

Knight Templar

VOLUME LXI

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NUMBER 9



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**Cover photo of newly installed
Grand Master Duane L. Vaught.**

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Grand Master's Message

It's an amazing feeling, being elected and installed as the 58th Grand Master of our Grand Encampment. It's also an awesome responsibility. In this, my first magazine article as Grand Master, I am going to break with tradition and not discuss at length how pleased and excited I am to be Grand Master. Please understand that those feelings exist, but they are of negligible interest to the bulk of our membership.

I want to touch instead on what we are looking forward to in this Fraternity and why we can all be excited about what lies ahead.

Let's start with the traditional complaint about membership and pleas that if we each got a new member we would double our size. While that math is indisputable, the program's likelihood of success is nil. Our issue is not so much marketing as it is manufacturing. We need to be the kind of organization people want to be part of and provide (manufacture) the activities that people want. This is happening. After decades of lamenting

losses, many Grand Commanderies are having, or are on the verge of having, net gains. This triennium could show a gain, and if so, it will not be because of Grand Encampment but because of what Sir Knights are doing in their Commanderies.

Next year, 2016, will be the two hundredth anniversary of the Grand Encampment. There will be special classes of Knightings, souvenirs (of course lapel pins are a must), and with luck, some very special events. Watch this magazine and the web site for information as it develops. We all like the medals, so I am especially pleased to announce commemorative Malta jewels that will be available beginning January first. Any Sir Knight will be able to purchase one, but those Sir Knights who receive the Order of the Temple during 2016 will receive one of these jewels directly from the Grand Encampment office gratis. Also, those jewels will be different from those for sale to forever distinguish the wearer as one of the Bicentennial Knights.

The much praised leadership program conducted in cooperation with General Grand Chapter and Council will continue.

We will continue to make every effort to make Department meetings and the magazine interesting. If you haven't been reading this magazine, you have missed a lot, but one can always start now. Every Sir Knight is welcome at Department Meetings, and if you haven't attended, you might find it exciting to try.



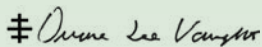
The Knight Templar Eye Foundation has commenced new and exciting initiatives, and new ones are under discussion.

The Education Foundation has a lot more potential than people realize. Many of our members don't even know it exists, and yet it is a ten million dollar operation with the work being done in the Grand Commanderies, not in the Grand Encampment. This is as it should be.

As exciting as it is to be Grand Master, we in the Grand Encampment are ultimately overhead. We can conceptualize, facilitate, coordinate, and administer. However in its roots, Knight Templary is, as it was two hundred years ago, something that happens in your local Commanderies and in the heart of the individual Knight Templar. If our principles are well represented there, we cannot fail.

There is much more I could say, but it seems that I have thirty-five remaining monthly issues to try to get it all in. I look forward to that opportunity.

Courteously,



Duane Lee Vaught
Grand Master

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Prelate's Chapel

by

Rev. William D. Hartman, Right Eminent Grand Prelate
of the Grand Encampment

Labor Day reminds me of that old hymn we used to sing: "Work, for the night is coming ... when man's work is done." (Annie Coghill, 1836-1907). I've worked in daytime, and I've worked in nighttime, always glad when my work was done and I could rest. This hymn (and others) isn't talking about "our daily labors" but about the work we do as our Lord directs. As Charles Wesley (1707-88) wrote, "Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go, my daily labor to pursue; Thee, only Thee resolved to know in all I think, or speak, or do. For Thee delightfully employ whate'er Thy bounteous grace hath given; and run my course with even joy, and closely walk with Thee to heaven."

Yes, many of us have to work to make a living, but it's the work for our Lord that makes a life, here and hereafter. Again, to quote Charles Wesley, "In all my works Thy presence find, and prove Thy good and perfect will." Horatius Bonar (1808-89) in one of his hymns, admonishes us, "Go, labor on! Spend and be spent; thy joy to do the Father's will: it is the way the Master went – should not the servant tread it still?"

It seems to me that these hymn writers have the right attitude for work, not just making a living but making a life, for ourselves, for our families and friends, for all those who would accept our Lord as their Savior and "closely walk with Him to heaven."



Henry Bates Stoddard

28th Grand Master of the Grand Encampment

(Tenth in a series on our Grand Masters)

by

George L. Marshall, Jr., PGC, KCT, ADC

Chairman, Grand Encampment Knights Templar History Committee

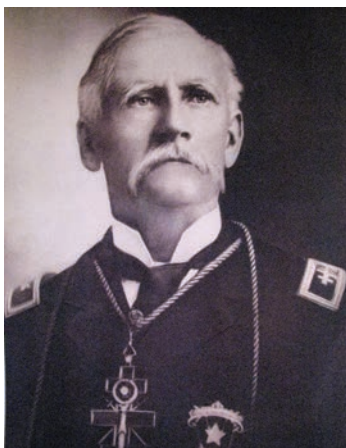
Most Eminent Sir Knight Stoddard was born on June 22, 1840, in Essex County, New York, to John and Margaret Bates Stoddard. He moved to Texas in 1860 and, at the outbreak of the Civil War, entered the Confederate Army as a Private. Serving throughout the war, he was assigned to the staff of Major General Camille Polignac and was discharged in May of 1865 at Jackson, Mississippi, with the rank of Captain.

Returning to Texas, he initially settled in the town of Millican where he began work in the cotton brokerage business. While in that town, he survived the terrible yellow fever epidemic of 1867 and served actively on the relief board. An estimated seventy-five per cent of the population died from the effects of the epidemic. A short time later he moved to Bryan, Texas, where he was to spend the rest of his life. In 1869 he married Louisa Ross English (1826-1904) of Bryan, and after her death, he married her sister, Hortense English (1859-1944) in 1909. By his first wife he had one child, a daughter, Charlotte (1877-1961), who never married.

knight templar

During his time in Bryan, Sir Knight Stoddard served as a Colonel of the Second Texas Volunteer Guard from 1880-1885 and as Brigadier General of the Texas Volunteer Guard from 1885-1893. In this latter capacity he presided over ceremonies dedicating the new state capitol building in Austin in 1888. Besides the cotton industry, his status as a cattleman led to his election as President of the Texas Live Stock Association in 1887 and as President of the Interstate Convention of Cattlemen in 1890 in Fort Worth, where eleven states were represented. He often declined election to public office but did serve one term as Alderman of Bryan, having been elected while he was absent from the state. As Alderman, he was largely instrumental in establishing the public school system of

Bryan, which at the time was considered one of the best in the state. He was also involved in several other business ventures, among the most notable of which were the Texas Dressed Beef and Packing Company, a proposed meat-packing business which it was hoped would rival Chicago in meat processing; Aransas Harbor City and



Improvement Company, a real estate venture at Aransas Pass, Texas; and the Texas Mineral Company, a proposed brickmaking project in Grimes County. In later life, he served on a committee designed to head the local effort to locate a proposed girls' industrial school at A&M College (now Texas A&M University). Stoddard was once considered for the Presidency of A&M College of Texas in 1902, and many petitions from various citizens of Texas to the Board of Directors of Texas A&M were received requesting the consideration of H. B. Stoddard to fill the vacant position of President of the College. (Stoddard did not, ultimately, become President.)

