

The Oklahoma Mason

THE GRAND LODGE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Vol. I February - March 2014



**Grand Master Ronald Jack "Ron" Chambers 2014
Medal of Honor**

FROM THE GRAND MASTER

Greetings, Brethren:

I hope your Lodges are all off to a great start and that peace and harmony prevail.

I'd like to tell you a little about my program for 2014. The program is called **Hand to Back**. I need not tell you that comes from our ritual. And its purpose is to enrich the fraternal experience for everyone who wants it.

The first element of **Hand to Back** is called "**The Western Gate**." That's what the door of the Preparation Room is sometimes called. This part of the program covers the man from the time he first expresses an interest in Freemasonry until he first enters the Lodge room. So obviously it includes the investigation and the ballot.

There is an increasing concern nationally that we have not guarded that western gate very well—that we have admitted men as members who should never have been given a petition, let alone passed the ballot box. It just isn't true that every man should be a Mason. Freemasonry isn't for everyone, and it especially is not for someone who has to be talked into it. The Fraternity isn't elitist, but it is elite.

Many Grand Lodges have started requiring background checks. A few Oklahoma Lodges have agreed to do that as a pilot project. But that is not a silver bullet nor a good and sufficient answer. All that can really tell you is if the man has been convicted of a felony. But we all know men who have never run afoul of the law—but who we would not want to have in our homes. And many of us know men who made stupid mistakes when they were young and got in trouble, but who learned from those mistakes, turned their lives around, and are good and sincere men who would be a credit to any organization.

No mechanical solution can provide the answer. It requires the personal, human, touch. It requires getting to know a man before you give him a petition, and certainly before you vote on him. That whole process is part of "The Western Gate."

A second element of the **Hand to Back** program might be called "**The Masonic Trail**." This is the time from the Entered Apprentice Degree through the next few years. It includes encouraging him to learn the proficiency material, complete his Degrees, and become active in the Lodge. We all know people drop out of the process. Sometimes it

is because they discover that they just aren't interested in Freemasonry, but more often it's because we throw them away. It seems to them as if they are not important to us, as if we don't care whether they progress. There are many of us who would never have completed the Degrees if it had not been for a Masonic friend who encouraged us, guided us, and sometimes bullied us along the trail. I may be especially sensitive to that. Most of you know of my Native American heritage, and the idea of the elder who encourages and guides the youth in the ways of the tribe is especially strong in that tradition.

Because an important part of the **Masonic Trail** is the good we do for others, and the personal satisfaction which comes from doing good, I plan on continuing the support of OETA, the fund-raising programs to help feed the hungry, and giving emphasis to the CHIP program of child identification. There is much more to Masonry than charity, but it is the "chief of every social virtue, and the distinguishing characteristic of Masons." And I plan to support FFA, the Future Farmers of America. Their ritual has strong echoes of the Blue Lodge, and the virtues and values they teach would be at home in any Lodge meeting.

A third element of the **Hand to Back** program is "**Alas, my Brother**." It deals with the Masonic Memorial service. Any Master Mason who wishes it is entitled to a funeral or memorial service conducted by a Brother. We promise that in the Entered Apprentice Degree when we present the new Brother with his apron. I've performed more than a thousand of those services myself, so it is close to my heart.

But there are some problems to be solved. We need more Brothers who can and will perform the service. We need ways to know if a Brother wants to have such a memorial. We need ways to make sure his family knows what is involved and that it was his wish. Those details are being worked out.

So that, in broad outline, is the **Hand to Back** program, with its major elements:

"**The Western Gate**"

"**The Masonic Trail**"

"**Alas, my Brother**"

The purpose is to enrich the fraternal experience for all of us, new Masons and those of us a little longer in the Masonic tooth as well. Because I truly believe that, in this age

of instant communications—and instant isolation—men do truly long for the personal, human touch.

We long for the friendly hand upon the back.



Ron Chambers, Grand Master



Meet the Grand Master

Most Worshipful Ronald Jack Chambers was born in Claremore, Oklahoma, on September 28, 1941. He attended public school in Claremore and Tulsa, and studied business management at Tulsa University. He served four years in the United States Marine Corps, then started to work for American Airlines in Tulsa. In 1998 he retired from American Airlines with 33 years of service. He also owned and operated Cross Fire Exterminators in Tulsa for 7 years and Cherokee Small Engine Repair for 9 years. He is a member of Heritage Hills United Methodist Church.

He and his wife, Marilyn Kay Chambers, were married in 1983. She passed from this life in 2009. His son, Ronald David Chambers is now 48 years old, and M.:W.: Ronald Chambers has twin grandsons—Aaron and Anthony—who are 23 years old.

He was Initiated an Entered Apprentice at Delta Lodge #425, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in October, 1966. He was Passed to the Degree of Fellowcraft in November and Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in

December of the same year. He served the Lodge as Worshipful Master in 1987.

Since 1984 to the present he has held an "A" Lecturers Certificate, and has served as Installing Officer for several Lodges in the Tulsa area since 2003. He was a member of the Oklahoma Masonic Indian Degree Team from 1986 to 1999, and served as Director of the team from 1995-1998.

