



The
klahoma Mason
The Grand Lodge of the State of Oklahoma

2011 - vol. I December / January

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M.:W.: Glenn Earl Almy - 2011



From the Grand Master

Happy Holidays, Brethren!

I hope you had a happy Thanksgiving and that you have plans for a joyful and rewarding season, whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or some other special event.

It is a time of giving and caring, and I would like to ask you to give some special attention to someone you may not think of—your Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts. Far too often, we leave our newest members at the altar. We greet them as a Brother, we tell them they are Masons, and then while we do not quite “turn them out like orphans into the storm,” we don’t make a special effort to make them feel welcome and let them know we are truly happy to have them with us.

As a result, we never see nearly half of them again.

There are some simple things we can do to change that, and it is just a matter of treating them as we would want to be treated. Not a bad thing to remember, especially at this special time of the year. Here are a few suggestions.

❄️ Before he comes to take his first Degree, make sure the Worshipful Master knows his name, his telephone number, and his e-mail address. The Secretary can take that information from the petition and give it to the Worshipful Master on a card. (Even better, make copies and give a slip of paper to each member present with the same information.)

❄️ Also before he comes, know who is going to teach him his lecture and have the Brother’s name and contact information on a card to give him. **The Grand Lodge has a special flyer, titled *A Few Words, Some Helpful Hints, and Some Handy Phone Numbers For the New Mason*, with places to write the name and number of the Lodge, the name and numbers of the Worshipful Master and Secretary, and the name and number of his teacher and they cost only 10¢ each.** They are a good way for him to keep the information.)

❄️ Make sure the teacher is there the night of the Degree, introduce the new Entered Apprentice to him, and give them a chance to set up a time to start work on the Degree. Experience has shown that those who start to work within a couple of days learn the material more easily.

❄️ Either that night after the degree or the next day, the Worshipful Master should send an e-mail

to the new E.A., welcoming him to the Lodge. It doesn't have to be long and elaborate. Something like *"Dear Brother Fred, it was a pleasure to welcome you to Freemasonry last night. We're happy to have you as a member. If you have any questions, please ask. If I can't answer them, I'll be happy to find someone who can. Fraternally. _____, Worshipful Master."* Encourage other members to send him an e-mail, too.

❄️ If the Lodge has a website or electronic newsletter, add his address to the list right away, so that he has contact with the Lodge.

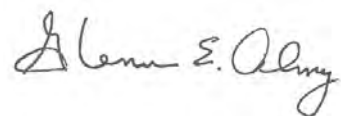
It will probably take less than 15 minutes to do all this, and it's a small investment of time to help a new Mason get connected with the Lodge.

Later in this issue, you will find the **Programs for 2011**. Please take a minute to read through it, and think of ways your Lodge can be made even better this year!

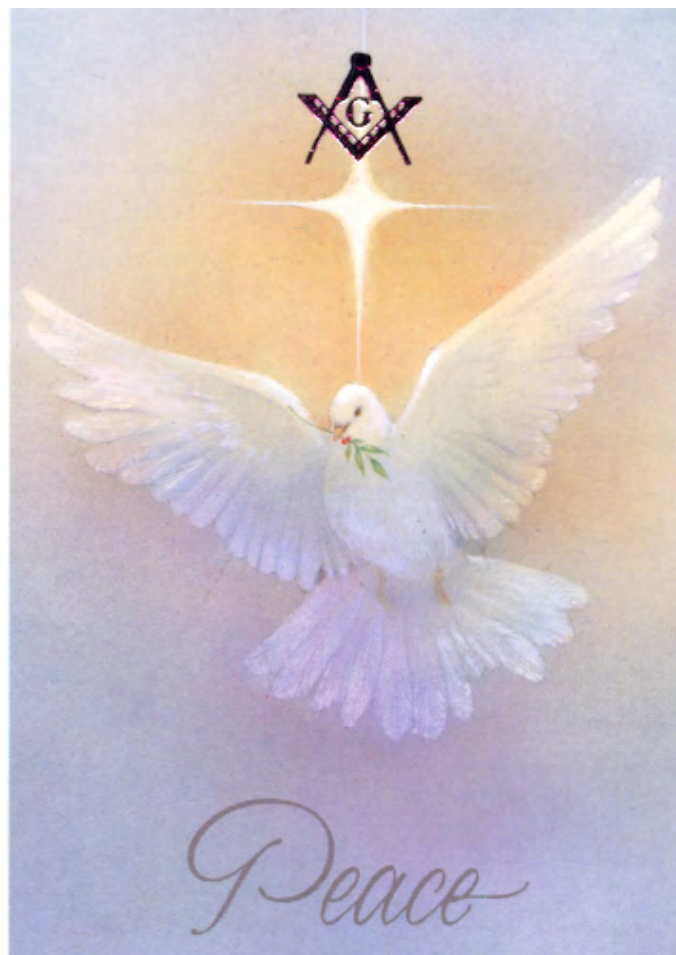
One other thought. I hope to visit with as many of you as possible this year, and that will be a lot easier and less expensive at District meetings than at individual Lodge meetings. Please let me know when there is a District meeting you would like for me to attend. I'll do my best to accommodate your schedule.

