



Freemasons Lodge #363

790 N. Van Buren St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202



Lodge Activity

March 4, Wednesday	5:30	Stated Meeting	HSRMC
April 1, Wednesday	5:30	Stated Meeting	HSRMC
May 6, Wednesday	5:30	Stated Meeting	HSRMC

Stay tuned for more to be posted. Google calendar coming very soon. And as you're probably aware, there'll be more than enough degree work to keep us all busy every month. Props to all who've been bringing in so many worthy new candidates! And to all and sundry, please come out not just for each stated meeting, but also for degree work, as more workers and sideline support is always fraternally welcome!

If you are receiving this Trestleboard as a printed edition and would like to help the lodge save costs by subscribing to the email version instead, please contact the editor at gnostictom420@yahoo.com.

Freemasons Lodge #363, Milwaukee, WI

www.freemasonslogde.org

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Trestleboard Editor: Tommy Baas

STATED MEETING:

1st Wednesday, monthly

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School of Instruction

The schedule of the Schools for Freemasons Lodge is:

The M.M. School will be at Freemasons Lodge on March 25, 2009 at 7pm. We will take part in the M.M. 2nd Section.

You need to be a Master Mason to attend the Schools. Sideliners will be able to follow along in their books, if they care to.

Frank Mayer
District #12 Lecturer



The Sound of the Gavel

Master's Message
by Jan Talaga

Greetings Brethren!!

Well the first official meeting of the year went pretty sooth. I would like to thank the officers for doing a great job on the opening and closing of the Lodge!

We are off to another record year in regards to new petitions. As of this writing, we have 4 new petitions, and 3 more that were interviewed after the last stated meeting. This is a good sign for Masonry all around, but more especially for Freemasons Lodge!

We have degrees coming up scheduled for the last Wednesday of the month for EA/FC's, as well as the last Saturday of the month for MM degrees. Our goal is to do the maximum number of candidates allowed by our dispensation for the EA's and FC's each time to move these new Brothers along. The MM's, however, still can only be done individually. My goal is to do 3 or 4 MM's a Saturday. This number is necessary to start relieving our backlog of candidates. I have asked Waukesha Lodge to help out if possible, and they have graciously offered to do some courtesy work for us in the Master Mason degree. When they have only one or two candidates, they will add one of ours to their workload. They do degrees twice a month, so this will help out where we need it most. I would like to thank them in advance for this tremendous favor!!

For those of you who sit on the sidelines and would like to help out the Lodge during degree days, your assistance is most welcome. Even if you can make only a special degree day only once in a while, it will help to move these candidates along that much faster. And you do not necessarily need to do any memory work, there are plenty of non-speaking roles that you may be perfect for!! And if you feel that some light memorization is not an issue for you, please let any of the officers know your wish to join in the degrees and we will put your skills to work!

Thank you all for making our first meeting a fun one. We got the work done and then had a great turnout for dinner and fellowship afterwards. My thanks to JW Mike Reindl for arranging an enjoyable evening while dining out.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the next meeting!!

Sincerely,

Jan F. Talaga
Worshipful Master

A brief re-cap of last meeting:

We balloted on several new candidates to join our Lodge. No real surprise there!! We made arrangements for our Treasurer to move forward on the new account and he is taking on his duties with great enthusiasm.

It was brought up to establish a practice to have the Lodge allocate funds to provide flowers or memorials for the wives of our Officers, Trustees, and other distinguished Brothers as the Lodge sees fit. This idea comes on the heels of the passing of our Brother and Past Master Jerome Holz's beloved wife Dorothy.

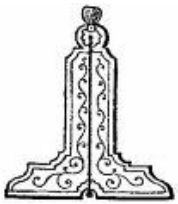
We have set up our Lodge for alternating our dining schedule. Every other month we will be dining out at local restaurants under the care of our very able Junior Warden. Thanks for all of your work in planning this!

A sneak peek into next month's meeting:

More petitions, of course!!

We are going to get the update of our Treasurer regarding our Lodge Endowment fund as well.

This time we are dining in, and I look forward to the fun and fellowship with all of our Brothers. Even if you can't make the meeting, come on down for the dinner and get to know some of your new Brothers. See you on the sidelines!



Senior Warden's station

by Brother Tom Curtis

"...harmony being the strength and support of all institutions...especially ours."

This will be an extraordinarily busy year for all of us due to the large number of Fellow Crafts now awaiting that sublime moment when they are raised to Master Mason. Many brethren will be needed for that degree work. The length of time that it takes to raise each new MM, and the requirement that we can only raise one MM at a time will add to the load. As a result we will be needing as many members of the Lodge as can lend a hand. A number of these events will, of necessity, have to take place on Saturdays or on the last Wednesdays of the months ahead. In addition, of course, we'll continue to be bringing in more EAs and passing FCs throughout the year, ours being one of the more popular Lodges in the Valley.

