



The Traveler

Volume 2, Issue 3

November-December 2008

Dates to Remember:

- December 13–
Greensboro (Gso.
Masonic Temple)

Officer Installation

- February 14 - More
Info to Come

Program to be announced

- April 11 - More Info
to Come

Program to be announced

Inside this issue:

Chaplain's Page	2
Birthdays	3
Business, EA?	3
Thanksgiving	4
Master's Message	5
Short of Mark	6



Short of the Mark

by: MWB Tom Gregory, PGM

I was asked to write an article for the Wilkerson College Lodge #760 newsletter regarding the recognition of Prince Hall in N.C. I can't resist an editorial of sorts as although I am pleased that the resolution finally passed, I feel it a rather hollow victory for those of us who want to do the right thing by our Prince Hall Brethren.

I don't think there is any valid Masonic precedent for recognition without visitation. I know that the Grand Lodge of Virginia recognized their Prince Hall counterparts in this manner, and I think that approach struck a cord with some. It may be a means to an end, but it is certainly an affront to Brotherly love. It is more pragmatic than Masonic.

I contend that there is simply no such animal as recognition without visitation – visitation being a Landmark in most Jurisdictions throughout the world. It is laughable and unbelievable to Masons in other countries. I have received several emails from Masons in other countries congratulating me on my Grand Lodge finally passing the resolution. When I thank my Brethren in those places, I remind them that the recognition extended does not include visitation. They are amazed to learn that there is such a thing as recognition without visitation.

The thing that reminds us that we are short of the mark is the way we recognize other Grand Jurisdictions, and the way we choose to recognize a Grand Jurisdiction in our own back yard.

We almost casually recognize Grand Lodges across the globe – full recognition with visitation and rights of affiliation. We do this almost at the drop of a hat. But what do we extend to our Prince Hall Brethren here in North Carolina? What do we tell the good men we work with and who live in our communities with us?

We tell them we recognize them but that we will not allow our members to visit their Lodges, and more importantly, we tell them they are not welcome to attend our Lodges.

Why? Why do we choose to treat them differently?

Is there some problem with them? Or us?

We have a lot of good Masons in this state who have worked long and hard to get us this far. They deserve our gratitude and thanks.

People like Walt Clapp and Ric Carter have been courageous in their support of this initiative. Early in the process, they could have easily lost their jobs over their stand for what was right.

But when I hear some Brothers say, "Now we can put this behind us and move on to other important issues", I feel they are indeed, short of the mark. This may be wishful thinking from those tired of the controversy and hard feelings. I can certainly understand that.

Con't page 6

Chaplain's Page

By: **WB Richard Smith, PDDGM**

Our Grand Lodge remains divided over fundamental issues in the recognition of Brother Masons. We are divided over who can participate in our Fraternity.

We are divided over the state of our Fraternity.

This issue had been ongoing for at least ten years since our own Charter Member and Past Master, MWB Tom Gregory served as Grand Master in 1998, and who has continued to lead the discussion.

I first became a participant in this discussion, outside my lodge, when I was appointed DDGM in 2001. When I made my first official visit to my district lodges in January, 2002 to report on the Grand Master's program, I was warmly received by all, except in one lodge when I reported on the his desire to see Prince Hall recognized. The lodge literally became unhinged, with members standing and shouting simultaneously, some up beating their fists on the secretary's desk, etc. I was astounded, and then learned, while under the hat, to also wield the gavel and close the lodge on all my further official visits. I was later asked by Masonic Education Chairman Dan Weatherington to assist with several of the summer educational meetings, which I did across state from Wilkesboro to Wallace. Again, I was shocked by the anger expressed, not during the meetings, but following the close of the meetings. These functions were later discontinued for obvious reasons.

Are we adrift, or so morally bankrupt that corrections, even if heavy-handed are necessary?