His Masonic career began in Bryan where he was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Brazos Union Lodge No. 129 in April of 1869. He served Brazos Union Lodge as Master in 1875 and again in 1876. He was exalted a Royal Arch Mason on July 26, 1869, in William T. Austin Chapter No. 87 in Bryan. He served as High Priest of Sterling Chapter No. 50 at Calvert in 1870 and his home Chapter, William T. Austin No. 87, at Bryan in 1885, 1886, 1887, 1896, and 1897. Sir Knight Stoddard was created a Knight Templar in Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8, Knights Templar of Texas at Bryan on December 25, 1869. He served this Commandery as Commander in 1875, 1876, 1882, and 1883. Sir Knight Stoddard was elected Prelate of Ivanhoe Commandery No. 8 in 1895 and served continuously until his passing in 1925.

In Grand Commandery, Sir Knight Stoddard was appointed as Grand Warder in 1874. He was elected Grand Junior Warden in 1875 and served in the several stations until 1880 when he was installed as Grand Commander, Knights

Templar of Texas.

In that same year, 1880, Sir Knight Stoddard was appointed Sword Bearer for the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar, United States of America. For the next twenty-one years, Sir Knight Stoddard served in the several stations until his election at the Triennial in 1901 in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was installed as Grand Master, Knights Templar of the United States of America and presided at the 29th Triennial in 1904 held at San Francisco, California.

At this Triennial, the negotiations toward closer relations with Templar bodies in other lands, which had been carried on for so long a time and which had shown signs of maturing at Louisville in 1901, for the first time achieved success. Upon invitation of Grand Master Stoddard, the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Euston, the Most Eminent and Supreme Grand Master of the Great Priory of the Religious and Military Orders of the Temple, and of St. John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta in England and Wales and the Dependencies thereof, came with a staff of six distinguished Knights to visit the Grand Encampment of the United States. He was royally received and, upon motion of Past Grand Master Reuben Lloyd, was elected the first honorary member of the Grand Encampment. Grand Master Stoddard was made a Knight Commander of the United Orders of England and Wales by the Earl, special representative of King Edward VII. The two great Templar organizations of England and America were thus bound together with ties of the closest friendship, the Templar order thus assuming an international role. The remainder of this Conclave was characterized by the absence of any agitation or need for legislation on the hitherto much debated

questions of uniform, non-affiliation, permanent place of assembly for the Grand Encampment, etc. One Grand Commandery, Idaho, was organized and created during the Conclave week. Sir Knight Stoddard received the thirty-third degree of the Scottish Rite in Galveston in 1920.

After serving as Grand Master, Sir Knight Stoddard continued to be active in his local Masonic bodies and the Grand Encampment up until his death. Sir Knight Stoddard's final duty to the Craft was installing the Grand Commandery officers on May 7, 1925, in Beaumont. He died on May 29, 1925, in Bryan. Funeral Services for Most Eminent Past Grand Master Stoddard were held at St. Andrews Episcopal Church,

Sunday evening, May 31, 1925, in Bryan, followed by the full Templar Burial Service by the Grand Commandery of Texas. He was interred in the Bryan City Cemetery beside his first wife.

General Henry Bates Stoddard Council No. 87, Knight Masons of the United States of America, in College Station, Texas, was named in his honor.

Right Eminent Sir Knight Marshall, KYGCH(3), KCT, 33°, is a Past Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Alabama. He is a member of the Editorial Review Board of the *Knight Templar* magazine and has published several articles in that magazine as well as in the *Royal Arch Mason* magazine. He can be reached at geomarsh@yahoo.com.

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Photo of a pediment in a chapel in the cathedral at Troyes, France taken by the editor.

A Chat With The Managing Editor

In 1969, a popular musical group called "The 5th Dimension" released a song entitled *Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In* but commonly referred to as "the Age of Aquarius." At the time, I had no idea what the age of Aquarius really was, but later I discovered that it is a period of time measured by the position of the earth in relation to the stars and lasting about 2,160 years. The lyrics of this song were based on the astrological belief that the world would soon be entering the "Age of Aquarius," an age of love, light, and humanity, unlike the current "Age of Pisces." In fact, part of the lyrics predicted that "...peace will guide the planets and love will guide the stars."

The actual beginning of the new age is imprecise and varies from the year 2000 AD to 2600 AD. From listening to the news, however; it is apparent to me that the prediction is in error or that the Age of Aquarius has not yet arrived, at least in our country. From the time that the song was published until today, I have observed a steady if not accelerating trend away from civility and respect for others and toward a dark age of hate and fear.

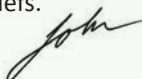
Looking back at history, it is easy to see a cycle from envy to hate to fear, and then a renaissance or recovery back to more civility. Sometimes this cycle is only regional like the occurrence seventy or eighty years ago in Europe beginning in Germany. Although I was born after the last world war, my world was filled with information about what happened to cause it. I couldn't understand and I still don't understand how an entire nation of people could have bought in to the propaganda of hate. Even though I still don't understand how this could happen, I believe that I am witnessing a recurrence of the phenomenon right here in my own back yard.

It starts with hateful rhetoric followed by lawsuits and then riots with a few futile attempts at appeasement thrown in from time to time. It is claimed to be a result of tensions over race or religion or morality.

A good brother shared a quote with me last weekend, something like "Hate is the poison we take with the hope of harming someone else." We seem to be in the hate phase now which is always followed by the fear phase. My father once told me that there is nothing more dangerous than a man who is afraid of you. Those who are currently doing the hating would be wise to take note.

So what does all this have to do with Knights Templar? As Christian Knights, we are taught by our Savior to be people of love, not hate. At a minimum, we should strive not to be a part of the problem. Christianity is one of the main institutions currently under attack. Based on history, if this continues, about half of our members will change sides and join the hate crowd before this is over. For those of us who are left, it appears that the time has come to see if we really intend to defend the Christian religion and those fellow Christians who have become targets because of their belief.

I long for the days when practically everyone I knew or knew about respected each other and one another's beliefs.



John L. Palmer
Managing Editor

The Contents of the Cup

By

Sir Knight P. D. Newman

[The Alchemists] have said that the fruit of their tree strives up to heaven, because out of the philosophic earth there arises a certain substance, like unto the branches of a loathsome sponge...The point about which the whole art turns lies in the living things of nature...From a likeness not altogether remote they have called this material virgin's milk and blessed rose-colored blood...For in the blood of this stone is hidden its soul. — Elias Ashmole

In our previous treatments of this subject we demonstrated that the Holy Grail of Arthurian legend was in all probability a veiled allusion to Baphomet, the mysterious severed head allegedly venerated by the original Knights Templar. It was further demonstrated that Masonic Templary, in turn, incorporated this imagery into its own ritual in the form of an initiatory cup. In the present article, we will tackle the problem of the contents of this cup and discover what it was exactly, aside from its composition and legendary history, that made this particular vessel so very special. To do this, we will first need to turn again to the East and look as far back as 1500 BC. For it is there that we will find the Vedas and more importantly, Soma.

To this day, Soma is surrounded by mystery. It is spoken of in the Vedas as being at once a plant, a libation, a drug, a bull, and even a deity. Known most commonly as the “Red Bull” and often described as having but a single leg and foot, Soma is not unlike the famed fruit of the tree of life in Judeo Christian lore or the legendary amrita or food of the gods of the Greeks. Like them, it was purported to confer upon its drinker

the gift of immortality. However, Soma's identification has eluded scholars for centuries, and it was not until the arrival on the scene of amateur mycologist R. Gordon Wasson that a reasonable proposal was set forth which satisfies most if not all of the requirements detailed in the Vedas.