In 2005 and 2006, he served as District Deputy Grand Master. Also in 2004, M.:W.: Chambers received the Oklahoma Masonic Medal of Honor the highest honor in Oklahoma Masonry. He was Chairman of the Last Degree Ritual Committee, responsible for revising the Oklahoma Blue Lodge funeral ritual. He has personally performed more than 1,100 Masonic memorial services, and is also a member of the Rose Croix funeral team. His lady, Pam, often accompanies him on his Masonic travels, helping to document the year.

He has been a member of the Joint Masonic Fraternal Relations Committee since 2004, was Grand Sword Bearer in 2008, and that same year served as Chairman of the Committee to create the cipher key.

He was elected to his second term as a member of the Board of the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma in 2012. That same year he became a Perpetual Member of Will Rogers Lodge #53.

M.:W.: Brother Chambers joined the Tulsa Scottish Rite Valley in 1967 and received the designation of Inspector General Honorary in 1995. He joined the York Rite Bodies in Tulsa in 1980 and has served as High Priest, Illustrious Master, and Commander. He holds both the KYCH designation and the Distinguished Service Bronze Medal Award.

He received the DeMolay Legion of Honor in 2006, and is a member of the York Rite College, the St. Luke Conclave of the Red Cross of Constantine (serving as Puissant Sovereign in 2010), the Allied Masonic Degrees, Akdar Shrine, and the Jesters. He is also a member of Friendship Chapter #492, Order of the Eastern Star.



Grand Master's pin design 2014

Grand Lodge Officers - 2014

Elected

Grand Master - Ronald Jack Chambers
Deputy Grand Master - Gary Lee Beisly
Senior Grand Warden - Ridge Smith
Junior Grand Warden - Richard Larry "Rick" Allison
Grand Treasurer - John C. Alexander
Grand Secretary - Steven Oneal Singleton
Grand Lecturer - Ronald E. Wray

Appointed

Senior Grand Deacon - Ronald L. Shoaf
Junior Grand Deacon - Henry L. Henson
Senior Grand Steward - Kevin Wayne Hall
Junior Grand Steward - Michael D. Dill
Grand Marshal - Michael Lewis Dixon
Grand Pursuivant - J. Dale McWaters
Grand Chaplain - C. W. "Corky" Grigsby, Jr.
Grand Bible Bearer - John Francis Carter
Grand Sword Bearer - David George David
Grand Flag Bearer - Kenneth Allen Staten
Grand Tyler - Gary Don Barber
Grand Musician - James Barry Wickett

District Deputy Grand Masters

District No. 1 - Alva L. Loughridge
District No. 2 - Charles William "Chuck" Crase
District No. 3 - Robert Scott Vincent
District No. 4 - Richard D. Bradford
District No. 5 - Jeffery Brien Cantrell
District No. 6 - Robert C. Felts
District No. 7 - John Q. Poe, Jr.
District No. 8 - Bryan Duane Wheat
District No. 9 - Larry Leon Foust, Sr.
District No. 10 - Chris Lindon Johnson
District No. 11 - Charles Edward Schneider
District No. 12 - Michael D. Maxey
District No. 13 - John Deen Richardson
District No. 14 - Jonathan W. Bennett
District No. 15 - Justin Cyler Winbolt
District No. 16 - Phillip Jared Wray
District No. 17 - Tommy L. McDaniel
District No. 18 - Paul T. Currell
District No. 19 - Daniel Dean Earley
District No. 20 - John Charles Walker
District No. 21 - James Donald Nobles, Jr.
District No. 22 - Gary Andrew Odendahl
District No. 23 - Todd Christopher Hunter, Sr.
District No. 24 - George Wiley Abel
District No. 25 - Gerald Dow Fiefield
District No. 26 - John Steven Scarbrough
District No. 27 - Michael Wayne Sexton
District No. 28 - Dan Wilson
District No. 29 - Bobby Dewayne Jones
District No. 30 - Daniel David Hanttula
District No. 31 - Charles Ray Trapp
District No. 32 - Glen Dale Swain
District No. 33 - Robert Ray Jameson
District No. 34 - Raul Morales Luna
District No. 35 - Michael Steven Wright
District No. 36 - Burl Stephen Sprouse
District No. 37 - Dan Brice Riley
District No. 38 - Jason Lee Pryor
District No. 39 - Jim D. Scott

Meet Your New Junior Grand Warden



Richard L. Allison lives in Enid, Oklahoma. He is retired, having recently sold Enid Iron and Metal, a company he owned and operated for 28 years.

Worshipful Brother Allison served Garfield Lodge #501 as Worshipful Master in 1984 and again in 2004. He has served the Grand Lodge as District Deputy Grand Master in 1990, Grand Pursuivant in 2009, Grand Marshal in 2010 and 2012, Grand Tyler in 2011, and DDGM in 2013.

He is a member of the Guthrie Valley of the Scottish Rite, where he holds the 33°. He has served as the Director of the 210 and as Wise Master of the Chapter of Rose Croix. He is also a member of the Chapter #6, Council #48, and Commandery #1 of the York Rite, and Past Commander of the Enid Commandery.

