many great historical figures went through what I went through that evening, and I am sure that they enhanced their greatness because they applied the principles of Freemasonry to their own lives.

I entered the Temple an imperfect man. It is my understanding that the more I learn about Freemasonry, the closer I will get to perfection - something no man can attain, but something the wise can always strive towards.

Once we start building our lives on a firm foundation, with God as our corner stone, we slowly but surely chip away the imperfections.

Another thing Freemasonry has taught me is patience. From the early stages of waiting to hear about my application to the big night of waiting to start the ritual, I've learned to be more patient.

When I was a child I read the story of Odysseus (known in Roman mythology as Ulysses). This story intrigued me immensely. The story is called “The Odyssey” and is the second oldest work of Western Literature. The story was originally written in the form of a poem by Homer in 8 BC.

The main focus is on the hero Odysseus and his journey home after the fall of Troy. It takes Odysseus 10 years to reach Ithaca after the ten-year Trojan War. In this 10 year journey he faces many adversaries and challenges and is even imprisoned. Since this work's translation into modern language, the word odyssey has indeed come to refer to an epic voyage.

I would go as far as to say that when I walked into the door of the Temple, I began an odyssey. The journey I began that evening has changed my life forever. I was stumbling in darkness and didn't even know who I was anymore.

As I read over my ritual book after my initiation, the light began growing stronger and stronger. Like a lost ship of old slowly approaching that harbour in the dark distance.

Upon making my oath before my Creator, I realised what a great step I'd taken. It is my choice to take a stand for Freemasonry and the principles of acceptance and brotherly love it stands for.

There is a great deal in Freemasonry that still confuses me, but through study and asking my Brethren for assistance and guidance I know that the confusion won't remain for long.

Before I became a Freemason, I wasn't always sure if I could trust people, but through putting the trust in 2 Brothers who were unknown to me I have learned that there is always a hand willing to help.

I feel truly blessed to call you all my Brethren and I feel equally blessed to call the Star of the West my Mother Lodge. It is my prayer that the Lodge may stand for many years to come, and I hope that one day my sons make the choice to go through the same.

My life is dedicated to my Creator, my family and after that it is dedicated to the principles of brotherly love, charity and becoming a better person.

May I forever bear the name of my Lodge with pride and may I make you, my Brethren, proud of me, never disappointing you. I only hope that I might one day assist a candidate as you all have assisted me. I was received with open arms into this Lodge.

I would like to thank every member of the Star of the West Lodge for their stories, advice and assistance. Most importantly I would like to thank everyone for their patience with me. I was so nervous at my first degree that if it were not for the brethren of this Lodge, I would never have made it through.

I look forward to the next steps on my journey.

Bro RL Thomsen
Lodge Star of the West

The Consecration of Fidelity Cryptic Council.



The new Fidelity Cryptic Council was consecrated on 31 October 2015 in the Masonic complex in Orange Grove, Johannesburg by the First Grand Principal, MEC Johan Britz. He was assisted by the Deputy First Grand Principal, MEC John Smith OSM; the Second Grand Principal, MEC Graham Sumner; the Third Grand Principal, MEC Bernard Neuhaus; the Grand Superintendents MEC Brian Karstens and MEC Tom du Toit and the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter Officers.

The consecration was followed by the installation of the TIM, Wor Bro John Harmse, and the investiture of the Officers. The installation ceremony was conducted by MEC Tom du Toit and the Officers of the Provincial Grand Royal Arch Chapter, Northern Division.

Overall, it was a most successful and very memorable occasion.

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to a better understanding of ourselves."
- Carl Jung

Almoner's Corner.

Congratulations to Len Kingsley on becoming a Grandfather for the fourth time - this time, a baby girl. We wish the mother and child everything of the best and may the little one become the apple of your eye.

Several Brethren have faced opportunities with new or re-occurring medical problems. Wor Brethren Mervyn Metcalfe (Lodge Mutual) and Koos du Preez (Lodge Johan van Riebeeck) were back for treatment and tests. Wor Brethren Braam van Zyl (Lodge St Jan), Corrie Grobbelaar (Lodge Simon van der Stel), Jan Venter (Lodge Johan van Riebeeck) and Eugene Slabbert (Lodge Parys) have all needed to spend time

in hospital this month. We wish you all a speedy recovery and a safe return to the "Square".

Brethren: It is the time of goodwill to all men. May we please remember those less fortunate than ourselves and share a prayer for those members of the Order who will not feel well enough to enjoy the festive season as they choose.

Grand Almoner

Brethren, the Grand Almoner is only as effective as the information he receives. Please, if anything is known about a Brother in distress, be sure to phone RW Bro Neville Klein OSM at 071 4148869 or send him an email to:

kleinneville@gmail.com



Registration Number: 2002 / 031211 / 23

Masonic Tour to Israel

"In the Footsteps of Freemasonry"

Join the Grand Master on this wonderful tour during
September 2016

Please contact Henda Heyneke on +27 (0) 11 764 2783, Cell: +27 (0) 83 256 6682 or on heyneketours@telkomsa.net for more information on this tour and other arrangements.

"If you can't fly then run; if you can't run then walk; if you can't walk then crawl; but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward!"
Martin Luther King Jnr