This being the case, let me ask each of you, my brothers, to assist in some small way at several of the days set aside for degree work. Sometimes, all that will be needed is to be at the Lodge to show the new candidates your support. In other cases, you can help in a more participatory fashion. Those who can memorize a few lines are welcome and needed. In whatever capacity you wish, please play a part.

It is a year-long process...and it calls for each of us to assist in this vital element of the life of our Lodge.

It's a thrill to see a number of younger members seeking membership in Freemasons 363 and we owe it to each one of them, to make this an occasion that they will always remember.

The schedule for degree work in the months ahead will be available shortly. Please review it and plan to be part of it!

As ever, fraternally
Tom Curtis
Senior Warden



Arts n' the Craft

A few more poems from talented Brother David J. White:

West Wind

West wind and winters freezing ends are melted
Halos of sunlight burn behind the grey
curtains setting them ablaze and with the light
orange warms the cedars

Vietnam Polaroid

We cleared the tree line in time to watch the
choppers turn into butterflies
to watch villagers turn to statues
made of jade and honey and Apollo's shadow

We cleared the coast in time to watch
the surf turn to lava and burn back
all ill intentions
We casted our ship afloat on roasting carbon
and splinted wood and dreamed of home

We slid past the radar
rode the mean terrain above
mountains, below God's sullen brow
Saw the sun rise like an elbow
attached to an arm, holding a hand shutting
off the alarm!

A little Masonic humor. (Remember Brothers, this is all in good fun!)

While visiting a newly initiated brother at home one day, the new brother's wife took me to one side and said her husband had started behaving very strange since joining.

I asked in what way?

She said that he locks himself in the toilet for hours on end mumbling to himself with his little blue book.

Later that evening I turned the talk to lodge, and asked him how he was getting on.

Oh fine was his reply.

I asked him about his behavior and if there was anything wrong.

No, was his reply.

So why read the book there?

Well he said "It's the only TYLED room in the house"....

Q: How many Masons does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Three. One to screw it in, one to read the minutes of the previous light bulb replacement, and one to sit on the sidelines and complain that this wasn't the way they USED to screw in light bulbs.



The Winding Stairs

Editor's Light ~ By Brother Tommy Baas

Key II ~ The High Priestess

In designing my own Tarot deck, I chose to stay faithful to the standard conceptions of the Major Arcana (as embellished with my own personal interpretations & improvements), as have the great masters, because they are standards for a reason. The characters of these cards reflect in aspects actual figures existing in the archetypal realm (a parallel dimension of a higher density of elemental vibrations) who are very, very real, though, for this reason, whose attributes are too abstracted in myriad layers to be sensitively understand to us in our limited dimension in any other form but colorful mythological figures. Mythology, like ancient religions, as the chosen language of the Mystery Schools, surpasses any form of literature in its capacity to communicate simultaneously the highest philosophy, spirituality, and politics, all at once in images simple to understand. These archetypes captured in the Major Arcana are isomorphic in meaning with their correspondent numbers as well as their sephiroth on the kabbalic Tree of Life, which skeleton key is simultaneously an alphabetical and mathematical palette. And even as the Major Arcana of the Tarot have their counterparts in the Tree of Life, so too are they hidden symbolized for the vulgar in Moses's Ten Commandments. Not to mention the lines of the Sermon on the Mount, the Tribes of Israel, the Disciples of Christ, and of course the Zodiac. You might see at first glance that the four transposed letters on the book in the Priestess's right hand could seem to spell out Tarot (without the silent T), and indeed, no matter the order of which letters, words whose letters add up to the same value in the Kabbalah share the same meaning (and the Gnostics were right in associating the Knowledge-yielding serpent in Eden with Jesus... "Oh, Felix Culpa!", as said Thomas Aquinas), and of course the book in her right hand is none other than the Torah (without the silent H). Besides being written in the Kabbalic language, the Torah is the basis for the Old Testament, the text containing the story of Eden with the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, as well as the story of Moses with the Ten Commandments. The Tarot is simply the essence and meaning of the Torah (Old Testament) captured in colorful images and made a more practical oracle. And both are drawn out manifestations of the Tree of Life.

The High Priestess represents the Greater, Heavenly Garden of Eden (whereas the following card, the Empress, represents the Lesser, or Earthly Garden of Eden). She sits in her throne in the Temple of Solomon, as reflected in the standard Masonic temple, which was constructed to symbolically reflect the world in its every element. The floor of the Temple is tiled black and white (as has been echoed in the game of chess, also symbolic of the world), representing the constant interplay of dichotomies which pervades reality. So too do the pillars of Boaz (strength/beauty) and Jachin (establishment; "God establishes..."). On top of the Boaz pillar by her right hand, which holds the Torah (The Law of the Heavens) is the globe of the Heavens, the Celestial sphere. On top of the Jachin pillar by her left hand, which is offering the apple of Knowledge (of Duality, i.e. earthly knowledge) to man, is the globe of the Earth. Appropriately enough the Moon is between. The pillars also are important furniture of both Solomon's Temple, and the Masonic Temple, which is a re-creation of the former. A divergence I have chosen to make is to change them from temple pillars to armrests of the Priestess's throne, where they can be seen congruent with their symbolic equivalent on the temple of the human body, the legs, which are indeed our pillars of foundation. In this perspective we can see the orb of her tierra above and between as the Middle Pillar. In egg-like color and form as her royal crown, it symbolizes Venus, the planet commonly associated with the goddess and referred to in the Kabbalah as the Shekinah, by Light of which first and brightest star through a portal in the Temple an initiate is raised from spiritual death by the Priestess. Another personal divergence made was to put the cross of Venus around her neck (between her breasts, also Two, though more pillows than pillars), where is, perhaps hastily errantly, typically pictured a regular Cross. Perhaps the old masters did not want to take anything away from the Empress, who also bears the cross of

