

NEWSLATE NUMBER 8

NOVEMBER 2011 ISSUE:

Message from the east
Upcoming events
A Masons Table Tow
Recent News
Thanks Giving Recipes
Much more



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EAST

This will be my final offering as Master of the Lodge. It has been a busy year, full of some traditional activities and some new ones. I would like to summarize some of these activities for you in this issue.

One of the first things accomplished this year was the update to the bylaws. The big changes were: (1) to get the language in line with the current Masonic Code and lodge practice, and (2) to put in place mechanisms to keep lodge dues and degree fees in line with current economic realities. The degree fee increases also includes provision to the new Master Mason of a lodge lapel pin and nametag plus the cypher and Masonic manual in addition to his lambskin apron.

Probably the most ambitious project we took on this year is the Mark Twain Award process. The Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award recognizes lodges that have demonstrated exemplary work in constructing a positive Masonic identity within the lodge and for the local community. A by-product of this process is a lodge calendar (unfortunately with no pictures) for the year, containing all these activities. This will be a useful reference tool if you are planning to attend lodge functions.

In addition, we tried to augment the regular schools of instruction with more personalized ritual work, teaming an experienced brother with a younger one (in the Masonic sense) who seeks more light in Masonry. We are calling this "The Work at . . ." meaning that it could be a someone's home, at the lodge, or even at a school of instruction. We held a few sessions, with some rather good Chili and cornbread dinners and great after dinner conversations. I hope the incoming officers will continue this on an as-needed basis.

Br. Shawn Carrick started the "Bikes to Books" program with one of the local Red Wing area schools; this is a great program for encouraging kids to read books. Our involvement is to create incentives by providing bikes to the kids that read the most books. The first year was a great success and we plan to continue this activity in future years.

The Kids ID program has been updated to a high tech computer system and we held a session at the Red Wing YMCA on Saturday September 24th, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM. We will had some great volunteers for this event, including two nursing students from SE Tech, a Red Wing Community Police Officer, and some Boy Scouts (who handled the computer data entry very well). I'd like to thank all the volunteers, including the members of the lodge, who participated in this event. We had some success for a first time out, creating ID Kits for around 35 kids; the parents who escorted these kids were very appreciative and I think this event will be bigger next time out.

The number of dues paying members greatly outnumbers those who regularly attend lodge. We spent some time this year exploring why this is the case and trying to make adjustments to see if we can improve this ratio. We did some calling, writing, or emailing to most of these members to determine their status: is it climbing the stairs, driving at night, being unable to travel, being just out of practice with the ritual and passwords, or something we haven't thought of. At the September stated communication we took the lodge Charter to the Presbyterian Church in downtown Red Wing, which has an elevator, but did not manage to attract any of the inactive members. This is the one initiative that I wish we could have made work this year.

There were some fun social events: I hosted a BBQ this Summer at my home, open to brothers and their immediate families to enhance the fellowship enjoyed by brothers who attend the lodge. I'd like to see this become an annual event. One of the most fun summer activities was a trip to Circus Juventus on July 30th; those kids are just amazing!! The Table Lodge, which has been such a great success the past two years, was moved to September 17th to accommodate the BBQ. We invited the widows of brothers who have passed to the Celestial Lodge and the wives of brothers serving abroad. The Table Lodge also included the scholarship awards and a Hiram Award for Br. Shawn Carrick, who has done so much for the lodge these past few years. On November 5th we will host a Chili dinner at the lodge, followed by Masonic Movie Night at the Sheldon Theatre with the classic film "The Man Who Would BE King"; the opening movies was made by Masonic Charities based on a time capsule found at the University of Minnesota.

The MN Grand Lodge sponsored an open house series in September, October and November. September was for existing brothers who don't make it to lodge on a regular basis. The stated communication was moved to the Presbyterian Church so you don't have to climb any stairs; this was described earlier. The October meeting was an open house across the state on Saturday October 15th and was to recruit new members; we were visited by a couple of young men & will have to wait & see if they come back. The November meeting will be at our stated communication & ideally we would hope to sign up a few members from the October meeting.

Thanks again to Br. Jeff Boigenzahn for putting together the lodge newsletters this year. In closing, I'd like to thank all of you for the privilege of being Master of this great lodge for the past year and wish the incoming Master and his officers a successful year in 2012. I would urge all of us to support them wherever we can to make 2012 the best year in the lodge's history.

Fraternally,
Ben Manning
2011 Master, Red Wing Lodge #8

A MASONS CABLE TOW

BY SHAWN CARRICK
JUNIOR WARDEN, RED WING LODGE No.8
MEMBER, GRAND LODGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
GRAND LODGE OF ANCIENT FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF MINNESOTA

As Masons we cheerfully agree to abide by our obligations and promises that we took at the altar in each degree. The cable tow is an integral symbol that is part of each degrees impact on the Mason's conscience. We learn about the cable tow in the first degree and it is reinforced in each additional degree a Brother will experience. An important question about this singular item is how the cable tow has been defined by different sources, depending on their interpretation of the degree.

MasonicDictionary.com indicates that the cable tow "represents the candidates bond to his guide". The Masonic Dictionary maintained by masonicworld.com indicates that the length of the cable tow is symbolically measured to be three miles in the early years to go to the relief of a brother in need but "in present time it is usually considered about forty miles." These definitions are just words that an individual has made based on their personal beliefs and experiences.