He is a member of India Shrine, the Red Cross of Constantine, the Royal Order of Scotland, the Order of the Eastern Star, and the Order of the Sacred White Buffalo.

His leadership experiences in organizations other than Masonry include having served as a member of the Board of his church, State Representative for Oklahoma to the National Archery Association, several terms as President of the Oklahoma Archery Association Board of Directors, and the Viet Nam Veterans Association.

For this issue of *The Oklahoma Mason*, R.:W.: Brother Allison wrote: *First I want to thank the Craft for all the hospitality shown to Sherry and me at all the lodges we have visited around this great state of ours. The friendships we have made will last a lifetime. We traveled many miles to lodges around the state. Almost always when we left home on a trip I would enter the destination into my G.P.S. to see how far we would be going that day.*

Just a few weeks ago, sadly, three other brothers and I traveled to Hugo, Oklahoma,

continued

to attend the funeral of M.:W.: Randy Rogers's mother. Also attending was the Grand Master of Texas, M.:W.: Walt Rogers. He is a great friend of Randy's and of Oklahoma masonry. I made the comment that he had traveled a considerable distance to be there. He looked me in the eyes and said "You never count the miles when traveling to see a friend." What a wonderful statement.

Do we count the few miles (or maybe blocks) we travel to see a friend and brother at our local lodge meetings? Do we let driving a short distance to lodge deter us from going? Isn't the fellowship worth the short drive? Is it the getting ready to go that keeps us at home? I know that for those that are working and have family commitments it can be difficult to get to lodge.

I allowed all of these things keep me at home for a period of time too. Then I had a chance to experience what brotherhood can really mean. In a time of turmoil, I found that my brothers were there for me.

How about traveling a few miles to a lodge in a town close to home. Maybe they are having some attendance problems and they need our help to open or conduct degrees. Perhaps a dual membership would help them turn things around. We never know what small things will make a really important difference for a lodge.

Brethren, I just want to encourage all of us to do what we can for our fraternity. To make differences where and when we can. Maybe in our own lodge or in another lodge. Remember that when you get dressed, get in your vehicle, and drive to lodge, don't count the miles because "you never count the miles when traveling to see a friend."

Richard L. "Rick" Allison
Junior Grand Warden

From the Deputy Grand Master



The Oklahoma Masonic Constitution and Code is an amazing and important document. In it we find what is expected of a Mason, his Responsibilities to God and

Man and to himself. It relates to us information on the Ritual; how and when it is to be used. We also find in it the Rules of the fraternity, regulations regarding Grand Lodge, Constituent Lodges, and the Trial Code.

The first part of our Constitution and Code book is the list of Ancient Charges. This section tells us what is expected of a Mason; how he is expected to act when in Lodge and when out of Lodge. It is a defining list of attributes of a Mason's behavior; his physical, his mental, and his spiritual behavior. These Ancient Charges are what help define a Mason. Many of these Charges are found in our ritual and are part of the installation of the Worshipful Master of the Lodge.

Following the Ancient Charges, we find the Landmarks of Masonry, or the Unwritten Law. This section of the Constitution and Code is made up of twenty-five Landmarks which provide the definitive outline of Oklahoma Masonry. The Landmarks explain many things, among them are how many degrees we are to have and the importance of the Second Section of the Master Mason Degree, the organization and governing of lodges and Grand Lodge, the right of our representation in Grand Lodge and the right of visitation, and the necessity of our belief in God. These twenty-five ancient landmarks of the Fraternity were developed by Dr. Albert G. Mackey.

The next section is the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge. This section is composed of nine Articles which deal with the regulations of Grand Lodge. Among the material included in these Articles is information on the organization and authority of Grand Lodge (Section 103), powers allocated to the Grand Master (Section 202), our annual Grand Lodge Communications (Section 301), information pertaining to the number of District Schools of Instruction required (Section 403), requirements on

renting a lodge (Section 610), laying of Cornerstones (Section 701), petitioning other bodies such as Shrine, Scottish Rite, York Rite, etc. (Section 805). And lastly, Article IX discusses amendments to the Constitution and Code; how resolutions are submitted, voted on, and requirements to pass.

The next section in the Constitution and Code book is the Uniform Code. This part of the book deals primarily with lodges and with what the majority of us are concerned; how to operate our individual lodge. This section contains nine Articles relating to the organization and operation of lodges. In these nine articles we find information about the authority of constituent lodges (U102), consolidation of lodges (U106), which officers the Master must appoint and when (U202), and duties of lodge officers (U208). Questions about whether the Master is to vote (U209), when the Senior Warden succeeds the Master (U221), which officers can resign (U222), who may open a lodge (U209 and U307), and why we read minutes (U309) are answered. Section U313 reveals that vouching for a brother is more involved than we typically consider. Article IV covers membership; qualifications of a petitioner (402), duties of investigating committees (U405), and fees and dues (U419). Information on Certificates of Good Standing is found in Section U425. Section U505 details the requirement for proficiency and who can dispense with this requirement. Article VI is about suspension, expulsion and withdrawals and Article VII explains who is entitled to a Masonic burial. Article VIII is referenced often as it covers prohibitions and offenses. This is where we find information regarding tobacco in the lodge room (U804) and how to handle offenses committed before petitioning (U809). Article IX is about resolutions and amendments.