Once again, have a truly happy holiday season, and a great New Year.

Sincerely and fraternally,



Grand Master



Biography of the Grand Master

M.:W.: Glenn E. Almy was born in Cleveland, Oklahoma on October 20, 1940. He was the second of four children. His older sister, Jacquie Reed lives in Mannford, Oklahoma. His brother Ronald, lives in Bay City, Texas, and his brother Larry lives in Columbus, Georgia.

He graduated from Terlton High School in 1958. After graduation, he joined the U.S. Navy and served aboard the U.S.S. Ticonderoga C V A 14 Aircraft Carrier. After he was discharged from the Service, he returned to the Keystone, Oklahoma area. As it happened, the Keystone Dam was being built, and there were many jobs in construction available.

In October 1961, he married a lovely lady from Mannford, Loretta Sue Fisher. The couple set up housekeeping in the Mannford area and have lived there since. They had two daughters—Lorri Ann and Allison Elaine—five grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

M.:W.: Brother Almy joined a local pipefitters and plumbers union and, after a five-year apprenticeship, became a code welder and pipefitter, and has worked all over the United States.

In 1973 he was initiated, passed, and raised to the sublime Degree of Master Mason at Mannford Lodge #515. From 1974 to 1994 he worked on the road while maintaining his membership in the Lodge. In 1994 he returned to the Tulsa area and started his own company, doing mechanical and plumbing work, until he retired in 2002. Also in 1994 he became very active in the Lodge. He received his "A" Certificate in 1999 and was elected Worshipful Master of Mannford Lodge in 2001.



A member of the Scottish Rite, M.:W.: Brother Almy received the designation of KCCH in 2005, and has been the Director of the 16th Degree since 2002. He is a member of the Cimarron Valley Chapter, York Rite. He performs the Masonic funeral/memorial service for brethren in the area and was elected to the Board Of Directors of the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma in 2009. He is a member of Mannford Lodge #515, Pond Creek Lodge #125, Hebron Lodge #215, and Akdar Lodge #555.



Meet the Junior Grand Warden



R.:W.: Brother Ronald Jack (Ron) Chambers was elected to the Grand South. He lives in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. He is widowed and has one son, R. David Chambers. He is retired from American Airlines with 33 years of service, where as an Inspector in non-destructive testing, he tested aircraft and parts using magnaflux, ultrasound, X-ray and radio isotopes. He also created and sold a pest control business and a small engine repair business.

He was passed to the sublime Degree of Master Mason at Delta Lodge #425, in Tulsa, on December 20, 1966, and served as Worshipful Master in 1987. He has been an "A" Certificate Lecturer from 1984 to the present, and has served the Lodge as Treasurer since 2003.

In 2004, he received the Oklahoma Medal of Honor.

Our Right Worshipful Brother joined the Tulsa Scottish Rite in 1967, and was invested with the designation Knight Commander Court of Honour (KCCH) in 1987. In 1995, he received the 33°. He has served the Tulsa Valley as a Service Knight, as Membership Chairman, and Almoner, and has assisted in more than 30 Rose Croix funerals.

