

The Doric Trestleboard

Doric Lodge #92, F.: &A.: M.:, Fremont, Seattle, Washington

WELCOME BACK!

Doric is honored to run R.:W.:B.: Bruce Vesper's message below, and heads-up — he will also be at Doric's **Return to Labor** Meeting this Tuesday, the 4th of September, as our Guest Speaker. Please come down for his presentation on New York and Washington Freemasonry!

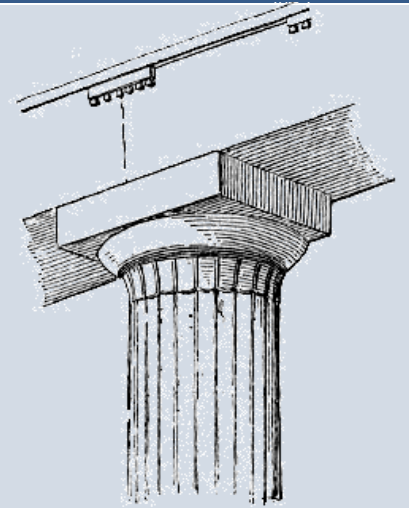
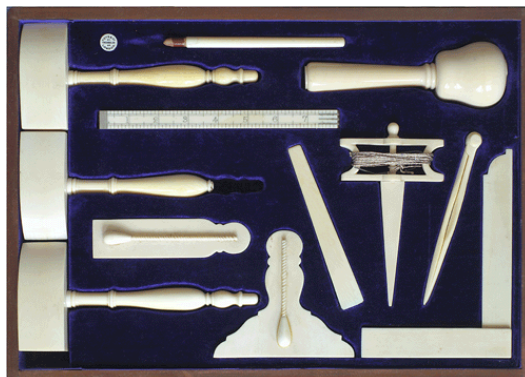
WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX?

— R.:W.:B.: Bruce Vesper, Deputy Grand Master



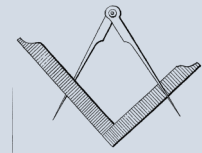
I can certainly identify with Tim Allen's character in Home Improvements, as I can never go through the mall without making a stop at one of the stores that sells tools, and looking at the various tools that are on display. While I have gotten to the point where I just window shop, in previous (read, "Poorer") days, I typically would purchase tools to fill out my tool chest, so that I could do my own home repairs and improvements, I could work on my vehicles and make certain they would run properly, and I could repair various items that the children and more recently grandchildren, always seem to be able to break in unusual ways. Dad oriented me toward being able to fix things, and trying to use the right tool for the right job, which always made the results look much better. I also found out, that while I could sometimes 'abuse a tool' in a manner in which it wasn't intended to be used, the right one always seemed to do the job better, faster, and without so much effort.

As I look around our fraternity, I see brothers trying to do jobs that they often haven't been well trained on. They are just given these jobs without much orientation and, likely, with no



Strength and a Noble Simplicity

August 6012 A.:L



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resources to accomplish the task. Even worse, rather than giving folks the task and some encouragement, they often get the task with a reminder that “Things are going to be tough and you won’t get much cooperation, etc., ...” We have not only handicapped them, we even have removed their motivation to do a good job. And yet, when things come out poorly, we are ready to blame them for not doing the job well, when they were never given the chance to succeed to start with.

Any time we assign a responsibility in lodge, we need to make certain that the individual has the right tools (the skills and abilities), the right references (people to turn to), and the right encouragement, so that they can indeed show us what they can accomplish. No one ever starts out to do a bad job, but so often they do, because we didn’t set them up to succeed. We don’t keep records so they know what has been done in the past, and don’t go down blind alleys trying to get different results this time. We don’t talk with them to make certain that they know what the job entails, how extensive their authority may be, and who might assist them in getting it done or giving them good counsel about how things go. In short, we fail to plan and then seem resigned to our failure.

But if we give them the right basics, the right tools, the right Masonic inspiration, we may be surprised at what they can accomplish. If they get effective training on what is required, if they get suggestions for right people to contact, and sometimes a suggestion as to what they should ask about, we might be surprised as to what gets done. Lastly, if we make a point to make certain that they get the credit for the job that was well done, rather than trying to abscond with it for ourselves or someone else, they will really try to do well again the next time.

If we give them the tools to be effective leaders, and reward them when they do well, we will be surprised at how well they can do. Again, I ask, what kind of tools are you putting in your brother’s toolbox?

INSPIRATION FROM ON HIGH

— *Bro. : Ralph Weathers, SW*

I am exhilarated by the introduction of the Lodge Achievement in Outstanding Performance Award Program by my Grand Lodge! Upon first hearing about this program I knew, as it was being explained, that it was going to be a major league winner for my lodge. The very talented Brothers of my Lodge will fit in very nicely with the concepts and programs of this plan, which maps out how, specifically to go about measurably increasing your lodge’s performance of its duties. Step-by-step evaluation of our performance, written down, will help us to have a clear view of what we did well and what we can improve on from year to year.

The plan is extremely flexible and leaves lots of room for Brothers to come up with all kinds of projects to work on to benefit the Community and Masonry itself. As American Masonry

tries many things to fill our ranks with good Men, this award is bound to attract the attention of a great many Masons, for it shows us the way to concretely reach our Masonic goals. It will help us to clarify who we are as Masons and exactly what we stand for and to work as a cohesive team towards our goals.