In the early years, 1700's up to mid 1900's, most members of a lodge would live in close proximity to their Masonic Temple, which would be consistent with a three-mile cable tow. The lodge was an integral part of the local community and being able to attend Lodge Communications was essential to Masons. In the present time, members are not solely from a specific town for the lodge they belong to, but rather they can many times be from surrounding communities, driving considerable distances to attend the different functions. They have chosen to be involved with a specific Lodge for a personal reason or a specific Lodge is involved in an activity that is of interest and importance to the Mason. To better understand the length of a cable tow, we must understand the give and take a cable tow experiences and what the cable tow represents.

A cable tow consists of two separate ends connected together by a cord. One end of the cable tow is representing the individual Mason while the other end is representing the Fraternity or Lodge. When examining the cable tow it is impossible to tell where one end starts and the other end begins. It is this fluid change that occurs while examining the cable tow from one end to another that sets Masonry apart from any other fraternal organization. The cable tow reminds each Mason of his obligations and promises to the lodge while at the same time representing the Lodge and the Fraternity's (Members of the Lodge) obligations to a Brother. How Masons fulfill their obligations differ based on their individual beliefs and interpretations.

CALENDAR

November 2011

November 1st (Tuesday) at 6:30 PM	Officer's Meeting at Sarah's Restaurant (note change in location)
November 5th (Saturday) at 5PM	Chili Dinner at the Red Wing Lodge before the show!
November 5th (Saturday) at 7PM	Masonic Movie Night at the Sheldon Theater: "The Man Who Would Be King"
November 7th (Monday) at 5PM	Membership Night
November 7th (Monday) at 7PM	Stated Communication with fabulous Smoked Turkey Dinner (at 6PM) & Officer Elections
November 12th (Saturday) at 8AM	Master Mason Degree
November 17th (Thursday) at 6PM	District 26 Past Masters Degree - Corinthian Lodge #67
November 21st (Monday) at 7PM	District 26 - 2nd School of Instruction (Corinthian Lodge in Farmington)
November 25th (Friday) at 5PM	Red Wing Downtown Holiday Stroll
November 28th (Monday) at 6:30 PM	Officer's Meeting

December 2011

December 5th (Monday) at 7PM	Stated Communication with Oyster Stew Dinner & Officer Installation
December 26th (Monday) at 6:30 PM	Officer's Meeting

What act or acts fulfill a Mason's obligations can vary greatly and may be as simple as having a conversation with a brother or it could be more important and impactful such as providing emotional and even financial support of a Brother who is in need of assistance, or to the family of a brother who is called by the Grand Architect of the Universe to that house not made with hands...the celestial Lodge above.

It is important to remember that the length of a Mason's cable tow is ultimately set by the individual Mason and cannot be truly judged by any other individual. When three miles may be the proper length of a cable tow for one Mason, another Mason's cable tow may be hundreds or even thousands of miles in length. Each length is determined by the individual's moral principles, beliefs and their particular individual circumstances. Ultimately, a Mason will pass judgment on himself based on the aid they have provided to others, but more especially a Brother Mason. A quote I like that I believe is fitting when looking at your cable tow is:

"When looking at the reflection in the mirror, do you like what you see based on what you have done and what you have not done?"

MASONRY IS A PROGRESSIVE SCIENCE THAT HELPS TO TAKE GOOD MEN AND MAKE THEM BETTER, BUT IT IS NOT THE LODGE ALONE THAT WILL HELP TO MAKE THEM BETTER. EACH MASON MUST WORK TOWARD THE GOAL OF MAKING HIMSELF BETTER. BY REMEMBERING OUR OBLIGATIONS AND HAVING A CABLE TOW THAT IS OF APPROPRIATE LENGTH FOR PROVIDING AID AND RELIEF, MASONS, WITH THE HELP OF THE LODGE, WILL SUCCEED IN BECOMING BETTER MEN TO THEIR FAMILIES AND TO THEIR COMMUNITIES.



Letter from the Secretary

In the last edition of News Slate Eight I highlighted the great importance of the Lodge acquiring all our Brother's electronic addresses. Having not gained a single new address in the effort I move to a more daunting subject: dues.

Revisions to our Lodge's By-Laws have set the annual dues rate at twice the Grand Lodge's Per Capita. That Per Capita figure, currently \$29 per annum, multiplied by two obliges Red Wing Brothers to pay \$58 by December 31st, 2011 to satisfy their 2012 requirements. I would like to highlight briefly that last part about dates.

As of this printing a full 13% of our members are in arrears for 2011 dues. The terms of the Masonic Code are clear regarding the Senior Warden's duty in the event a Brother seeking admission through the West Gate does not possess a current dues card: he must be blocked from entry. While I realize that in most cases Brotherly Love prevails and the unpaid Brother is granted admission, it is my hope that those men in arrears will consider the rather uncomfortable position in which they put the Senior Warden. Should he be questioned regarding his decision to open the Gate, by a Custodian or District Representative for example, he would have no Masonic justification for his decision and may be faced with discipline. For those in our 13%, consider your fraternal feelings for our Senior Warden: come out from the darkness of arrears and into the light of current dues payment.

An equally important piece of this discussion is a Brother's ability to pay. It is critical that if that ability is compromised, notice should be served to the Secretary. He may then enter into a discussion with the Master regarding whether the member's difficulties merit consideration regarding dues payment, and they may confidentially bring the matter to the Lodge. Masonic obligation is not intended to produce a financial burden to a Brother or his family. Please contact WB Manning or me should you feel your situation merits relief.

I would like to thank all of you for making 2011 a banner year for Masonry in Red Wing. I look forward to our continued labors in 2012, and may each of you and your families have a safe and happy holiday season.

Fraternally,

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