He is a member of the Tulsa York Rite Bodies, serving as High Priest of Chapter #52 in 1987, Illustrious Master of Council #22 in 1987, and as Commander of Tulsa Commandery #20 in the same year. He received the designation of KYCH in 1989 and the Distinguished Service Bronze Medal in 1995.

He is also a member of York Rite College #75, McMillion Council #15 Allied Masonic Degrees, and the St. Luke Conclave - Red Cross of Constantine.

He is a member of Akdar Shrine and the Jesters, and also of Friendship Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star.

Brother Chambers served as a member of the Oklahoma Masonic Indian Degree team from 1986 to 1999, and as Director of the team from 1995 to 1998.

He has served the Grand Lodge on the Credentials Committee from 1988 to the present. He served as Chairman of the Last Degree Ritual Committee, tasked with revising the Masonic funeral service in Oklahoma in 1993, has been a member of the Joint Masonic Fraternal Relations Committee since 2002, was Grand Sword Bearer in 2008, and that same year served as Chairman of the Committee to create the cipher key. One of the few Brothers in the state to perform the Masonic memorial service, he has conducted more than 900 Masonic funerals.



*Merry
Christmas*

3 Brethren Elected to the Board of the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma

W.: **William J. (Jim) Cloud** lives in Blanchard, Oklahoma. He works in Business Analysis for Integrated Data Service, where he administers the system which manages over \$2 billion B-52 and KC-135 acquisition and sustainment program for the United States Air Force for Fiscal Year 2010.

He is a retired US Air Force Master Sergeant (E8) Budget Analyst. He is funds manager for the Air Force C-21 aircraft program and research manager for Foreign Military Sales of aircraft engines.

He was elected to the Charity Foundation Board of Directors in 2000, and has served on the Finance, Fraternal Relations, and Matching Funds Committees.

Brother Cloud is a member of Blanchard Lodge #395, which he served as Worshipful Master in 1985. He served as Senior Grand Steward in 1987, Junior Grand Deacon in 1988, and Senior Grand Deacon in 1989.

R.:W.: **David W. Allen**'s permanent residence is in Sand Springs, Oklahoma with his wife of 45 years, Jo Nan. He is Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the State of Oklahoma, and is retired from the Sand Springs Children's Home where he was Executive Director. As Director, his duties included hiring, supervising, and terminating employees, developing and managing budgets, and management and maintenance of facilities.

As secretary of his Lodge, he has worked with the Matching Funds program, the Promises Matter Program, the Student and Teacher of Today programs, and with Prevent Blindness Oklahoma.

Regarding experience with 501-(c)-3 organizations, he developed fund-raising programs for two organizations, facilitated policy development and implementation for endowment fund-raising, distribution and investment, development of by-laws and Articles of Incorporation for 501-(c)-3 organizations, and facility development of budgets, funding, and oversight.

R.:W.: **Randall L. Rogers**, Deputy Grand Master, lives in McAlester, Oklahoma. He has two daughters, Makenna and Torie. He is a Lieutenant with the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, having supervisory responsibilities for six counties. He is Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of Oklahoma.

He has served as Vice President of the McAlester Scottish Rite Charitable and Educational Foundation. Other than his Grand Lodge activities, he is probably best known for the outstanding Masonic Education program he implemented at South McAlester #96.

Grand Lodge Officers for 2011

Grand Master M.:W.: Glenn E. Almy
 Deputy Grand Master R.:W.: Randall L. Rogers
 Senior Grand Warden R.:W.: Bradley S. Rickelman
 Junior Grand Warden R.:W.: Ronald J. Chambers {moh}
 Grand Treasurer R.:W.: Nathan Johns
 Grand Secretary R.:W.: David W. Allen
 Grand Lecturer R.:W.: Ronald E. Wray