Wasson identified Soma as the entheogenic and mycorrhizal *Amanita muscaria* mushroom, commonly known as “fly agaric” and still widely used today for ritualistic and religious purposes by numerous indigenous peoples, including the shaman of Siberia. Without entering into the difficult question of whether or not Wasson was correct in his identification (which I believe he was), the reader is directed to his books *Soma: the Divine Mushroom of Immortality* and *Persephone's Quest: Entheogens and the Origins of Religion* for a full treatment of the subject.

As stated above, *A. muscaria* mushrooms are entheogenic or psychedelic and contain within them a powerful visionary and intoxicating compound called muscimol. When properly prepared and ingested at a safe dosage by humans, these mushrooms have the potential to induce visions of light and

sensations of ascension and dissolution as well as cause profound introspection and revelations of a personal as well as cosmic nature. On the flip side, they can also induce terrifying hallucinations, disorientation, distortions of time and space, flushing, extreme perspiration, and brutal nausea.

Clark Heinrich explains in his remarkable book, *Strange Fruit*, that the *A. muscaria* mushroom begins its life as a small, egg shaped mass before expanding on its stipe into a platter-like cap and finally into its matured chalice shape. Its “red with white spots” appearance is familiar to us all as the so-called fairytale mushroom seen in popular children’s stories such as Lewis Carroll’s *Alice In Wonderland*. The white spots are the remnants of the universal veil, which serves two important purposes. First, it protects the fruiting body before the mushroom has had time to expand its bright red cap. Second, with its numerous small points, like several tiny horns, the universal veil assists the fruiting body in reaching the sunlight by breaking up any soil which might cover it. Hence Soma’s being likened unto a “red bull” in the Vedas. The epithet of single foot therefore refers of course to the lone stipe which supports the ruddy cap. This figurative bull had to be slain by the worshippers via pressing out its rich, intoxicating blood. Indeed, Soma even means “pressed one.” According to the Vedas, the juices of the Red Bull would be pressed out between two stones and mixed with cow’s milk before being ritually drunk by the congregation of worshippers.

It is believed that Soma eventually became exclusive to the Brahmin priesthood, and its use by those of other castes was deemed taboo. One early

Hindu law maker, Manu, even went so far as to declare that the consumption of mushrooms be outlawed completely. Soma did not disappear from view altogether, however. As many scholars have pointed out, it survived with the ancient Hindus’ Middle Eastern neighbors, the Zoroastrians, under the name of Haoma. Like Soma, Haoma is described at once as a plant and a libation as well as a bull and is even mentioned in the Zoroastrian holy book the *Zend-Avesta*.

Remarkably, according to 6th century chronographer John Malalas, ancient Greek legend holds that after decapitating the Gorgon, Perseus used Medusa’s head as a “skull-cup” to “teach the rite of Zoroaster to the Persians, who took the name of Medes in honor of the Medusa.” Medea is of course where Zoroaster, the founder of the Zoroastrian religion, is said to have been born. As Carl A. P. Ruck, professor of classics at Boston University, has observed, it is no coincidence that most scholars agree; the sound which the Gorgon sisterhood made was a mooing. That is, “the lowing of cattle was their sound.” As with Soma and Haoma, the Gorgon from which the skull cup came is implicitly associated with cattle. It is also notable that here we have our first example of the contents of the cup as being consubstantial with its vessel, i.e., both the skull cup and its contents allude to the mushroom. Indeed, for “skull cap” is even a name commonly applied by laymen to mushrooms of various species.

It was during their travels in the Middle East that scholars believe Roman soldiers first encountered the Haoma rite which they then established in their own homeland in the form of the Mithraic Mysteries. Known as Mithra to the Zoro-

astrians, Mithras also appears in the Vedas as Mitra, an epithet of Soma, which means “a friend of man.” Conveniently, Mithras is also known as the “lord of cattle pastures,” keeping with our peculiar but prevalent bovine theme. Mithra’s role in the Zoroastrian religion was as divine mediator. However, the role he played in the Roman manifestation of his cult was considerably more complex.

The Roman cult of Mithras was for all practical purposes a secret society, composed almost wholly of Roman soldiers. Specifically, they were holy warriors. Similar to Freemasonry, the Mithraic Mysteries consisted of a hierarchical structure of initiatory degrees or levels of attainment wherein the mysteries of the cult were progressively imparted to the initiate as he made his advancement through the grades. The final grade, that of Pater or Father, was symbolized by what appears to be a bowl and staff, suggestive of the cap and stipe of a mushroom, depicted next to a ruddy and spotted Phrygian cap, also known as a skull cap — and equally indicative of the mushroom — and next to that, a pruning hook, not unlike the one used by Perseus to decapitate Medusa before using the cap of her skull to teach the Haoma rite to the Persians. The members of the Mithraic cult met in small, subterranean chambers called Mithraea that were cave-like in appearance. Similar to a Masonic Lodge, the floors of the Mithraea were consistently designed as a rectangle or oblong square. Quite unlike a Masonic Lodge, on the other hand, is the fact that the eastern wall of every Mithraeum included a depiction of the Tauroctony, a fresco or relief which featured a Mithras clad in red with white spots, supported on one leg like the “single-footed” Soma and donning a Phrygian knight templar

cap (also known as a “liberty cap”), and triumphing over a sacred bull. Here, as with the A. muscaria consuming shaman of Siberia, Mithras has made himself consubstantial with the mushroom, taking on the appearance of the object of sacrifice. Furthermore, the shape of the single leg on which Mithras supports himself, paired with the suggestive folds of his clothing and armour in that region, very much itself resembles the cap and stipe of a fruiting body.

The Phrygian cap worn by Mithras is no doubt familiar to members of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite where, in the Knights Kadosh degree (the Knights Kadosh naturally being the Knights Templar), one encounters the fungally suggestive Liberty Pole in the form of a Phrygian cap placed atop a shepherd’s crook. Note that in addition to the fact that the liberty pole and liberty cap are both common euphemisms for various mushrooms, the Knights Kadosh degree is similar to the Templar ceremony in the York Rite, concerning certain libations.

Rosicrucian scholar Hargrave Jennings tells us in his book *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries* that “the real meaning of the...‘cap of liberty’ has been involved from time immemorial in deep obscurity, notwithstanding that it has always been regarded as a most important hieroglyph.... It signifies the supernatural simultaneous ‘sacrifice’ and ‘triumph.’ ...The whole is a sign of ‘initiation,’ and of baptism of a peculiar kind.”

It is here that we come full circle back to that other secret society of holy warriors with whom we first began, the Knights Templar. As was explained in our previous treatments, in his epic poem, “Perzival,” Knight Wolfram von

Eschenbach identified the Grail Knights of Arthurian legend as the Knights Templar. During their fateful trial, we know that many of the Templars confessed to the veneration of a mysterious severed head, named by some as Baphomet. It is quite possible that the Templars, like their Roman predecessors in the Mithraic Mysteries, employed the *A. muscaria* mushroom in an initiatory context and that this mysterious severed head was actually no more than the symbolic vessel, consubstantial with its contents, with which the Soma or Haoma was ritually drunk. After all, as Von Hammer demonstrated, Baphomet is not the name of an elusive deity. Rather, it is the description of a sacred and secret ritual act employed by the Templars in an initiatory context: Baphe Metis, the "Baptism of Wisdom." A "baptism of a peculiar kind" indeed.