Everyone wants an Outstanding Lodge. Everyone wants to experience how great it is to be a Masonic Brother and do the good things we do. I'm very excited about the innovative steps my Grand Lodge is taking to make our craft better, so that we Masons can improve ourselves as we see fit. As I ascend into the east, Lodge willing, this will make my job much easier to communicate to the Brothers exactly what we are doing and why. The sky is the limit for Brothers who clearly understand where they are going. It's a great day to be a Mason!

www.freemason-wa.org Grand Lodge Office- Forms- Lodge Achievement in Outstanding Performance Award Program

A SEDENTARY FRATERNITY

— Bro. : Grant Cooper, SD

The Grand Lodge of New York states on their website that “Making a Difference Every Day Most men join the Masonic Fraternity primarily for the opportunity to perform meaningful community service.” In the early days of Doric, when the Men that needed a Lodge to do the work laid out for them on the trestle board, they got together and volunteered their free time to build the Doric temple. They built the whole building in 6 months! But for the last 25 years, you could not find enough members to come together to perform necessary maintenance on the building for so long that it took tens of thousands of dollars to barely bring the building from the brink of collapse.

In the more recent times of Doric Lodge when Bob Herman was a lad, Doric men came together to volunteer their time to offer a soup kitchen dinner to the public before every one of their stated meetings.

Nowadays, good luck getting most of our members to even show up to our stated meetings!

Brethren, my point is this: with all of the modern conveniences that we have at our disposal, you cannot convince me that we have less time in our lives to volunteer our time in ways that benefit our lodge and our community. It's not as if you have to saddle your horse after feeding it and ride to town twenty miles and then finish out your 80 hour work week. Those men did and still found time to show their faces to the community. So let's stir up this sediment that has become our fraternity!



THE LENGTH OF MY CABLE-TOW

— Bro. : Charles Roland Berry

Cable-tows come in all lengths, thicknesses and colors. Some look sturdy, but one good yank and they snap. Some are good only when the weather is good. Fair-weather friends. At times, getting my carcass out to a Stated Lodge meeting is the most my cable-tow will do. And even then, it's seeing friends and looking forward to a good meal that does most of the work.

I lay out my cable-tow on the work-bench in my garage, and take a good look at it. It expands and contracts, depending on my mood. It is only as thick as I let it be, and often its brightness of color depends on how much money is in my pocket that day. Often my cable-tow looks good, but doesn't really do much. The length and the strength of my cable-tow is variable, depending on a number of factors: 1.) non-Masonic commitments. 2.) fear 3.) anger 4.) my view of the world.

Like everyone, I have a life and a family, I need to earn money and pay bills. All those things effect the length and strength of my cable-tow. Like most people, I have a tendency toward laziness, and it sometimes takes a serious effort to get me out of my recliner. I fear I am too tired, or too stressed, or too cranky to be around my Brothers, or around anyone except my cat. There is also my fear of wasting time and money on things which accomplish nothing. There is the fear refusing to show up, and thereby raising anger among Brothers who count on me.

Anger toward one or more Brothers sometimes knots-up my cable-tow so badly, the rope becomes useless. Anger might be a perceived misuse of community property (meaning Lodge money or Grand Lodge money, or our buildings falling into disrepair and no longer serving the community in which they stand.) Anger can quickly kill every single Masonic virtue, stone cold dead.

My world-view is the most influential factor when I decide to participate or not to participate, when I decide to be charitable or not to be charitable. If my world-view says, our civilization is a reasonable place, where everyone has equal opportunity, and everyone can earn money if they make an effort-- I might ignore the homeless person on the sidewalk outside my Lodge. If I believe my bank accounts and my secure and comfortable life are solely the result of my hard work and self-determination-- I may not be quick to help people who have nothing, who have never had a good job, or made any serious attempt at self-determination. My cable-tow might not extend an inch further than my small circle of friends, the Brothers who have as much money or more money than myself. My cable-tow might not extend to aid non-Masons at all, regardless of our Closing Charge, regardless of growing unemployment and



homelessness throughout the United States. My world-view might say, those things are exaggerations, or those things are completely beyond my control. In those cases, the truth is, my world-view would be a lazy and inaccurate world-view. In those cases, my cable-tow was truly a decorative feature of my Degree work, and of no actual value anywhere else.

AN OVEREXTENDED FRATERNITY

— *W.:B.: Dan Harrity*

I must agree with Bro. Grant regarding the seemingly sedentary nature of our Fraternity, but I would like to approach it from a slightly different angle.

Let's consider the number of Masonic bodies that any individual Brother may be involved with (or be constantly pressured to become involved with) beyond his Blue Lodge — Scottish Rite, York Rite, District Masonic Lodge Associations, Shrine, Order of the Eastern Star, DeMolay, Amaranth, Jobies, Grotto, Etc., plus any number of committees and so forth appertaining to any of those groups. This list could go on at great length before you know it.

Beyond this, these days it's commonplace for Masons to live, work, and have Lodge dozens of miles apart each from the other. If one is lucky, bumper-to-bumper traffic will not be a consideration. But here in Seattle, that sure is one BIG consideration, and this makes for a massive, further constraint upon a Mason's time.

Furthermore, bear in mind that a Mason's time is really his family's time. Time taken for Masonry is time taken away from spouses, sons, daughters, friends, religious and civic commitments, studies, etc. For an organized man, this should be no big deal so long as his Masonic time is confined to a Stated Communication and perhaps a Degree Conferral and/or other Masonic commitment per month. But let's be honest: how frequently are a mere two nights the minimum expected?

Bottom line, there are only so many hours in the day, and we do not all share each others' passions for the innumerable, highly specialized incarnations of Freemasonry. To this end, I submit that a review of the EA's instructions regarding the 24-inch gauge would be useful for many of us — not so much in attending to our own time-management, but to give us some perspective on our expectations of other Masons' time constraints.

Lack of participation in Blue Lodge is a real problem — there's no getting around it. Sometimes, though, what seems to be a lack of participation is simply a conscious choice to exercise Prudence and Temperance by avoiding overextending ourselves... and then burning out and potentially throwing in the towel entirely.