Senior Grand Deacon W.: Edward N. Blackwell
 Junior Grand Deacon W.: L. Erik Stuckey
 Senior Grand Seward W.: Jason W. Stacy
 Junior Grand Seward _____
 Grand Marshal W.: Doug Helm
 Grand Chaplain W.: William E. Sullivan
 Grand Bble Bearer W.: R. J. "Buddy" Fernandez
 Grand Pursuivant W.: F. Randall Clark
 Grand Sword Bearer W.: Tom F. Middaugh
 Grand Hag Bearer W.: John D. Miller, Jr.
 Grand Tyler W.: Richard L. Allison
 Grand Gator W.: Jim Tresner {moh}
 Grand Historian W.: Gene M. Rodgers

District Deputy Grand Masters

Bill Greenfield District No. 1	Danny McGuire District No.2	David D. Shore District No.3
John G. Hibbs, Sr. District No.4	Marty Farquharson District No.5	Ken D. McGee District No.6
W. M. Bill Miller Jr District No.7	Donald Smith District No.8	Dan Murphy District No.9

Barry J. Koehler
District No. 10

Tyler Buttram
District No. 13

David Howard
District No. 16

Michael Echols
District No. 19

Bob Blackwell
District No. 22

J. D. Olinger
District No. 25

Douglas Moye
District No. 28

James Denton
District No. 31

Reuben Pulis
District No. 34

John Carter
District No. 37

Tully Choate
District No. 11

Robert Park
District No. 14

Charles Rucks
District No. 17

Bradley Baker
District No. 20

Travis Moore
District No. 23

Danny Blair
District No. 26

Layton Adair
District No. 29

Clarence Grigsby, Jr.
District No. 32

John Sprowls
District No. 35

Morris Chiles
District No. 38

Barry Wickett
District No. 12

Stephen Spleth
District No. 15

Timothy Israel
District No. 18

David David
District No. 21

Steven Saunders
District No. 24

Larry Gill
District No. 27

Joe Goenaga, Jr.
District No. 30

Billy Don Caudill
District No. 33

William Eastman
District No. 36

David Epperly, Jr.
District No. 39

Changes in Oklahoma Masonic Law

as the Result of Resolutions Approved by the Delegates



At the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge on November 13, 2010, Delegates voted on 12 Resolutions which would have had the effect of amending the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge of the State of Oklahoma. The following Resolutions passed and are now law. The actual text of the Resolutions is printed in the Yellow Book, and updated pages for the Constitution and Code will be mailed to the Lodges.

Resolution #2A Changed the meeting of Grand Lodge, so that it starts at 1:00 PM on a Friday and closes with installation of officers on the next day. All voting will be on Saturday, so that men who work can still attend and vote. (Amends Section 301) **Resolution #2B** Specifies that election of officers will be held during the Saturday session.

Resolution #3 Moved Grand School to open the third Friday of May, and specifies it shall be held in the Grand Lodge building. (Amends Section 402)

Resolutions #4A&B These resolutions clarify existing law by specifying that one must be a voting member of Grand Lodge in order to propose a resolution. They do not change the current law. (Amends Section 901)

Resolutions #5A&B The law now states that resolutions are to be read immediately after the report of the Committee on the Grand Master's address. In practice, the schedule has made that impossible for several years. These resolutions remove the language. (Amends Section 901, Paragraph 3, Line 5)

Resolution #6 This resolution deals with changing the meeting place of a Lodge. There is a conflict between two sections of the law. This housekeeping resolution resolves the conflict but does not change the effect of current law. (Amends Section U302 B)

Resolution #7 This resolution clarifies some confusion as to the number of Masons required to open Lodge. It simplifies the language in the Constitution and Code, but does not change the law. Housekeeping resolution. (Amends Section U306)

Resolution #9 Clarifies language concerning the procedure for Applications for Advancement. (Amends Section U415)

Resolution #10 Eliminates the 28-day layover between the time an Application for Affiliation is referred to a committee and the time it can be voted upon. (Amends Section U417)

Resolution #11 The resolution provides that if the Lodge has not been able to contact a Brother with a Perpetual Membership for 5 years, the secretary is to report him as deceased on the monthly report. If he is subsequently discovered to be alive, the secretary will notify the Grand Lodge and he will be reinstated without loss of time. (Amends Section U420)

Note: Resolution #1 (to raise the per capita); Resolution #8 (to all business meetings in any Degree); and Resolution #12 (a method of reporting widows to the Grand Secretary) failed to pass.