However, unlike our previous subjects, neither the Knights Templar nor the Grail Knights are associated with any sort of bovine symbolism. Still, as Heinrich ably demonstrates, there is no better candidate for the Holy Grail than the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom. Indeed, for the Grail is found precisely where one would expect to find *A. muscaria* mushrooms, in the forest. For, as stated above, *A. muscaria* is a mycorrhizal mushroom, meaning that it can only be found growing within and upon the root systems of host trees. It is quite literally the fruit of the roots of the trees whereon it is found, and like *A. muscaria*, depending on the version of the story, the Grail is described variously as a stone, a platter, and a cup. Recall that the life cycle of *A. muscaria* progresses from its egg or "stone" shape to that of a flat platter on a stipe, and thence to

that of a chalice.

Has symbolism pointing to *Amanita muscaria* mushrooms been preserved in the three degrees of Craft Freemasonry? It is hard to say. The only evidence of bovine symbolism which remains in the Craft is the spurious account of Pythagoras' curious hecatomb episode wherein he is said to have sacrificed one hundred oxen. However, considering the fact that Pythagoras not only eschewed and condemned the sacrifice of animals of any kind, for ritual purposes or otherwise, and that he was a devout vegetarian, interpreted in anything other than a cryptic and symbolic light, Pythagoras' actions appear both barbaric and bizarre. As I argued in my paper "Pythagoras: Sacred Bull Slayer," whatever type of bulls Pythagoras allegedly slaughtered, they were not of flesh and blood.

Before closing, it should be noted that *A. muscaria* has been used by at least one Masonic order. According to Rene Le Forestier, the incense blend used by Martinez de Pasqually and his order Elus Cohens included "spore of agaric." While the spores of *A. muscaria* are not psychoactive, the fact that the mushroom is referenced at all is worthy of mention. Even Reverend William Alexander Ayton, the famed Alchemist of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, purported to have received and drank the "true Soma" upon his initiation into the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor. Soma is spoken of too by the infamous H.P. Blavatsky in her book *The Secret Doctrine*: "But the real property of the true Soma was (and is) to make a new man of the initiate, after he is reborn, namely once that he begins to live in his astral body ...The partaker of Soma finds himself both linked to his external body, and yet

away from it in his spiritual form. The latter, freed from the former, soars for the time being in the ethereal higher regions, becoming virtually 'as one of the gods,' and yet preserving in his physical brain the memory of what he sees and learns. Plainly speaking, Soma is the fruit of the tree of knowledge forbidden by the jealous Elohim to Adam and Eve or Yah-ve, 'lest man should become as one of us.'"

I close with a quote from Freemason and Sufi Rene Guenon.

"[Concerning lost words and substituted words, an] example...can be found notably in the Mazdean tradition, and in this connection, we should add that what was lost is represented not only by the sacred cup, that is, by the Grail or various of its equivalents but also by what it contains. This is readily enough understood, for the content, however designated, is actually nothing other

than the 'draught of immortality,' the possession of which essentially constitutes one of the privileges of the primordial state. Thus it is said that after the Vedic soma became unknown in a certain epoch, it was necessary to substitute another draught that only represented it; and although not positively indicated anywhere, it even seems that this substitute was later lost in turn. ...and while on this subject, it bears recalling that in other traditions, wine also substitutes for the 'draught of immortality,' moreover; this is why it is generally taken as a symbol of the hidden or guarded doctrine, namely, esoteric and initiatic knowledge..."

Sir Knight P. D. Newman is a member of New Albany Commandery, No. 29 of New Albany, MS. He can be contacted at: pdnewman@tupelomason.org.

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Zend-Avesta

Sir Knight Duane Lee Vaught, GCT Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar U. S. A.

Duane L. Vaught was born in 1956 in Crawfordsville, Indiana, the first of three sons of Lloyd E. Vaught and Maxine Vaught. He graduated from North Montgomery High School and from Indiana University, the latter with a Bachelors of Science degree in accounting.

He was baptized and confirmed as a member of the Methodist Church. In 2000 he married Georgia Jean Nagai Goode. Sir Knight Vaught has two brothers, both residing in Indiana. Georgia has a sister, living in Atlanta Georgia.

Duane Vaught began his professional career with a national accounting firm in its Indianapolis office, during which time he passed the CPA exam and was licensed as a Certified Public Accountant. He subsequently moved to a local accounting firm in Bloomington, Indiana. He advanced in that firm to the level of partner. In

1995 he joined the firm of Stampfli Associates CPAs as Vice-President. In 2008 he became President of that firm. Although he works with individuals and many kinds of businesses, not-for-profit entities are one of his primary specialties. He served as president of his chapter of Kiwanis, is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, its Not-For-Profit practice section, Indiana State CPA Society, and the Bloomington Chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants, in which he served several years as Vice-president for Professional Education.

Duane Vaught began his Masonic career in 1971 when he was initiated into Montgomery Chapter of the Order of DeMolay. In DeMolay he served as Master Councilor of his Chapter, Illustrious Knight Commander of DeMolay Order of Knighthood in Indiana, and two years as an appointed officer of the DeMolay State Council. He has received the DeMolay honors of Representative DeMolay, Chevalier, and Legion of Honor (Active).

Sir Knight Vaught was initiated, passed, and raised a Master Mason in 1977, in



his hometown of Crawfordsville, Indiana. He served as Worshipful Master of Spencer Lodge No. 95 in 1993 during which year the Lodge received the Grand Master's Award with Distinction. He has also served as Worshipful Master of Dwight L. Smith Lodge of Research.

From May 2002 through May 2008, he served as an officer of the Grand Lodge F&AM of Indiana, the last year of that period as Most Worshipful Grand Master. He is also the Grand Representative of the Grand Lodge of New York near Indiana. In 2008 he was elected to a three year term as trustee. For five years he also served on the Board of Directors of the Indiana Masonic Home.

Vaught received the degrees of Royal Arch Masonry, Cryptic Masonry, and the Orders of Chivalric Masonry on October 22, 1977, in a festival held in Muncie in honor of then presiding Most Eminent Grand Master Willard M. Avery. He served as High Priest of Crawfordsville Chapter No. 40 and Illustrious Master of Montgomery Council No. 34 in 1983.

Sir Knight Vaught served as Eminent Commander of Crawfordsville Commandery No. 25 in 1981 and 1982 and has received the Distinguished Service Award, Knight Commander of the Temple, and Knight Grand Cross of the Temple awards. He is Grand Representative of the Grand Commandery of Illinois near Indiana and also holds memberships in Bloomington Commandery No. 63 and St. Anselm Commandery U.D. in Indiana. He also holds memberships in Commanderies in Ohio and Colorado. He holds honorary memberships in several other Grand Commanderies. He served ten years as an officer of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Indiana, culminating in serving as the 140th Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Indiana during 2001 - 2002.

Sir Knight Vaught is a Past Sovereign of St. Basil Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine; Past Governor of Banks of the Wabash York Rite College No. 72; and has received the Gold Honor Award and Order of the Purple Cross. He is a Past Excellent Chief of Indiana Council No. 15, Knight Masons and Past Director General of Indianapolis Preceptory, Yeomen of York. In the Allied Masonic Degrees, he is a Past Sovereign Master of St. Bernard de Clairvaux Council No. 256. He is a Knight Commander of the Red Branch of Eri and served over ten years as Secretary of his council.