The final part of our Constitution and Code book is the Trial Code and is composed of ten articles. The Trial Code covers what actions are considered as being against Masonry (T102), how charges are defined, how Masonic trials are conducted, how evidence is presented, and how decisions, punishments, and restoration are handled. This particular part of the book is very specialized and complicated. Ideally as we all become more knowledgeable of the previ-

From the Senior Grand Warden

ous portions of the Constitution and Code and improve our candidate investigations, maybe some day we will have less need for this section.

As you can see, our Constitution and Code book has much information. It is not expected that every Mason will know exactly what is included on every page; but, it is important that every Oklahoma Mason, and especially every officer be familiar with the Constitution and Code to the extent that he can use it as a reference. The more familiar we are with it, the more we can resolve our lodge concerns before they become a problem. An excellent source for gaining more knowledge of the Constitution and Code is the Oklahoma Grand Lodge Correspondence Course 1. This is an open book test which covers the Constitution and Code and is taken in the comfort of your home. It may be ordered through the Grand Lodge at a cost of \$10.00. I think this should be mandatory for all elected lodge officers. The annual Leadership Conference will be held in Oklahoma City the first weekend of August. This conference is open to all Masons and particularly to lodge officers. This is another good opportunity to learn about the rules of Oklahoma Masonry.

Our Constitution and Code relates to us the RESPONSIBILITIES of a Mason, the RITUAL of Masonry, and the RULES of Masonry, the three R's of MASONRY!

Gary Beisly

Deputy Grand Master



“I complained because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet...”

Brethren, as I write this, it is early January, 2014. While many people use the

beginning of a new year as a time for making resolutions, I like to use this time to reflect on my many blessings and to be thankful for all that I have. If I wrote down all of my blessings, it would fill this entire magazine, and more, so I'll just write about some of the important ones.

First, I am thankful for my wife and family. I have the great blessing of a loving wife and two wonderful adult children, plus four perfect grandchildren. As I reflect on the family turmoil that I read about in the papers and hear about, I am distressed to hear of parents that abuse their children and also of children who abuse their parents. So many families today are filled with hate, not love. I thank God that my family – parents, children, grandparents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins – treat each other with love. Yes, we don't always see eye-to-eye, but we still love each other. God has richly blessed me.

I also am thankful for my life and health. Yes, I'm getting older, and I have the mind of a 20 year old in a 68 year old body, but I have learned to appreciate each day. I often joke about how “every day above ground is wonderful,” but while I say it jokingly, I truly mean it. Some of you know of my experiences in Vietnam. Someone once said that, “For those who have faced death, life has a flavor that the protected will never know.” I am thankful every day for my continued life and good health.

I am thankful for all the wonderful benefits that come from living in this amazing time

and place. I look outside and see the winter weather in my back yard, and I'm thankful for my warm house, a well-stocked pantry, running water, indoor plumbing, modern range and refrigerator, my microwave, and lots of other modern conveniences. I happen to be living on the farm where I was born, I remember well where the outhouse used to sit. Many of us grew up without running water and indoor plumbing. I even remember when the first television station began broadcasting from Oklahoma City in 1949 which only broadcast a few hours each day. Now we have 24/7 television on dozens of channels, computers, internet, and lots of other forms of entertainment.

I am thankful for this great country, built on the same principles upon which Masonry is founded. While some say that America is declining, I disagree. We still have the best country that has ever existed. Yes, we have problems, but we have had problems in the past and have overcome them. When I am around our youth groups: Rainbow Girls, Job's Daughters, and DeMolays, I am convinced that our country has a bright future.

Last I want to mention how thankful I am for this great Masonic Fraternity. It has been said that a man is fortunate if, in his life, he has three true friends. Through my membership in the Masonic Fraternity, I have hundreds of men whom I call my true friends. Men that I am proud to call “Brother.” Men that I would trust to protect my family if need be. Men for whom I would drop everything to go to their aid if I be called upon. The Masonic Family of organizations has been a wonderful blessing for me and my family. I believe that my children have been successful in large part because of the principles they learned through our youth groups. I thank God that I am an Oklahoma Mason.

Ridge Smith

Senior Grand Warden



From the Grand Treasurer

The Fraternity has begun a new year, and the Grand Lodge Officers have been very busy with installations throughout the State of Oklahoma. I am very proud of our leadership, and we are the envy of many Grand Jurisdictions throughout the Midwest. I am proud that you have allowed me to be a part of that group of outstanding Masons.

One of the things other Grand Jurisdictions admire about Oklahoma is the good financial position we enjoy with our investments. The Grand Lodge of Oklahoma Trustees have the fiduciary responsibility to oversee our invested capital. We are blessed to have an investment advisor such as John Fryear, with NAFA Capital Markets, to watch after our investments. In our continuing effort to keep the brethren in the State of Oklahoma informed of the financial position of your Grand Lodge, the Board of Trustees meet monthly and review these Investments statements.