NOTE: Copies of the DVD from the Masonic Service Association shown at Grand Lodge are available to loan to Lodges for Lodge education, District meetings, Friends Nights, etc. It is a short but informative program with lots of good information. Contact the Grand Secretary to arrange to borrow a copy.

New Library and Learning Center Announced

During an open meeting of Grand Lodge on November 12th, the Trustees of the Grand Lodge and the Board of the Library and Museum of the Grand Lodge of the State of Oklahoma announced the creation of a new center. To be known as the Dr. James T. Tresner Library and Learning Center.

The center will be created in one of the multi-purpose rooms on the first floor of the Grand Lodge building. Custom bookcases will be built for the space by WM Mike Fritts, of Sand Springs Lodge #475, who has very kindly offered to build them for the cost of the materials. Anyone who has seen examples of his cabinetmaking knows they will be beautiful additions to the Grand Lodge building. The bookcases will also hold 3 computers: one dedicated to the catalog of the collection, one programmed for reading electronic books and research material including the full Oxford English Dictionary on disc, and one for Internet access, including access to the digitized proceedings of the Grand Lodge.



The agreement provides that Dr. Tresner will give the Library and Museum possession of and title to his collection of Masonically-related materials. In turn, the Library and Museum promises to house, protect, and maintain the collection, to make it available to both Masons and non-Masons, and to update the electronic equipment as needed.

The collection is divided into several different areas: Masonic history; national or international history mentioning Freemasonry; mythology; comparative religion; biographies of Masons; non-Masonic books written by Masons (examples, the works of Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle; and Benjamin Franklin); works of fiction in which Freemasonry appears (examples: *The Da Vinci Code*, *National Treasure*, *The Artifact*, *Masters of the Maze*); Masonic symbolism; general symbolism; ritual; alchemy; and books relating to the Scottish Rite and York Rite; with materials in additional areas.

Construction on the Learning Center is expected to begin soon.



2011



Grand
Lodge



Programs

Brethren,

Membership is important to Freemasonry! For every organization there is a certain “critical mass” of membership. Once the organization falls below that number, it is almost impossible for it to recapture its former status. We’re not there, but we’re getting close.

There are some people who think the world no longer needs the Fraternity. They are wrong. Everyday, people become more alienated from each other. We talk and text more than ever before, but real communication is rare. In national surveys, a majority of men claim that the number of their “real friends” is between 0 and 2. And you only have to turn on the news to know that integrity, honesty, faith, loyalty, and charity are in short supply.

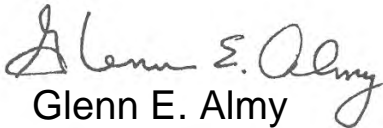
So I am asking you to take a two-pronged approach to membership my year.

“One by One,” replace yourself in Masonry. If you are an active, attending member, bring another man into your Lodge who will be an active, attending member. If you are a Certificate Lecturer, bring in a man who you think will become a Certificate Lecturer. In other words, Replace Yourself!

“All the Way” Make every effort to see that your Entered Apprentices advance to Master Masons. Don’t let them fall through the cracks. Help them learn the lectures; invite them to Lodge functions; plan functions for EAs and FCs and their families.

You can make a major difference in the Future of Freemasonry.

Fraternally,



Glenn E. Almy
Grand Master



Masonic Education in Your Lodge



No one would boast that a concert they attended was over in half an hour, or that they only spent ten minutes detailing their car. But you will hear Masons brag that their Lodge opens, takes care of business, and closes in less than 30 minutes. It's true that if a meeting is going to be boring, it's better if the torture ends quickly. But it's much better to have a good meeting!

Lodge meetings should be educational, informative, and include a comprehensive study of the Mysteries.

All Lodges will incorporate Masonic Education in their Lodge Meetings during each meeting this year.

Sources of Masonic education include BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

Masonic Speakers

Reading aloud the Short Talk Bulletins

Masonic Education Courses

A "Tour" of the Lodge Room—learn and discuss the meanings of Lodge paraphernalia

Mackey's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*

Various video tapes and DVDs

Masonic web sites

DVDs by experts such as Joseph Campbell



Lodge of the Year

The Lodge of the Year Program WORKS!