Some division is normal and healthy. Our Code has been written to deal with the reality of division. Historically, our great strength has been our bedrock right to think freely, and to disagree openly, i.e., "who can best work and best agree."

But something deep and disturbing is going on now.

The stakes are enormous. The world has changed far more than many Masons realize. It is more difficult for us to maintain the status quo. We are in competition with other activities and organizations, who are less enamored about what our Fraternity offers. Our current division reveals deep veins of intolerance and hatred, as well as the possibility of making our lodges dysfunctional.

We will survive the current divisions resulting from the vote to recognize Prince Hall, but some fundamental trust has been lost. We knew that there was some opposition, but without any argument to their merit, it is simply racism.

I am so very proud to be a part of Wilkerson College Lodge 760 which has led the way in promoting this recognition which has finally come to fruition under the leadership of Grand Master David R. Cash.

We might expect the Grand Masters to restart the Fraternal Relations Joint Commission to define a path for us.

We will then first see organized traded lodge visits with permission from both Grand Masters, followed by easier visiting, for example, individuals visiting with prior notification to lodge.

Finally we will have just regular visitation, escalating each step as the culture adapts.

We will find that the recognition we passed is just recognition, the same as any other. Our restriction of visitation is just an agreed method of letting everyone get used to new times and avoid embarrassment in places where it would be shunned

WB Rick Smith discussing our resent Grand Lodge Communication with MWB David Cash, GM at our last Wilkerson College Lodge meeting.



Conduct Business in an EA Lodge ?

By: WB Larry Thompson, DDGM

"[F]or many persons, the First Degree was the whole substance of Freemasonry, and this early preeminence of that degree persists in England even to the present day; for the Entered Apprentice's lodge is the lodge, that is, the place where all business of the Craft is transacted.... But just the opposite system developed in America, where the Master's lodge became predominant and the Entered Apprentice's lodge became merely a meeting for degree work. The first Degree confers no privilege, except that of attending a lodge of that degree and witnessing the work on other candidates."¹

In October of 2007 the members of Wilkerson College Lodge voted to support a proposed amendment to The Code that would allow the Master of a lodge the discretion to open and conduct business on a degree other than the Third Degree. The proposed amendment, as you can see from the quote above, is not a revolutionary idea and, in fact, at least 12 Grand Lodges in the United States currently permit the practice.² The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Jurisprudence, while agreeing with the concept, thought that the amendment was not fully developed and recommended at its last meeting that the amendment be sent back to the Code Commission for further work.

As members of a lodge whose focus is on Masonic education, we have little trouble envisioning the possibilities of being able to fully engage our Entered Apprentices each and every time the doors to the lodge open. As previously alluded, this is not a new concept but it is certainly one whose time has come...



¹ *Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*, revised edition, 1995, page 188.

² Bessel, Paul M. (February 7, 2000). U.S. Lodges Conducting Business on the 1st

History & Current Status of this Issue. Retrieved October 20, 2008, from <http://bessel.org/firstpprold.htm>.

WB Larry Thompson, DDGM
PM Wilkerson College Lodge
2007

Happy Birthday to the Following Members

November

Bill Brunk - 17
Billy Dill - 2
Harry Sinclair - 19
Joe Brown - 24
Joe Knox, Jr. - 10
Kevin Wood - 4
Mark Conner - 16
Mike James - 4
Ray Hall - 4
Ron Sortino - 13
Steve Smith - 29



December

Bob Ferris - 2
Ed Lawing - 2
Frank Ortiz - 12
Joseph Adegboyega - 21
Nigel Hawkins - 19
Steve Viers - 27
Tom Dolinger, II - 15

Pictures from our Last Meeting [Thanks to WB Mark and all his hospitality]



A Thanksgiving Message

By: WB, Rev. Gene Cobb , Past Grand Chaplain

A few decades after the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, there was a Lutheran pastor named Martin Rinckart who lived in Eilenberg, Saxony during the siege of the Thirty Years War. Eilenberg was a walled city that surrounded by Swedes. There were 800 homes in the city burned because the people suffered from the plague and starvation. Pastors were burying 12 people a day. Pastors themselves started to die and Martin Rinckart was the only pastor left. He was conducting 50 funerals a day. He buried over 5,000 people that year, including his own wife. When the war ended a year later in 1648 he sat down to pen these words familiar to all of us.

*Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

Beyond all we can think or imagine, Rinckart is still able to get us to our knees and lead us to praise and give thanks to God. The countless gifts of God's love are still ours today. Let us give thanks to God with heart and hands and voices!



WB, Rev. Gene Cobb

The Master's Message

By: WB Frank Spears, PM

As we embrace the closing of 2008 and look towards 2009, we are reminded that the winter months soon will be upon us. This always is a good time to look back at where we've been, and the direction we're taking as we head into the future.

It is gratifying to note all the great things Masonry in North Carolina has accomplished with your hard work. From the recognition of Prince Hall to black ball resolution, this year truly will be a year to remember. I congratulate and thank our Brothers who pulled together to ensure our successful meetings across the state. Without your tireless efforts, this year could not have been such a success.

This is the perfect opportunity for us to reach back and gather all the enthusiasm and excitement we generated over the past year, and use it to springboard Freemasonry into the future.

For the first time in years, our fraternity is being recognized for the many positive things Freemasons do. The press is beginning to acknowledge our fraternalism and our charity, as well as the integral role our Brethren play in the success of our communities. Furthermore, young people who are looking for a purpose in their lives - for a way to help their fellow man and positively impact their communities - are once again knocking at our doors. As soon as they see all the wonderful things Freemasonry offers, they are jumping in with both feet and helping us to make a positive difference in our communities.

There is one thing we need to keep in mind however, and that is that such success simply doesn't happen on its own. It is up to us - each and every one of us - to see that this success continues. We can't sit back and simply let it happen. We need to make it happen. No good thing occurs on its own, and the centuries-long success of our Fraternity is no different. We need to continue to REACH toward success in everything we do, and the success will continue to come our way. If we don't want to try to make it happen, then we need to move aside and allow others to do so. Freemasonry has been, and will continue to be too important to our Brethren and to our communities to do any less.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Master in 2008 and I look forward to the continued progress each of you have shown in our great fraternity across the state. With your help, we will continue to grow and prosper for many more years to come.

Community Bulletin Board

Grand Lodge Installation : Saturday, November 22, 2008 at MHCO in the York Rite Chapel

Blackmer Lodge No. 127, 4th Annual Fun Shoot: Saturday, November 29, 2008 *(Contact Larry Thompson for more info)*

Oasis All-Star Classic: Friday, November 28, 2008 at the American Legion Stadium, Charlotte

Dead line for events in the upcoming edition is January 3, 2009, for events Jan.12 thru March 31, 2009



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Wilkerson College Mission Statement

The mission of Wilkerson College Lodge is to foster a flame of brotherly love and friendship that will surpass all differences, envelope all similarities and consistently travel that level of time in search of how to make good men better. As speculative Masons, education will be our greatest tool, so as to instill in our future Masters qualities of leadership, responsibility and compassion

Short of the Mark.....continued from front

But until we treat our Brothers as the equals they are, we have not done what Masonry teaches us. If the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of North Carolina is satisfied with this state of recognition, they are wrong as well. It is simply not Masonic.

Until we sit together in a tiled Lodge as Brothers – until we recognize Prince Hall in North Carolina as we recognize predominantly Caucasian

Grand Lodges, we have work remaining to be done. By our actions we can be best known – our words are not sufficient. Brethren, we are short of the mark.

Based on an article today in the Raleigh News and Observer, there are to be discussions between the two Grand Lodges concerning our relationship going forward including visitation. Hopefully these discussions will put us on the mark. That's when I'll get out my party hat and horn.



MWB Tom Gregory, PGM

