

Master's Message

Brethren, family and friends,

It brings me great pleasure to address you from the pages of the Trestleboard, if only I could move the schedule up a couple of weeks instead of last minute.

March Stated dinner is at 6:00, Wednesday March 1, with the meeting to follow. The Temple Board meets at 5:00. We will have a new visitor at dinner who is a Mason in his heart and needs to make a few friends who might in due time sign his application. Please get to know him. I'm hoping Richard Fonseca will come to present Ben with his Mason of the Year award from last year.

A new website for the lodge is up at <http://clearlakemasoniccenter.org>. I will be working it over the next months to be focused on renting our hall, but it's a start.

SOI will be at Clearlake Callayomi Lodge on March 8, 6:00 pm. This will be a practice for the 3rd degree for Bro. Derby. The degree is scheduled for March 22 at 6:00pm. We will have help from Hartley Lodge. Please come be a sideliner. We do the work for the candidate, but our reward is the audience.

We will of course make mistakes, plenty of them most likely. I make different mistakes every time through, so it's not a matter of not knowing the work, but rather the gamble of what's going to come out of my mouth next. Frankly that's part of the fun of being a sideliner, that you know our secret ceremonies so well you spot the mistakes. The familiarity of our ceremonies is like a rhythm of awareness.

What we do in Masonry has a magical quality to it. Whether one has a part in a stated meeting or degree or is only watching it, when we enter the lodge room a transformation of our awareness occurs, and we become very sensitive to the feelings of brotherhood working hard in agreement with one another. When our eyes land on the boat over the

door in the north west corner of the lodge we are reminded of integrity, and our mortality. When we look to the Monad, the point within a circle, we are reminded of our spiritual aspect that never dies and are reminded to circumscribe our passions by staying aware of our center.

Most interesting to me is the somewhat reverential aspect of Freemasonry in that here in the Blue Lodge we are in the business of creating a transformative experience for the quality men that seek out membership in our fraternity. When we put on a degree we create a life memory for the candidate and empower him to grow as a more spiritually integrated man. Those that have seen our ceremonies dozens of times are never left unmoved by the reminder of Freemasonry's edicts. These edicts are many, and varied, but collectively will allow the transformation of the world into an enlightened, civil, and safe place for the best expression of that Supreme Architect which forever animates.

Michael McKeown

March Birthdays

| A | B | C | |
|---------|----------|-----|--------|
| Gilbert | Amaya | | 8-Mar |
| Roland | Eckhardt | Jr. | 23-Mar |
| Richard | George | | 18-Mar |
| Robert | Jordan | | 23-Mar |
| | | | |

March 3rd Degree Anniversaries

| First Name | Last Name | Suffix | Date |
|------------|-----------|--------|--------|
| Gilbert | Amaya | | 28-Mar |
| Michael | Berryman | | 12-Mar |
| Richard | George | | 31-Mar |
| Robert | Hipkiss | Jr. | 26-Mar |
| David | Jones | | 26-Mar |
| Robert | Jordan | | 27-Mar |
| David | Thompson | | 11-Mar |

Michael's Masonic Esoterica

Every time I chose the simplest element of Freemasonry to take a close look at I find hidden information I had no idea about. Today I took a look at the rods we use in the lodge room and found this article on our own Grand Lodge website:

THE SYMBOLISM OF MASONIC RODS

By Michelle Simone

Masonic rods, born by the stewards and deacons, are a hallmark attribute in every Masonic lodge. Their presence dates back to at least 1724, when they are said to have been carried in a grand lodge procession. Today, the rods continue to be infused with rich Masonic symbolism.

Masonic rods are thin poles that are approximately six feet long. According to one school of thought, this shape and length represents the asherah, wooden staffs carried by ancient attendants to the high priests. The term "asherah" comes from the ancient West Semitic goddess of the same name, who was said to have birthed the gods of dusk and dawn.

The herald who guided candidates through their initiation to the

philosophies of the ancient mysteries was also known to carry an asherah. His was topped with a caduceus of Mercury – a winged staff wrapped with two opposing snakes. This symbol was said to ward off the spirits of evil.

According to Grand Lecturer Jack Rose, some scholars attribute the metal tips of contemporary rods as homage to this ancient symbol. Another interpretation of this tip shape is that it imitates the thyrsus – a sacred staff carried by Bacchus, the Roman god of fertility, wine, and agriculture. The thyrsus was wrapped in leaves of ivy and topped with a pinecone. The pinecone carries its own rich symbolism – it is considered to be an ancient symbol of human enlightenment. In this school of thought, the rod tips represent this pinecone.

SYMBOLISM AND MEANING

The word “deacon” derives from the Greek word for attendant. The junior and senior deacons’ rods, which are blue, symbolize friendship and benevolence. The white junior and senior stewards’ rods, represent purity and innocence.

All rods are tipped with a silver or gold emblem. Until the late 18th century, the symbols of choice were the caduceus or pinecone. With a rise in Christian influence and negative views around symbols associated with paganism, the rod tips began to exemplify Biblical concepts, such as the crescent, sun, and cornucopia.

Today, when viewed together, these updated rod tips tell a story: The junior deacon’s rod tip, a “spilling water moon” (crescent moon that stands on its points) is combined with the sunshine atop the senior deacon’s rod to yield a fruitful harvest – symbolized in the cornucopias that adorn both stewards’ rods.

EMBLEMS OF MATERIAL CULTURE

Contemporary Masonic rods play an important role in the material culture of their lodge and convey great meaning regarding those who carry them. The deacons stand in the east and west of the lodge, with rods tipped with the jewels of their office – the rising and setting sun. They are

charged with serving as messengers of the worshipful master and ensuring all visitors have been properly screened by the tiler. Carrying their white rods, the stewards prepare and protect each candidate, assuring his quest towards light and goodness. Their jewels – bountiful cornucopias – also call to mind their duties to provide refreshment to the men of the lodge.