FUN

FACILITIES

FINANCE

FELLOWSHIP

FRATERNALISM

The purpose of the Lodge of the Year program is to encourage all Oklahoma Lodges to rebuild and strengthen those 5-F's. It is the best way to create the excitement for a new generation of Masons, and to pass on the joy of Freemasonry to our children and grandchildren.

The **Lodge of the Year** program works a little differently than programs in the past. It is not a checklist on which your Lodge must score specific points to qualify. We know that each Lodge is different, with different circumstances, size, resources, and everything else.

We are not telling you what to do in the 5-F areas, we're asking you to tell us what you are doing!

To enter, your Lodge creates a binder with pages showing what you have done in each area of the 5-F's.

MOST LODGES HAVE DONE MORE THAN THEY THINK, so make sure to look at the examples below. If you can include some photographs, that will be even better. **The binder must be completed by October 10th, and then given to your DDGM so he can sign off on it.**



FUN Fun is anything the Lodge members do, with or without families, for the purposes of pleasure and relaxation. That can include Lodge dinners, cookouts, fishing trips, meeting somewhere else for dinner, holding a Friends Night, going to a movie or drive-in or a baseball game, playing dominoes, and much more. It is important that we do not lose the fun of the Fraternity. Brainstorm what you have done, and make plans to do something, just for the fun of it.

FACILITIES What have you done to fix up the Lodge? Some examples: given it a good cleaning, repainted all or part of the interior or exterior, planted some shrubs, made a special effort to keep the grounds in good shape, changed or improved the lighting, acquired a new sign, fixed or updated the plumbing, polished the Lodge jewels or rods, waxed the furniture, or anything else which helps the Lodge room or building?



FINANCE Have you set up a fund to save for Lodge improvements and repairs? Have you increased dues to keep pace with increasing costs? Have you added to the Lodge investments? What fund-raisers have you held?

FELLOWSHIP What has your Lodge done to extend Masonic fellowship? Tell us if you have supported the Youth Groups and how you did. Have you made it a point to reach out to Brothers who do not attend Lodge to see if they need transportation to the meetings? What have you done to make the Lodge experience as rich and meaningful as possible? Here is where you tell us about your Masonic Education program. Let us know what you have done as a part of the Educational program. Have you brought in a guest speaker, added books to the Lodge library? Have you asked your newest and youngest members what they are looking for in Masonry and tried to make it available to them?



FRATERNALISM What has your Lodge done to take care of our Brothers? Have you started the **“No Mason Left Behind”** program? Does your Lodge send cards to Brethren on their Masonic anniversaries? Have you used Lodge funds, Matching Funds, or **Promises Matter funds** to aid a Brother or his family? (You don't have to tell us the name or amount, just tell us if you did it.)



Especially, survey your members to see if their needs are being met. **If you are not sure how to use Promises Matter, ask the Charity Foundation to send a speaker to do a program in your Lodge.**

How good does your Lodge “feel?” Does it feel warm and friendly, as though you were visiting the home of a good friend?



Membership is a primary concern of any organization, especially in times of economic trouble. There are two aspects of membership I am asking each Lodge and Mason to address.

“One by One” The basis is simple: **Replace Yourself!** If you are an active Lodge attender, try to bring 1 person into your Lodge this year who will also be an active Lodge attender. If you are a “C” Certificate Lecturer, try to bring in someone who will also get his “C” card. If you have an “A” card, try to bring in someone who will want to get an “A” card. In other words, replace yourself. Each of us knows at least one good man who should be a Mason.

“All the Way” One of our biggest problems is with Entered Apprentices not advancing. Sometimes, an Entered Apprentice decides that Freemasonry just is not what he wants. But in the great majority of cases, he simply falls through the cracks. That isn’t fair to him, and it hurts the Lodge. Here are some things which will help:

✓ **Before he is initiated, appoint either his top-line signer or some reliable Brother to be his Masonic friend and guide.** Introduce them the night he is initiated, make sure they exchange phone numbers, etc., and make sure the “friend” knows it is his responsibility to

check with the new Brother at least twice a week to see how he is coming with the lectures, invite him to degrees and functions, etc.