Vaught is a Past Preceptor of St. Andrew Tabernacle XXXV Holy Royal Arch Knight Templar Priests and an officer of the Grand College. He is an officer of the Grand College of Rites. He is a member, IX degree, Knight Grand Cross of Indiana College, Masonic Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis (MSCRIF), and serves as Treasurer General of the High Council, MSRICF of the United States.

He is a member of J. Herbert Nichols and Robert A. Woods Priories of Knights of the York Cross of Honor, Terre Haute Valley, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite NMJ, Royal Order of Scotland, Murat Shrine AAONMS, Sahara Grotto MOVPER, Grand College of Rites, Order of Knights Preceptor, Indiana Past Commanders Association, Goose and Tater, and Royal Order of Zanzibar. In 2005 he was crowned a Sovereign Grand Inspector General, 33 Degree. He is a Grand Cross of the Royal Society of Knights Occidental and an Honorary Kentucky Colonel.

General Supplement

The space on these two pages is provided by the *Knight Templar* magazine to be used by the Grand Commanderies to communicate with the individual Sir Knights in their jurisdictions on a monthly basis. From time to time and for various reasons, we fail to receive any material from the editor of the state supplement for a given month. When this happens, we take the opportunity to offer you the information below. – The Ed.



Photos of Commanderie D'arville in France taken by the editor.



NEW CONTRIBUTORS TO THE KTEF CLUBS

Grand Master's Club

Raymond D. Godeke CA Neil D. Nagy NJ
Michael A. Higgins TX

Grand Commander's Club

Cirilo P. Marquez CA Stanley L. Wilson, Jr. MI
Timothy M. Taylor NC Mike Cefaratti, III..... NJ
Joel T. Bundy VA

Knights Templar Eye Foundation

How to Join the Grand Commander's or the Grand Master's Clubs

Any individual may send a check in the amount of \$100 or more specified for the purpose of beginning a Grand Commander's Club membership and made payable to the Knights Templar Eye Foundation. This initial contribution will begin your Grand Commander's Club membership. In addition, members of the Grand Commander's Club pledge to make annual contributions of \$100 or more. Once contributions total \$1,000, the individual is enrolled in the Grand Master's Club. Membership is open to individuals only, and Commandery credit is given for participation. Information is available from: Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc., 1033 Long Prairie Road, Suite 5, Flower Mound, TX 75022-4230, Phone (214) 888-0220, Fax (214) 888-0230.

As of 2/1/2015 once 25 Grand Master's Clubs are reached, a Sword of Merit will be awarded.

Subscriptions to the *Knight Templar* magazine are available from the Grand Encampment office at a rate of \$15.00 per year. Individual issues in quantities of less than 10 can be obtained for \$1.50 each from the office of the managing editor if available. Inquire via e-mail to the managing editor for quantities in excess of 10. Some past issues are archived on our web site. <http://www.knightstemplar.org>.

We publish letters and articles from a variety of sources and points of view. The opinions expressed in these articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policy of the Grand Encampment, the *Knight Templar* magazine, or the Editorial Review Board.

The Little Blue Card

By

Sir Knight J. R. Dinkel

I hold in my hand a small folded piece of cardstock, which was presented to me in April of 1998, nearly twenty years ago. Older Masons have seen this before and very likely have one just like it. This card is my proficiency certificate, which I earned within sixty days of being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

Its blue outer layer reminds me of the Blue Lodge which issued it on behalf of the Grand Lodge under whose jurisdiction my membership was secured. The white printed portion inside is divided into two parts: the first part is signed by a representative of the Masonic District School of Instruction's Committee of Instruction, notifying my Lodge that I had been examined and found to be proficient in a reasonable knowledge of the three symbolic degrees of Freemasonry; and the second portion below, signed by the Master of the Lodge and by the Lodge Secretary, showing their acknowledgement of the Instructor's certification of my proficiency. It also lists the dates of my reception into the three symbolic degrees, and taken together with the Instructor's certification, allowed the Lodge to present me with my paid-up dues card, making me a full member of the Masonic Fraternity.

The dates written on my card show the months of January (Entered), February (Passed), and March (Raised) for my degrees, and also May 4th, 1998, my certification date of proficiency. I consider this last date to be my Masonic birth-

date, because on that date I was able to consider myself as a full voting member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known, that of the Free and Accepted Ancient York Masons.

Of course, I had completed the requirement of understanding the examination of a visitor work within the necessary ten day window after my raising and felt confident that, given the need, I could pass any test of an examining committee in any Lodge in which I might reasonably find myself, and it was fortuitous that I had done so, because only one week after becoming familiar with the examination work, I found myself at the monthly meeting of my district's school of instruction, only to find that no one was present from my home Lodge to vouch to the school's officers for my admission.

This simple card-stock certificate is the visible reminder of my earliest entrance into the Masonic Fraternity, of my symbolic degrees and the men who took the time to confer them in good order and form, and of the dedication of those instructors for the Lodge and the district who led by example, passing along the hard-won knowledge they possessed so that I might join them inside the Lodge room with a true feeling of accomplishment and of belonging.

I carried this little blue card in my wallet all of 1998 and into 1999 until I began to think that I might want to keep it as pristine as possible against the time when I would look fondly back to my

initiation, passing, and raising with nostalgia and quiet pride. It would become more than a reminder. It would become a memorial to those fine men and Masons who believed that it was not merely important, it was essential, that each new member in our fraternity of Freemasons should be given the tools necessary to begin their own journey toward manhood, completion, and personal growth. For no matter what each new member's goals might be, we all begin our journey in Freemasonry with nothing more than the idea and desire to be something better than we are, using those tools we are given for the journey.

My Grand Lodge no longer presents the certificate of proficiency to every new member, perhaps because we are no longer tested in the way we once were. No one hands over this visible and palpable article of proof that they have indeed been tested and found worthy. No one takes them to the foot of the dais within ten days, and sits them down on the steps, kindly and casually, to explain the workings of the examination of a visitor in its various permutations and possibilities or discusses the history of the Cerneau Rite of Freemasonry, a reference of which is still found within the examination itself, and more's the pity for all that, because the explanation of "why" we do certain things in Freemasonry makes the "how" we do them more meaningful and much more easily remembered by each member. "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and then I understand" is still the best road to proficiency in all areas of life, not the least of which includes Freemasonry.

Oh, I suppose all jurisdictions have their own method of transmitting the important information that a candidate

needs to feel both welcomed and qualified. The instruction actually does not need to take the form of a little blue card or other permanent reminder, but the feeling that I had when I received that certificate, one of gratitude and accomplishment, could never be transmitted in any other way. Eighteen years later, this simple blue card conjures up the time and place of my entry into Freemasonry with such vividness that I can see the Lodge room around me and remember the men who were there, even those who have passed beyond the last white veil and entered into eternity where they put aside the tools of labor and were raised to a new and eternal life.

Those days and those men live on in my memory. All it takes to relive those experiences is to hold this simple blue certificate of proficiency. I am sure that the cost to the Lodge was only about a dime, but it was far more important to me then, and it is priceless to me now. No matter what honors and achievements have followed its presentation, that little blue card remains one of my most treasured possessions.

It is my sincere hope that my Grand Lodge will see fit to reinstate the practice of using certificates of proficiency in this jurisdiction to mark the crossover from a candidate's old life to that of a man of the craft. It is something that the newly proficient Mason will carry with pride early on and return to with nostalgia and a sense of connection to his roots in the fraternity and to those men who started him on his journey to become a better man, years after the event itself is but a fond memory.