We have over \$6,500,000 in the Perpetual Membership Fund and \$1,700,000 in the General Fund which are invested in Collateralized Mortgage Obligations [CMO's], currently earning approximately 7.0%, and in the opinion of our investment advisor, should remain at about that level throughout the year. There are other investments available in the equity market of 4-5% dividends, but they have additional risk. The Trustees believe we should continue with the investments we currently have.

Our accountant, John Wagner has advised that our return on investments in the PEM account, less bond discount premiums for the year 2013 has resulted in our Perpetual membership payout to the Lodges in the State of Oklahoma of \$386,914.12. This is \$119,376.73 less than Grand Lodges payout to the Lodges in 2012. The overall bond investments for the year was 6.5 %. We have been fortunate over the past three years earning between 8.5 % to 12.0 % in interest, however the world's economy has significantly changed our earning potential. Our new PEM memberships for 2013 was \$243,962.85.

Danny Thomas, (who was born Amos Muzyad Yakhoob Kairouz) on January 6, 1912, and died February 6, 1991, was best known for starring in the television sitcom *Make Room for Daddy* (also known as *The Danny Thomas Show*). He was one of the original owners of the Miami Dolphins of the National Football League. But he will always be remembered as the founder of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Danny Thomas and a group of businessmen—who had agreed to support his dream—seized on the idea of creating a unique hospital devoted to curing catastrophic diseases in children. More than just a treatment facility, this would be a research center for the children of the world. Through striking improvements in the care of pediatric leukemia and numerous forms of solid tumors, St. Jude now has a daily operating cost of \$1.7 million and has brought about improved

health for children all over the world. St. Jude physicians and scientists have pioneered treatments which have helped push the survival rate for childhood cancers from less than 20% when the hospital opened in 1962 to 80% today.

Brother Danny Thomas was initiated, passed, and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason at Gothic Lodge #270 F&AM, located at Hamilton Square, New Jersey, on March 15, 1984. He became a Scottish Rite Mason in May, 1985, and a Noble in Al-Malaikah Shrine in Los Angeles.

Brother Danny Thomas stated: "Success has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. *It's what you do for others.*"

John C. Alexander
Grand Treasurer

NOTE: *As this was going to press, we learned of the untimely death of Brother John Wagner, long-time accountant and past board member of Masonic Charity Foundation. Please keep his family in your prayers.*



From the Grand Secretary Your Lodge is a Business- Do You Run It That Way?

Quite a few of our brothers come from the business world, whether agricultural or commercial. Even those with military backgrounds had business functions as part of their job descriptions (we won't talk about \$500 hammers).

The only organization I can think of that does not operate as a business *is ours*. Now that sounds a little strange, but brothers, it is the gospel truth. Any business that operated the way we ran our lodges would have their doors locked and windows boarded up years ago.

How do we get away with it? Well, we call ourselves a fraternity - a 'non-profit' fraternity. But we, like every for-profit business, need to make money! The non-profit title sticks because what we earn is not intended to profit any of our members. But lodges have to operate like a business in order to keep the lodge doors open, keep the lights/heat/air on and still have enough money left over to fulfill our benevolent goals in our communities.

That all being said, you increase the money you have to do all this by maximizing the efficiency of your organization; minimize expenses and maximize revenue. It is the goal of every for-profit business, and makes sense from a non-profit perspective because it increases the amount of money we have *to do good things*.

In order to manage money and maximize the amount you have to do the things listed above, ***you must have a budget***. This year, a large number of our lodges (over 75% of lodges reported as of this article) reported they don't have a budget - - they just 'wing it'. This is the equivalent of saying "I must have money; there are still checks in the checkbook!"

Every new Worshipful Master must sit down with his Secretary, Treasurer, and Trustees and make a budget at the beginning of the year. Write down every monthly expense; every annual expense (like insurance cost- you do have insurance, don't

you??) and then amortize (average it out) over each month. Finally, write down all of your known one-time expenses, like costs of doing a fund-raiser or a scholarship- you can spread that out over the year too. That will give you how much you need to make just to break even for the year. Once you know all your costs, then project (guess) revenue. How much do you bring in for dues? How much do you anticipate getting back from perpetual interest? What revenue do you expect to make from fund-raisers, donations, trust pay-outs? This is all somewhat of a guess (no one can foretell the interest on investments), but you will at least be in the ballpark.

Once you have done this, you subtract expenses from revenue and ... hope you come up with a positive number. If you don't have a budget, then you must vote on EVERY BILL that comes through the lodge because all expenses have to be approved by the craft. By putting recurring costs in a budget, and having it approved, the secretary/treasurer can pay these bills without having to come back to the membership to approve every meeting. It is meant to make everyone's life easier, and cut down on the administrative dead time of a lodge meeting.