✓ **Before he is initiated, know who is going to teach him** and make sure they are in contact on the night of the EA Degree.

✓ **Set the date of the Fellowcraft Degree the night the Entered Apprentice Degree is conferred.** The date can always slip a little, but he is more likely to learn the work if there is a set date rather than a “when you’re ready.”

✓ **The Worshipful Master should call or e-mail him at least every two weeks,** checking on how he is doing.

Ethically, morally, and fraternally, we can’t afford to “throw away” an Entered Apprentice because we lose sight of him.

Grand Lodge Building Capital Campaign

Grand Master’s Club

The Grand Master’s Club is for individuals or Lodges who contribute \$1,000.00 or more to the Grand Lodge Building Fund. Names will be recognized on a permanent plaque in the Grand Lodge Atrium, and an invitation to a luncheon at noon at Grand Lodge.

Brick Campaign

Commemorative Bricks are available for purchase to memorialize Lodges or a loved one. They will be placed in the Memorial Mall in front of the Grand Lodge Building.

Large bricks are 24 X 15, with 9 lines of 30 characters/spaces per line for \$300.00.

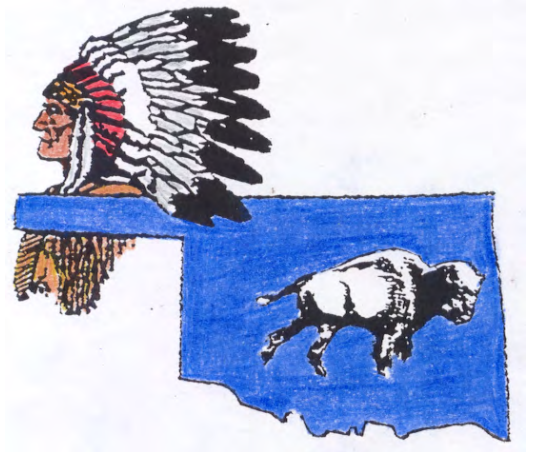
Medium bricks are 12 X 12, with 12 lines and 22 characters/spaces per line for \$200.00.

Small bricks have 3 lines with 13 characters/spaces per line for \$50.00.

Artwork is available on medium and large bricks, but will limit the number of lines available. Order forms are on the website or at the Grand Lodge Building.

Order of the White Buffalo

The Order of the White Buffalo has been reinstated! Initiation is open to men, women, and families. Initiation fees and yearly dues go to support the Grand Lodge Building Fund.



OETA

The OETA campaign will be in February. You are one of the largest supporters of this fine program, which gives Masonry lots of good exposure. Lodges contribute \$1.50 or more per member, and apply to the Masonic Charity Foundation for matching funds.

Prevent Blindness Oklahoma

Oklahoma Masonry supports this fine program—our oldest partnership with another organization. You can help by volunteering a small amount of time as a helper during your school's eye screening.

CHIP Program

The **CH**ild **I**dentification **P**rogram uses cutting-edge technology to provide parents with a sure means of identifying their child in the case of abduction or other emergency in which positive ID is essential. The importance of such identification can hardly be overstated. There are two ways in which the Lodge can support the CHIP Program:

- Host a CHIP Program in your town
- Contribute monetarily

These are the highlights of the Grand Lodge Programs for 2011. As you can see, they stress the necessity of becoming more informed about Masonry as well as being of service to the community. We are faced with a unique opportunity to make our Fraternity stronger and more relevant in the lives of men than it has been in many long years.

We've got to get it right!!!!