My first dues card is long gone, my journeyman's tool and diemaker's diploma resides in my safety deposit box

along with my passport and first nursing license, but this little blue card remains close at hand at my bedside in my Masonic *Bible*, to remind me of my journey, both from whence I came and to where this journey leads.

Sir Knight J. R. Dinkel is Past Commander of Beaver Valley Commandery No. 84 in Beaver County Pennsylvania. He resides in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania and can be contacted at jdcommander@comcast.net.

KTEF RECEIVES 2015 “CHAMPION FOR VISION” AWARD

The American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS) has named the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc. (KTEF) the recipient of its 2015 “Champion for Vision” award. The Champion for Vision award is a joint award presented by the Children’s Eye Foundation and AAPOS. The Champion of Vision award is designed to recognize individuals or organizations that have made an extraordinary impact on children’s vision. Areas of consideration for the award include local and international vision outreach efforts and research, technology, procedure innovation, and blindness prevention programs.

The goals of AAPOS are to advance the quality of children’s eye care, support the training of pediatric ophthalmologists, support research activities in pediatric ophthalmology, and advance the care of adults with strabismus. The mission of AAPOS is to promote the highest quality medical and surgical eye care worldwide for children and for adults with strabismus.

Sir Knights David Dixon Goodwin, Most Eminent Past Grand Master and then President of the KTEF, and Jeffrey N. Nelson, Right Eminent Deputy Grand Grand Master and then Vice President of the KTEF, accepted the award on behalf of the KTEF at the 2015 AAPOS annual meeting. The award was presented by the President of AAPOS, Sherwin J. Isenberg, M.D., of the Jules Stein Eye Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles during the opening session of the meeting. Past recipients of the Champion for Vision Award include Prevent Blindness America and the National Head Start Association.

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New York

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Died: September 5, 2014

Kenneth W. Smith
Illinois

Grand Commander 2013
Born: March 18, 1932
Died: April 20, 2015

Viron E. Baxter
Nebraska

Grand Commander 1980
Born: January 27, 1922
Died: July 10, 2015

Jack L. Foil
Louisiana

Grand Commander 1996
Born: January 26, 1941
Died: April 22, 2015

IN MEMORIAM



Jacob W. Miller
Pennsylvania

Grand Commander 1991
Born: July 15, 1930
Died: September 17, 2014

Lillard E. Payne
Louisiana

Grand Commander 1997
Born: July 15, 1922
Died: April 29, 2015

Odis Ray Eldridge
Tennessee

Grand Commander 1991
Born: August 19, 1925
Died: June 10, 2015

Henry R. McCoy
Colorado

Grand Commander 1980
Born: January 13, 1919
Died: December 12, 2014

The Decline of Voluntary Organizations in America: A Clarion Call for Change and Action in the York Rite

By
Sir Knight Brad Rickelman

The discussion and bemoaning of the decline of voluntary organizations has been an almost constant issue for the last twenty-five years. Books such as *Bowling Alone* (2000) by Robert Putnam have drawn from sociological research on changes in our society. Articles abound about how today's "Millennial Generation" (those born after 1975) has very different expectations regarding career, family, and vocations. Most reports conclude with pessimism over the future of voluntary organizations. As Freemasons, we must pay attention to this younger generation of men because they are the most inclined to join our organization.

I believe our differences are more characterized by means than values. Evidence from the Pew Research Centers Religion Public Life Project suggests the millennial generation to be the most spiritual generation to come along since the 19th century even as their religious affiliation declines. We must give greater attention to expressing our values as an organization. For Freemasonry, there are three areas of concern in which we may not be expressing our values accurately.

Do we mean what we say?

All voluntary organizations have certain goals, values, and beliefs that characterize them. Those expressions are what attract people to the organization (and hopefully to join it).

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Yet, it is all too common that members do not actually engage in the very goals or values they represent. They do not practice the values expressed by their organization. Thus someone who is looking to join thinks to himself, "they talk about how they believe X, but I see their behavior as not X, so why should I join?"

What does this mean for York Rite?

1. We claim the York Rite is important to our understanding of Masonry, that we learn important lessons that have to do with how we grow personally and spiritually as men, but do we labor to make these necessary connections with those who first join so their understanding of the Masonic journey is truly enhanced?

2. We claim the York Rite provides our new members with what was lost to them in Craft Masonry, but do we really explain to them that the real journey is about going deep inside ourselves to discover who we are and how this discovery changes the way we live our life?

3. We claim that all Christian Masons should become Knights Templar, but do we as Knights Templar express how our Christian values are to be appropriate

ately expressed in an all-inclusive fraternity of men?

4. We claim that our degrees contain important lessons, but do we ensure that we actually convey those lessons as discussed and learned by those who receive them. Are our lessons presented with that level of importance?

Do we provide value?

It is easy for those of us who actively participate in Freemasonry to find value in what we do – that is why we participate. But our shortcoming is in assuming or believing that what we have found valuable for ourselves will be as valuable to others. We unrealistically assume on behalf of all brethren that our own particular interest within the fraternity will also be theirs. After all, our organization is made up of an almost infinite number of interests.

Members decide what has value, but the organization's values can only be validated when every member receives something back in return for their exchange of time and money. Can we honestly say that our activities represent our organizational values if only ten percent of our members are active participants?

To a degree, recent studies such as Putnam (2000) on organizational interest are correct. Values change; what was once desirable can fall out of favor. Participation in local organizations used to be desirable and useful if a man was to be known and respected as a member of the larger community. Organizational participation of almost any kind gave men a public face. This is no longer

the case, but that does not mean men no longer want and desire community. It means joining just any organization today is not the way many define how they will express themselves in service to community. To just be known as a Lion or a Rotarian – to be a “card-carrying member” - no longer has the relevance it once had, because that aspect of our social life no longer represents a value the community holds important.

What are the implications of this new reality?

We may be a fraternal organization, but we are an organization nonetheless. We have the same challenges in overcoming perceived irrelevance as any other organization, and we are competing with the limited time every man has available to give us.

This means we need to take an honest look at how we ask a man to spend his time with us. What are we doing with our time in Chapter, Council, or Commandery? What can he expect from the time he gives us?

1. Consider the last regular meeting of our York Rite group. What did we do in that meeting? Did we read minutes after a poor opening that is always read from our ritual book? Did we cover any important materials or information other than a list of reports from a grand line officer? Did we offer any education or discussion items of compelling interest to York Rite Masons? Did we provide quality fraternal relationships? Did we offer a quality social agenda? Did we

convey our degrees and orders with accuracy and meaning? Did we discuss the allegories presented in our ritual words?

2. If few attend our regular meetings, ask yourself why that is the case. Have we ever surveyed our members who do not attend and asked them why they do not attend?

3. If we are going to entice a York Rite member from his home on another night beyond Blue Lodge, what are we offering him? What value are we providing him? What organizational values are we reinforcing in him?

4. Do we help integrate new members into our group? If he wants to learn our ritual, do we help him learn? Do we encourage him to take a part in our ritual or committee settings? In Commandery, do we teach him about sword drills and marching? Most men today do not have a military background and have never marched in line or stepped off at a cadence. Why do we wear uniforms? Do we explain the similarities and differences between our form of Templarism and the Templars of the Crusades?