More importantly, using this process is how we should be determining what our lodge dues should be. If the revenue and expense number are almost the same, there is no margin for error - - you can't improve the lodge, and you open each meeting with a prayer that the roof doesn't leak, someone doesn't steal you're a/c unit, or that your heating unit doesn't break down. You must have enough revenue to set *something* aside each year (the lodge contingency fund). If you aren't (or can't) do this, YOUR DUES ARE TOO LOW! The average dues for the lodges of Oklahoma are \$42.00, with the vast majority well below that number. 20% of our lodges have membership so low, I don't see how it is possible to raise enough money to stay open, but they still do- there must be an awful lot of 'hat passing' going on,

because the numbers just don't add up.

You get what you pay for. If you continue to charge the minimum for dues, you better have a wealthy deceased brother who left you a huge estate, because it is just a matter of time before your doors will close, permanently.

Brothers, our fraternity is in crisis. Most (yes, I said most) of our lodges have little, if any fiscal management in place. They;

- don't bond the money-handling officers,
- don't require budgets,
- don't require two signatures on checks from lodge and worst of all,
- pay cursory attention to the end of year audit report - some waiving it under the Master's nose for him to sign 5 minutes before a lodge meeting.

The new Secretary/Admin handbooks have a section for how to make a budget and how to conduct an audit. The information is only good if you use it. For the sake of your lodge, take immediate action to get these procedures in place.

One final word. At Secretary training, I had two secretaries tell me they did not know they were to provide verification of tax filing to Grand Lodge. All you need to send to GL is the verification page from IRS if you file electronically or the cover sheet from your long form. This is to help us make sure everyone gets taxes filed and stay eligible for matching funds. No tax filing, no 501c(10) status, no matching funds and the experience of getting back into good standing is a very 'paperwork painful' process.

Fraternally,
Steve Singleton
Grand Secretary

From the Grand Lecturer



We stand on the shores of a vast ocean, and watch the ship depart with those whom we have known so well, and loved so long. We watch until the last shadowy, ghost-like gleam disappears beyond the horizon.

This is the way I felt as the Deputy Grand Lecturers and I attended the funeral of one of the ritual's finest instructors, Brother Raymond Brown. As time moves on, we see more and more of our mentors of the ritual lay down the working tools here, and go on to their eternal reward. May God bless Brother Raymond's wife and children in their time of loss.

Once again I want to thank the craft for electing me as your Grand Lecturer. At the last session of Grand Lodge held in November, 2013, the craft voted to move Grand School of Instruction back to the month of November just before Grand Lodge. The dates will be November 5th, 6th, and 7th, 2014—which is the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday until noon before Grand Lodge.

I remember when I became a mason and would attend schools of instruction. Many times it would be after I got off work before I could get to the school. We do not see much of this happening anymore however; and so

this year the Board of Grand Lecturers has decided to start our schools at 9:00 a.m. just as we have done for years, but not to put a closing time for the school. We will instruct as long as the brethren want to work.

The Board also will be traveling across the state to do some exemplifications at different lodges. Altus Lodge, Muskogee, and Tulsa are the areas which have been talked about. Keep watching for the dates and details of these events.

The craft also passed some regulations in the ritual at our Grand Lodge session. This will allow us to bring our esoteric book up to date as the way our work is being taught by the Board of Grand Lecturers.

At the 2nd annual (IRONMAN) school of instruction, held on February 8th 2014 at Yukon Masonic Lodge, there were 24 masonic districts represented. In attendance were 4 Past Grand Masters, 2 Medal of Honor recipients, 4 Grand Lodge Trustees, 6 Deputy Grand Lecturers, 3 Deputy Grand Lecturer Assistants, and several District Deputy Grand Masters for a total of 56. Congratulations to Yukon Lodge #90 for starting this great school! The masonic instruction went on until after 6:00 p.m. This could not happen without the brethren of Yukon Lodge, for they served not only lunch, but also dinner. This is only the second year for this event, and it has already grown by leaps and bounds from last year. On behalf of all the instructors and myself, I want to say "thank you" for asking us to attend, and be a part of this school.

Brethren this is one to put on your calendars for next year, and it will be the same as always the second Saturday in February. See you next year at (IRONMAN) !!!!

Again I want to say thank you for putting your trust and confidence in me over this most important part of our fraternity, that of our esoteric ritual.

Fraternally,
Ronald Wray
Grand Lecturer



MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS FOR 2013

The Medal of Honor is the highest honor presented by the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma.

The recipients for 2013 are:

LESTER
"BEAR"
STEWART
Healdton Lodge #23

J. DALE
MCWATERS
Amity Lodge #473

BOB PETERS
Composite Lodge #107



Changes in the Masonic Law of Oklahoma

The following resolutions were adopted at the Grand Lodge Annual Communication in 2013. The descriptions given below are for convenience only. The exact language has been sent to the Lodges.

Resolution #4 Amends section 502. Adds \$2 to the per capita (total \$10). The \$2 goes into a fund for the repair, maintenance, and capital improvement of the Grand Lodge building.

Resolution #5-A - 5-E Establishes a fund to help offset the costs of a Lodge trial, so that if a Lodge requests a Grand Lodge Trial Commission to handle a Masonic trial and the Grand Master approves, the Lodge's financial obligation for expenses is limited to \$400. After the Lodge has expended that amount, the Grand Lodge fund will take over.