Venus, but it must be remembered that the Empress is indeed a lower, earthly manifestation of the Priestess, and so their symbols may be similar. The Venus cross is similar to the Egyptian Ankh often seen in the hand of Isis, who the High Priestess is a mythological equivalent of. These crosses symbolize rebirth. As well as the virgin mother and huntress Diana, the High Priestess could also correspond with the essence of both the Mother Virgin Mary and the Bride (or Courtesan) Mary Magdalene, who each simultaneously reflect aspects of the Egyptian goddess Isis (and perhaps Maggie is also the feminine of Magus, which is Magician). The High Priestess is at once a symbol of the Virgin Birth and Fertility. Besides the floor design and the pillars, this card is full of symbols reflecting dichotomy, and like the shape and quantity of 1 reflects many aspects of the Magician, it is the same with the High Priestess and the number 2. Every little element is full of meaning in esoteric, each with layers of meaning decipherable according to the spiritual capacity and need of the interpreter. 2 is two 1's in shape, like the pillars or the legs. Itself, the shape of 2 reflects the up-curling serpent in Eden who gave the apple of the Fruit of Knowledge of Good and Evil (i.e., knowledge of integral Duality) to Eve, who then offered it to her partner in duo, Adam. The apple in the Priestess's left hand is my own addition. The pomegranates on the wall of the Temple are standard, and were indeed well-represented by decoration in Solomon's Temple, as they are in Rosslyn Chapel. Actually the combination of these two sacred fruits make the most enchanting perfume brought out right by the pheromones of a priestess.

Two changes I made which I consider a real improvement upon the standards might be considered too "vulgar" for an image so sacred, but only to the deprived minds of the vulgar. Knowing the philosophy behind these symbols, it seems an atrocity if not a blasphemy that a few aspects here have been perhaps censored, deliberately or not, thus taking away from the profound meaning of the symbol. All descriptions of the High Priestess will tell you that she is clothed only in a dress of white light, yet every image appears materially clothed. I not only took the initiative to correct this discrepancy here, but I also made the light from the Sun which dresses also to penetrate her between the legs, just as the masculine Sun/Son does the feminine Earth/womb with life. And whereas the Moon, which the High Priestess is the very symbol of, is not even subtly passed off as in the sky in standard cards, but actually awkwardly positioned at her left foot, I once again took a "bold" initiative and placed the symbol of the moon where it belongs, over the female reproductive organ whose hormonal cycle reflects the Lunar Cycle. While we habitually consult our zodiacal Sun signs, it might do us each and all a service, whether as a woman or as a man trying to understand a woman, to consult the movements of our Moon signs.

To understand the Virgin Birth, contemplate the Source of that which makes you who you are from conception as distinct from each your father and mother or even the combined DNA of the two, yet is passed down through the mother, she being the receptor of God. It is our soul which is the Christ or Logos within us, and this which like a perfect eternal flame is placed in our bodies at creation so to make us alive in Wisdom (Sophia) in a way that even our primate ancestors are not so Alive with a capital Alpha. So in this sense, which appropriately is the spiritual sense, the fundamentalists are right, just as are those who truly believe in the Grace of the Virgin Birth.

And just as it is the female who offers us such light of Wisdom, so too is it Eve who offers Adam the apple of Knowledge. The concepts are the same in meaning.

Taoism and Gnosticism, Eastern and Western religions respectively, yield characteristically dualistic philosophies. Reminiscent of the concept of the Virgin Birth, the Tao (the Way) works by the passive axiom, "Do by non-doing and all will be done." For feminine passivity of the High Priestess, this axiom takes on almost an opposite yet very similar meaning to the same phrase applied to the Magician, whose power is in his assertive will in alignment with that of the Cosmos.

And the Moon, of course, like the Vagina which takes in the phallus and by fertilization of dispelled seed recreates the child, yields its power by receptive reflection of active/solar/masculine power.

The camels on her throne represent Hebrew letter Gimel, meaning desert. And perhaps the way the camel carries its water in its hump across the desert is reflective of the concept of the Virgin Birth.

The bow and arrow at her left foot (a crescent where Rider-Waite puts the crescent of the Moon) reflects that, like Diana, she is a huntress.