Do we provide something aspirational?

People want to be part of something meaningful. We all enjoy jumping on the bandwagon when the music passes, but do we still enjoy the music after we get off the wagon? Too often, our organiza-

tions are viewed as something good for us, even if it tastes terrible. (I do not want to take medicine, but I take it because it makes me well.) Some members even have the stubborn resolve to believe that our organization is good for us, and that its terrible taste is what tells us it is good! We have a vision in our mind about who we want to become – we aspire to that vision. If York Rite membership can assist that man in his pursuit, then it will be meaningful. How do we verify that we are offering something meaningful and significant to our new members?

What does this mean for York Rite?

If York Rite is to be aspired to, there are a few more honest questions we must ask ourselves.

1. Are our jackets and uniforms clean and pressed or shabby and in disarray? Are our ritual items in good repair, broken, patched, or missing?

2. Are our meetings enlightening, compelling, and engaging, or do our meetings consist of four men sitting around a coffee pot? What do we provide a new member? Are we being fraternally honest by telling a new member he will get more Masonic light in the York Rite if we offer him no real instruction? Why would we expect a new member to attend our meetings if all we offer is an average or below average experience?

3. In Commandery, do we help the new member in obtaining a uniform he can be proud of

and wear correctly? Do we make him aware that there are adopted standards for every aspect of Commandery dress? Do we just assume he will know and then reprimand him when he is not in proper uniform?

How do we respond to these organizational concerns and expectations?

How can we ensure that we are expressing our core values in the York Rite? Are we willing to acknowledge the areas where we fall short?

We should not expect that we will always act according to our values in all situations. The futility of this expectation is not because it should not be our goal but because we recognize our own frailty and human nature.

Reviewing our beliefs and values in relation to how these are actually conveyed in practice helps to overcome the issue of our not meaning what we say. For example, we could tell a prospective member, "We believe in doing the right thing, even at the cost of personal gain. We don't always express that in our actions, but here are some ways that we try to bring about that belief."

Curiously, it is often the case that the longer a member has been a member, the more difficult it is for him to express exactly what the values are in the York Rite, and for the regular meeting attendee, it is easy to become complacent in his participation, little realizing that the original goals of the fraternity are no longer being expressed. It is important to realize that when a prospect asks us why we participate, we might not be able to express that to him (or ourselves).

What are our core values?

It is crucial for every member to have access to information on what is important and unique about being a York Rite Mason. What are our core values and how do we assure these will be transmitted to every new member? As a start, our core values are those expressed within our York Rite degrees. What core values or beliefs does our fraternal organization have that are not duplicated or presented by joining the Scottish Rite or the Shrine or another Masonic group?

How do we increase the value of what we provide?

We have all watched commercials selling products to get us into better shape. Each commercial always begin with a claim that spending just "14 minutes a day" or "10 minutes to health" will get us into shape. Yet, we all know how few people take up this challenge, even when they know it would be good for them.

The most common claim for not participating in any activity is a lack of time. Everyone perceives that they have no time left beyond what they are currently doing with their life. This claim is partially true and partially false. Given that the average American watches hours of television a day, it is false to claim that we do not have time to do other things. Some people; maybe young couples with children, or those underemployed, or fast track high potential employees; may indeed have little free time in their lives, but regardless of the situation, it is always true that whatever the value of watch-

ing hours of television, or working on a career, or supporting a family may be, that perceived value is more than that person believes he would obtain by participating in our group.

Not only must we share our core beliefs with a prospective member, we must also increase the value (in his mind) of whatever programs or meetings we provide to a level that he perceives it to be as important as his other time priorities. Increasing the value of our organization within the mind of a prospective member requires that we know something of what his expectations will be.

The question we must ask each prospect or new member is this: what do you want to do in expressing with us the common beliefs or values we share together as York Rite Masons? It may be attending a meeting. It may be something else, but we have an obligation to strive to provide the experience he is seeking and at the least, to make the connection between the values and purpose of our organization and whatever unmet need or needs he may have.

How do we make what we do more meaningful? How do we communicate our strengths and values?

We would be naïve to believe that a great untapped market of future members is waiting our siren call. That does not mean there are no men out there who would be interested in York Rite Masonry. We have to be able to communicate our strengths and values to prospective members.

Communicating our values means taking advantage of the variety of communication methods available to us; whether digitally, in print, or in person. Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses and attracts a different de-

mographic. We must focus our methods on those that best attract each participant whom we want to call our companion and friend.

The key is to communicate our strengths to other Masons using the venue they use to communicate in their world and then to make York Rite something in which they will feel compelled to participate. How do you do this communication?

A Final Consideration

Do we really want new members?

I worry that deep down we want new members only to fill our chairs, to attend our regular meetings, or participate in the ongoing activities of the organization. Many active current members simply want more (new) members to perpetuate the current activities of the organization, but those new members are not really members at all – they are stand-ins to allow us to continue to do what we have always done. Their role is to reinforce and ensure that our interest will always be the prevailing focus of the organization, even when our interest is wrought with mediocrity and little adherence to our core organizational values. Is it any wonder that there are few takers interested in such a vision?

If we really desire new members, we must realize that they bring their own beliefs and wants. New members may look and act differently than we do. They won't have the same motivations. Even if they agree with the goals of the organization, how those goals are expressed may be quite different for them.

Conclusion

Real new members will expect more of us than we are used to giving. They will ask questions and challenge assumptions we hold dear. To respond to the decline of our voluntary organization requires responding to the needs of new members while not throwing away our own needs.

We often tell new members that if they just give the organization a chance and wait a while, things will make more sense and they will come to enjoy it, but we are then surprised when after a short time, the new member fades away and then drops membership.

If we genuinely want new members, we are going to have to change the way we act, not change the way they act, and our goals and objectives will have to adhere to our core values, because they are looking to incorporate our values into their experience.

Actions for Change

Here are the three actions every York Rite Body should take if they want to attract men entering the fraternity today.

1. Know yourself. Know the core values of the York Rite, and if you are not sure, figure them out or come up with your own explanation. Write the values down and give them to every new member. Display them in your buildings. Place them on your website. Include them on your social page. Add them in your communications. Distinguish them from the core values of all other Masonic organizations. Leave no question

unanswered about these core values. Regularly discuss and review what your Chapter, Council, or Commandery is doing to follow, enforce, and uphold its core values.

2. Understand your uniqueness.

The most popular organizations are compelling in direct relationship to their uniqueness among all other organizations. What is unique about the York Rite? Understanding what is unique about the York Rite means placing it within the family of Freemasonry. Communicate our uniqueness to the family of Freemasonry. Understand how the core values of the York Rite contribute to its uniqueness. Build programs and activities that reinforce the uniqueness of the York Rite.

3. Be attractive. Above all, understand what being attractive means. The very word comes from the late Latin word *attractivus* or “a medicine with drawing power.” Make the York Rite attractive as an organization. Consider how attractiveness and excellence in practices go together. Make you agenda compelling. Consider excellence in all things as the standard by which your Chapter, Council, and Commandery operates at all times.

Be the local York Rite Body that clearly understands our organizational values and mission. Embrace what is unique and even eccentric about the York Rite, as this is the path to raising interest and curiosity among our initiated brothers in our Lodges. Understand the importance

of being an attractive organization, ever realizing that your attitude, convictions, and knowledge of the York Rite will determine whether or not your Masonic friends and acquaintances will want to follow your choice and example in expanding their organizational participation beyond their Craft Lodge.