Resolution #6 Amends section 402. Moves Grand School from May to just before Grand Lodge in November.

Resolution #9-A & 9-B Amends sections 109 & U109. Housekeeping amendment. The sections speak of a majority of members present, but since some members carry proxies and have more than 1 vote, it should speak of a majority of votes cast. The Resolutions changed the language from "members present" to "votes cast."



Resolution #10 Adds section U324. Requires that official communications by e-mail, etc., with Lodges in other Grand Jurisdictions or with other Grand Lodges must go through our Grand Lodge. It is a matter of Masonic protocol expected in other states.

Resolution #11 Amends section U 302-B. Clarifies the language concerning types of meetings and observations, open and tyled meetings, etc

Resolution #12 Amends Section U 308. Adds reading from the Constitution and Code to the agenda of a meeting.

Resolution #13 Amends section U 602. Housekeeping Resolution. Previously, Grand Lodge voted to amend section U 405 regarding the 28-day waiting period for affiliations. Section U 602 deals with the same matter and should have been amended at the same time.

Resolution #14 Amends section T 1003, ¶ 2 Housekeeping Resolution. Section T 1001 of the Trial Code, dealing with restoration of membership after Masonic discipline, had been amended but a similar amendment should have been made to section T 1003, paragraph 2. This Resolution corrects that omission.

ALTUS LODGE #62 RECOGNIZED



It was a front page story in *The Altus Times*. The headline read "Altus Masonic Lodge Donates to Child Safety Council." The text tells the people of Altus that the gift of \$1,152 will help the Child Safety Council purchase literature and other materials to promote child safety and inform of the dangers of drugs and alcohol as well as educate on anti-bullying. The photograph shows Steve McMall, Senior Warden; Don Wolford, Trustee; Tim Murphy, Chief of Police; John Church, Member of the Lodge; and Pete Downs, Senior Deacon. Well done, Brethren!

FROM THE MASONIC CHARITY FOUNDATION



The Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma 2014 Officers

President - Charles L. Stuckey

1st Vice President - Elwood M. Isaacs

2nd Vice President - William J. Cloud

Secretary - Robert G. Davis

Treasurer - Gary A. Davis

Asst. Secretary - John L. Logan

Photo Contest

The Charity Foundation is soliciting photos of the charitable and educational efforts, or other efforts which symbolize fraternalism, by your Lodge. Winning photographs will be featured in the Foundation's Annual Report calendar. Photos may be submitted via e-mail to information@mcfok.org or by mail to P.O. Box 2406, Edmond, OK 73083.

Masonry in Action Award

The Masonry in Action Award is designed to provide special recognition of two lodges each calendar year in their own communities by providing a **\$5,000 grant** to be awarded to the organization(s) selected by the winning Lodge.

PRIZES AWARDED:

A \$5,000 grant on behalf of the winning lodge, given to the organization(s) of the Lodge's choice. A total of two \$5,000 grants will be awarded for the calendar year.

WHO CAN APPLY:

Any Masonic Lodge in Oklahoma! If your lodge has participated in any of the Masonic Charity Foundation's programs during the calendar year, your lodge could be a recipient of the Masonry in Action Award! Full information on the program and how to apply has been sent to each Lodge.

The deadline for applications for the Masonry in Action Award is March 31st!

2014 Timeline for Charity Foundation Programs

Important Dates Throughout the Year

FEBRUARY 2014

Senior Essay Contest (2013 – 2014) winners will be announced. Letters announcing the names of the local division (male and female) winners and/or state-wide winners are sent to the participating lodges. Lodges are urged to contact schools and coordinate presentation date, time and place.

Student & Teacher of Today forms are mailed to all Oklahoma Lodges. Lodges are encouraged to distribute these forms at their local public schools

MARCH 2014

Masonic Fraternity of Oklahoma Youth Scholarship Program notifications will be mailed to all Youth Group Leaders in the state

O.E.T.A. Telethon (Mason night is scheduled for Saturday, March 15, 2014) - Lodge contributions, plus matching funds are presented by the Grand Master.

Masonry in Action application postmark deadline is March 31, 2014.

APRIL 2014

Awards for Arts Excellence - This program will be held Thursday, April 17, 2014 at the Scottish Rite Temple in Guthrie. The Grand Master and State Superintendent present medals to many deserving students.

Senior Essay certificates and checks for winning students are mailed to all participating Lodges for presentation by the Lodge. Lodges are urged to contact schools and arrange presentation date, time and place.

Student of Today and Teacher of Today certificates are mailed to Schools or Lodges prior to the presentation date. Lodges are urged to contact schools and confirm presentation date, time and place.

MAY 2014

Youth Scholarship Program - Completed scholarship applications are due. (Postmark deadline is May 1, 2014)

JULY 2014

Senior Essay (2014 – 2015) packets are mailed to all Oklahoma Lodges. This essay contest is open to all seniors in Oklahoma Public Schools. Lodges are encouraged to deliver these packets to their local high schools in August. The postmark deadline for essays is October 31, 2014. Essays are then professionally graded November through January with results being announced no later than mid-February.