Scottish Rite Reunions for 2011



January 8 - one-day Reunion, Guthrie

March 26-27 Reunion, McAlester

April 1-2-3 Reunion, Guthrie

April 16-17 Reunion, Tulsa

October 1-2 Reunion, Guthrie

October 15-16 Reunion, McAlester

October 22-23 Reunion, Tulsa

October 30 Honors Investiture and Conferral

York Rite Calendar



January 15, K.:T.: Work and Tactics

April 28-29-30, Grand York Rite

July 23, HRAKTP

July 27-28-29-30, YRSC Annual Assembly

August 28, General Grand Chapter & Council Banquet

August 29, General Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons

August 30, General Grand Council, Cryptic Masons

September 3, Convent General KYCH

September 24, Grand Master York Rite Festival





Encore for Brother Benton(elli)

Masonic Education

Jim Tresner

Giuseppe Bentonelli was a world-famous operatic tenor in the first half of the 1900's. He sang at the Met, at La Scala, at the Lisbon Opera, the Cairo Opera, and the Chicago Opera, among many others. He was hailed as one of the finest tenors of all time. And he had a secret.

Giuseppe Bentonelli was really Brother Joe Benton, from Sayre, Oklahoma.

There are fads in opera, just as in everything else. When he started his singing career in the 1920's it was universally "agreed" that while America produced fine sopranos and even baritones, just as England produced fine contraltos, only Italy could produce a really good tenor. And so, at the suggestion of his singing coach, Joe Benton, product of the music department at the University of Oklahoma, translated his first name into Italian, added "elli" to his last name, and became Giuseppe Bentonelli. And his career never looked back. He became the first American male singer to be universally accepted in Europe, and was voted one of the four best tenors in Italy in 1934.



Bentonelli as the Duke in
Verdi's *Rigoletto*

My father, Jack Tresner, Sr., knew him and sometimes told me stories about him. He loved a good joke, had a strong laugh, and was "one of the most humble and genuine men you could hope to meet." His voice was legendary, and he was well-known for his philanthropy, raising large sums of money to help the poorest of the poor in Europe..

He was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1898, but at age two moved with his family to a farm at Sayre. At 17, he went to the University of Oklahoma, from which he earned three degrees—a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and French in 1920 (the same year he was raised to the sublime Degree of Master Mason, at Norman Lodge #38, on November 22), a Bachelor of Music in Voice in 1921, and a Master of Arts in Modern Languages in 1941. On October 24, 1940, he received the 32nd Degree at the Guthrie Temple.) In 1944 he retired from the stage and returned to Norman, where he served as Professor of Music until his retirement in 1969. He died on April 6, 1975.

In 1973 he published an autobiography entitled *Oklahoma Tenor*, and a highlight of my collection of Masonic biographies is a signed copy of the first edition. The book is a great set of

memories of his stage career, and there is nothing of self-glory in it. Quite the opposite—one of the best stories happened while singing the title role in a performance in Italy of *Faust*.

“Filling in with the agreed-upon acting, I suddenly felt my right gallus [suspender] tear in two on the shoulder; but on stage one does not adjust clothing, nor could I, since the broken suspender was far beneath my tight-fitting cavalier’s costume and doublet. There was nothing to do but to hope and carry on. Mefisto drew me into the shade of the garden while Marguerite sang her “Ode to the Night” from her balcony.

“Trusting that the one remaining gallus would work for both, I followed our rehearsed acting scene, tore myself away from the Devil’s power, bolted in long jumps across that wide, wide stage, leaped upon the flower box under Marguerite’s window and took the lovely lady into my arms. However, while doing all this, the other suspender strap tore loose also, and while we were locked in each other’s arms, my back to the audience, those free-wheeling tights nose-dived and dropped completely around my ankles! The audience roared.”

Oklahoma is justly proud of Brother Benton, whose portrait hangs in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. And we can also be justly proud of him as the Oklahoma Mason who took the operatic world by storm, while remaining true to his roots.



By now, you should have received a copy of this calendar in the mail. This year, the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma has gone to a different format for the annual report. It is not only a financial report but a Masonic calendar. Events which had been scheduled at the time the calendar was printed have been included. (Be sure to check with your organization, because dates can change with circumstances.) The statistics present a picture of which we can all be proud. The Charity Foundation remains one of the

most respected philanthropic organizations in the state. The Foundation hopes you will use and enjoy the calendar, and take pride in the charitable accomplishments of Freemasonry in our great state.

Remember that speakers from the Foundation are always available to speak to your Lodge or District Meeting.



**Color your New
Year in
Masonry any
way you wish,
but have a
Happy and growth-filled
Year.**