Sir Knight Brad Rickelman is Past Commander of St. John's Commandery No. 8, Stillwater, Oklahoma. He served as Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge AF&AM of the State of Oklahoma in 2013. He would like to thank Sir Knight Robert Davis, Past Grand High Priest and Past Grand Commander of Oklahoma, and Sir Knight Tom Warren for their assistance on this article. He can be contacted at brad.rickelman@gmail.com.

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Beauceant News



Over thirty sisters attended the Elizabethtown No. 265, Social Order of the Beauceant, meeting during the *On the Wings of a Dove* Homecoming weekend in honor of (Mrs. Leslie J.) Sandy Loomis, Supreme Worthy President. Seated in front: (Mrs. Fred) Brenda

Kaylor, Worthy President; (Mrs. Leslie J.) Sandy Loomis, Supreme Worthy President; and (Mrs. David E.) Sonja Alcon, Past Supreme Worthy President. While the ladies were meeting, the men went on a tour of the American Helicopter Museum and Eleutherian Mills, the original home of E. I. duPont's family.

A Pennsylvania Dutch dinner was held on Friday evening, a luncheon followed the Saturday morning meeting, and a homecoming banquet was held on Saturday evening. The First Capital Brass quintet provided entertainment, and a divine service was held on Sunday morning with Reverend and Sir Knight Preston Van Deursen delivering the message. A choir of Beauceant members, directed by Mrs. Jerry Hamilton, sang "In the Garden." Musical selections were provided by (Mrs. Jerry) Patty Sutherland, Past President of Carnegie Assembly No. 80.

The Elizabethtown No. 265 homecoming committee presenting a remembrance quilt to (Mrs. Leslie J.) Sandy Loomis, Supreme Worthy President, with Beauceant symbol in center. Left to right are Mrs. Christine Caruthers, Mistress of the Wardrobe; (Mrs. Fred) Brenda Kaylor, Worthy President; (Mrs. Thomas) Betty Miller, Chaplain and homecoming committee chairman; (Mrs. Leslie J.) Sandy Loomis, Supreme Worthy President; (Mrs. Jerry J.) Janet Hamilton, Supreme Standard Bearer; and (Mrs. David E.) Sonja Alcon, Past Supreme Worthy President.



knight templar



Knights



at the Bookshelf

By
Sir Knight George L. Marshall, Jr., PGC, KCT

Isaac Blair Evans, *The Thomson Masonic Fraud: A Study in Clandestine Masonry*, Salt Lake City, Arrow Press, 1922.

This book details the intriguing and illegal escapades of one Matthew McBlain Thomson (1854-1932), a Masonic swindler who was perhaps the first in America to abuse Craft or Symbolic Masonry with noticeable success by openly soliciting members. Thomson also claimed to have the right to confer all the “higher” degrees in nearly a dozen orders, including the Shrine, which were supposedly “Within the bosom of the Scottish Grand Council of Rites” and which he alone had the right to confer in the United States.

He was born in Ayr, Scotland, in 1881 and after converting to the Mormon religion, came to America and settled in Montpelier, Idaho. There he met one Robert S. Spence, a country lawyer, who afterwards was intimately associated with Thomson as the Secretary of his bogus Masonic organizations. He returned to Scotland but in 1898 returned to Montpelier with a patent from the “Scottish Grand Council of Rites.” He used this document to create his “American Masonic Federation” in 1907, later changed to “International Masonic Federation.” He promoted the sale of all sorts of “Masonic” degrees by mail and worked through paid solicitors. Reduced rates were given when groups were large and many joined at the same time. He also found time to publish a magazine, *The Universal Freemason*, which served as the official organ of his International Masonic Federation and which he used to promote his views and schemes to his credulous devotees.

According to Thomson, he was made a Mason in 1874 at Glasgow, Scotland, in a Lodge which he describes as Glasgow Melrose St. John, afterwards demitting to Newton-on-Ayr St. James No. 125 and Patna Bonnie Doon No. 565, both on the registry of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. He also later became a Royal Arch Mason and Knight Templar in Ayr, and in 1876, he received the degrees of the Scottish, Mizraim, and Memphis Rites. He also claimed to have been Worshipful Master of Patna Bonnie Doon No. 565 for several years. In 1906 he demitted from St. James No. 125 and joined King Solomon Lodge No. 27, Montpelier, Idaho. In 1907 he left regular Freemasonry to begin, with the assistance of Spence and others, a career in selling counterfeit Masonic degrees through the means of his American Masonic Federation.

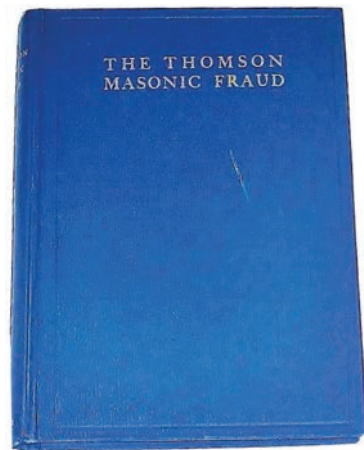
The scam was carried out through authorizations to “organizers” who were essentially carefully trained traveling salesmen for the charters and degrees. The traditional prerogative of Masonic Grand Masters to make Masons by sight was granted by Thomson to these agents—supposedly only for the first seven men organized into a prospective “lodge,” but in reality to as many as these agents could inveigle as a preliminary group of candidates. Once a “lodge” was established, they would then proceed to sell as many high degrees as they could to the new “Masons,” using a similar technique. Once the local supply of credulous men was drained, they would move on.

Eventually, Thomson and two associates were apprehended and were convicted at Salt Lake City, Utah, on May 5, 1922, on ten counts of using the mails to defraud. Each was sentenced to serve a term of two years in Fort Leavenworth Prison and pay a fine of \$5,000 and costs on each count—sentence to run concurrently. It is interesting that while at Leavenworth, Thomson managed to become the Prison Librarian.

The author of the book, Isaac Blair Evans (1885-1941), was the Federal prosecutor in the court case against Thomson, et. al. He graduated from Harvard University Law School in 1913. He was also a (legitimate) 33° Mason.

The conviction in the Federal Court at Salt Lake City, Utah, of Matthew McBlain Thomson, Thomas Perrot, and Cominic Bergera of using the mails to defraud, was the conclusion of efforts of the United States Government begun in 1915 to bring to justice the perpetrators of one of the most clever mail frauds and likely the most daring and spectacular Masonic deception in American history. No one can read this book without clearly recognizing the great importance of this trial, both in crime history in the United States and in the history of Masonry in this country. For this reason, as well as the book providing the details of Thomson’s schemes and actions, photos of his patents and correspondence, and the trial particulars which are presented therein, the book is well worth the read.

Note: The book has been reprinted by Kessinger Publishing in 2010 (ISBN: 9781162576053) and is also available free online at Google Books at: <https://books.google.com/books?id=W86AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA68&lpg=PA68&dq=the+thomson+masonic+fraud&source=bl&ots=d1p-bv-bWN&sig=3l6zEOoMocUj25ZcwJygujBAacw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=WUWEVeeiC9H9yQS35rWwDg&ved=0CDsQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q=the%20thomson%20masonic%20fraud&f=false>



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*The wilderness and the
solitary place shall be glad
for them, and the desert
shall rejoice and blossom
as the rose.
Isaiah 35: 1*

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