SEPTEMBER 2014

State Teacher of the Year ceremony at the Oklahoma State Fair in Oklahoma City. The Grand Master presents a framed certificate to every district winner present; a \$500 check to each Rising Star honoree, a \$1,000 check to each of the eleven Teacher of the Year finalists; a \$5,000 check to the Teacher of the Year; and a \$5,000 check to school district of Teacher of the Year. (This event is usually held the 3rd Tuesday of the month of September)

OCTOBER 2014

Senior Essay Contest postmark deadline is Friday, October 31, 2014.

DECEMBER 2014

2014 Matching Funds application deadline is Monday, December 15, 2014.



Blue & Gold to Square & Compasses

JOHN CARTER

In the fall of 1968, as a teenager of thirteen, I graduated from the two room country school I had attended for the past eight years and enrolled in the “big” high school in town. In the process, the high school counselor noted that I was a male and that I lived on a farm, so as a part of my beginning high school curriculum, she enrolled me in a class called Vocational Agriculture (she called it FFA). This seemingly insignificant event was to be one of two that would profoundly influence my life. The other was becoming a Mason, and though I did not realize at either time, the two were connected.

The connection was not apparent until some forty years later when I was raised a Master Mason and sat in Lodge for the first time. There was something familiar about the ritual; striking similarities in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) I had experienced as a teenager and in the ritual I was beginning to know in the Lodge.

One of the first things I noticed was that both organizations had opening and closing ceremonies for their meetings and each both call the roll of the officers and describe their duties. Each officer has a symbol of his office and the officers are positioned about the room in similar positions. In the FFA, the presiding officer, the President, is stationed at the front of the room. His assistant, the Vice-President, is situated directly opposite at the back of the room. Both organizations have an officer stationed near the door: in the Lodge, the Tyler; in the FFA, the Sentinel.

As a new Mason, I noticed there were broad similarities in the language of the rituals. The symbol of the President in FFA is the rising sun and at one point in the opening ceremonies of the FFA, the Vice-President says “*The rising sun is the symbol of a new era in agriculture. If we will follow the leadership of our president, we shall be led out of the darkness of selfishness, into the glorious sunlight of brotherhood and cooperation.*”



Sun, darkness, light, brotherhood, all sound like masonic themes.

I also noted there were other points of similarity in the two organizations. Membership in the FFA is by degrees, beginning with Discovery degree through National FFA degree. Each uses symbols as teaching elements. If one is familiar with both, there are numerous other commonalities in the two rituals.

Vocational Agriculture began in 1917, as a part of the progressive education movement of the early twentieth century, with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act by Congress, to provide instruction in agriculture to high school students. Within a few years, in Virginia, a student organization was developed to provide opportunities for leadership and personal development among students in Vocational Agriculture. The organization became a national one in 1928, whose mission was to develop agricultural leadership, character, thrift, scholarship, cooperation, citizenship, and patriotism, purposes in line with Masonry and, moreover, using many of the same leadership development tools and similar ritual methods, such as symbols.

How did the design of the FFA come to be so similar to Masonry? One may speculate, but from the internal evidence noted, masonry surely was used as a pattern by the founders of the FFA in the early part of this century for their new organization. Down through the years, it has not been uncommon for such to happen. During the nineteenth century there were numerous fraternal organizations begun, all patterned

from Freemasonry. One such agriculturally oriented fraternal organization was the *Order of Patrons of Husbandry* (The Grange) founded in 1867 and, though one cannot say with certainty that the men who founded the FFA were Masons (as men of that generation did not generally go out of their way to advertise that fact) the internal evidence is strong. There is evidence to show Masonry had an influence, perhaps directly by the founders being Masons, or indirectly through fraternal organizations like The Grange.

I can say that FFA had a great influence on my life. The experience gained in public speaking, parliamentary procedure, other leadership development activities, and the emphasis on character development changed my life to the extent that I first became president of my local FFA and later became an Agriculture Education teacher.

Masonry, through emphasis on similar tenets: friendship, morality, and brotherly love, and similar leadership and character development continues to shape and mold my life. And local lodges can continue the masonic legacy of support for public education by supporting the young men and women in the Blue and Gold jackets. One means of support, of course, is through supporting local FFA chapters financially. Many of their educational activities meet the criteria to qualify for matching funds from the Masonic Charity Foundation

References:

[Note: Support of FFA is one of Grand Master Chambers' programs - ed.]

Official FFA Manual, National FFA Organization, Indianapolis, IN, 2013

A Brief History of the National FFA Organization, National FFA Organization, IN, 2013
www.ffa.org/documents/about_ffahistory.pdf

National FFA Organization Records, 1916-2008, IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN, 2013

www.ulib.iupui.edu/special/ffa

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BRETHREN, WE'D LOVE TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR LODGE!

Please send photographs to the editor at

jim.tresner@yahoo.com

**Don't limit yourself to check presentations, installations, etc.
Be creative—just be sure we have permission to use the photographs.**

Address Change (please print)

Lodge # _____ Date Address Effective _____

Full Name _____

Street or Box address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send to *Address Change update, The Oklahoma Mason, P.O. Box 1019, Guthrie, OK 73044*