

The Trestleboard
AUSTIN Lodge #12
Ancient Free & Accepted Masons
aUGUST-september
ad 2009, Al 6009



**Worshipful master
j. mCkissick**

~Rising From the East ~

Brethren,

What an exciting time it is to be a Central Texas Mason! I believe that Masonry is undergoing a renaissance the likes of which has not been seen since the 1940's. As we all know, Masonic membership has been in steady decline since the 1960s. But we are attracting a new generation of young men to our Craft who want to be a part of a tradition that is bigger than themselves, and who want to give something back to their communities and to society. And I believe that Austin Lodge #12 is at the forefront of this trend. If you haven't been to Lodge lately, come to the next Stated Meeting and see all the new young Masons who have joined our Lodge!

This Masonic year is going to be one filled with challenges, but also a year filled with lots of opportunities. Our Lodge is facing several financial challenges this year. The Grand Lodge endowments (which generally provide around \$2,500.00 of our annual income) did not provide any returns this year. Also, investments from our Permanent fund did not perform at the levels they have in years past. We expect a decrease in dues income, while at the same time our per-capita expenses to Grand Lodge are going up. These, along with

several other issues, gave us a budgetary shortfall of almost \$3000.00.

We are fortunate at Austin Lodge #12 that the Brethren who have come before us built a legacy which provides a solid financial foundation for our Lodge. After careful deliberation, we were able to cut an already lean budget by almost \$1500.00. We were able to reinvest some of our available cash into some short term interest bearing investments which will make up for some of income shortfalls, allowing us to pass a balanced Operational budget at the last Stated meeting. This will allow our Lodge to continue to function without compromising the high standards of our Lodge.

We are still looking into the returns on investments from the Ziller fund (which finances our Charitable work), but based on current economic conditions, we expect to have considerably less return on our investments than in years past. Charity is one of the cornerstones of our Order, and it is one of the first Lessons we are taught as an Entered Apprentice, so this is an area that we cannot neglect – indeed, it is needed in our communities now more than ever.

We will be exploring several fundraising possibilities this year that will allow us to continue to give out scholarships fund our other charitable works. If you have any suggestions or ideas for fundraising opportunities for our Lodge, please share them with me – I'd love to hear what you have to say. My contact information is listed below.

In closing, I just want to say what an honor it is to server as Master of Austin Lodge #12. I look forward to what we as a Lodge are going to accomplish this year, and I am grateful for the opportunity that you, my Brethren, have given me to add to the legacy of Austin Lodge #12. I will do my best to render myself worthy of the honor which you have conferred, and merit the confidence you have reposed.

Most Sincerely and Fraternaly,
J. McKissick, Worshipful Master
Austin Lodge #12, A.F. & A.M.
512-828-7701
jam@austinlodge12.com

~ The View From The West ~

Hello Brethren,

I would just like to say that it is an honor to sit with each of you inside and outside of the Lodge. I often ponder on the level of intelligence that I am surrounded by in our outfit. We have former NASA personnel, Suma Cum Laudes, bankers, investment bankers, real-estate Guru's, and high level salespeople to name just a few. I then think to myself, what in the heck is a dumb o'l restaurant guy doing in the midst of these incredible fellows? Well, I guess the answer is that I like to be around good people that I might learn from, i.e.: the sharpening of my iron or the smoothing out of my rough ashlar.

When I attempt to write these types of articles, I am always trying to come up with something profound to say. While I don't think that I have nothing to say, (redundant, huh?), I do believe that most ideas, philosophies, politics, religiosities and so forth have already been discussed and/or have been written about and are out there for the reading. Thus, I shall just attempt to bend your ears on the topics' that each of us enjoy and have in common, Masonry and Austin Lodge 12 A.F. & A.M. I look forward to seeing what I am going to write about next; aren't you?

Sincerely and Fraternaly,
Steven Sterzing, Senior Warden
Austin Lodge #12, A.F. & A.M.
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~The Sun In The South~

Franklin Virtues System

As you are probably aware, Benjamin Franklin was a mason, and served as Grand Master in 1734. Of his many unique contributions "to promote generally the happiness of mankind", Benjamin began his work with himself, and had a particular program for forming a more perfect version of himself.

He selected thirteen "virtues" which he wished to inculcate in himself, and used that old and proven technique of measuring for what he wanted to see. Each week he would take one of the virtues and score himself on how well he observed it each day, taking particular pains to identify ways in which he could do better. At the same time, he did not particularly focus on the other twelve, but did not particularly try to break those virtuous behaviors either! By this means, for one week each quarter (4 times a year), he would focus on improving his behavior with respect to each of his chosen virtues.

While Franklin didn't live completely by his virtues and by his own admission, he fell short of them many times, he believed the attempt made him a better man contributing greatly to his success and happiness,

I invite you to join me in employing this system this year. For the coming month I plan to take the first 4 virtues, one per week.

1. Temperance: Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. Silence: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. Order: Let all things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. Resolution: Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

I also invite you, during the stated meeting, to share any insights that we may gain through this process.

Russel Zears, Junior Warden
Austin Lodge #12, A.F. & A.M.
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I am Freemasonry

I was born in antiquity, in the ancient days when men first dreamed of God. I have been tried through the ages, and found true. The crossroads of the world bear the imprint of my feet, and the cathedrals of all nations mark the skill of my hands. I strive for beauty and for symmetry. In my heart is wisdom and strength and courage for those who ask. Upon my altars is the Book of Holy Writ, and my prayers are to the One Omnipotent God, my sons work and pray together, without rank or discord, in the public mart and in the inner chamber. By signs and symbols I teach the lessons of life and of death and the relationship of man with God and of man with man. My arms are widespread to receive those of lawful age and good report who seek me of their own free will. I accept them and teach them to use my tools in the building of men, and thereafter, find direction in their own quest for perfection so much desired and so difficult to attain. I lift up the fallen and shelter the sick. I hark to the orphans' cry, the widow's tears, the pain of the old and destitute. I am not church, nor party, nor school, yet my sons bear a full share of responsibility to God, to country, to neighbor and themselves. They are freemen, tenacious of their liberties and alert to lurking danger. At the end I commit them as each one undertakes the journey beyond the vale into the glory of everlasting life. I ponder the sand within the glass

and think how small is a single life in the eternal universe. Always have I taught immortality, and even as I raise men from darkness into light, I am a way of life. I Am Freemasonry. –Ray V. Denslow

~Musical Notes~

I am thrilled to be appointed Lodge Musician this year for Austin Lodge #12.

We are blessed to have a Hammond C-3 Organ in the Scottish Rite Theatre. It is in great working condition and recently serviced. We are also blessed - based on the generosity of Brother Peter Reardon - to have a unique Wurlitzer vintage electric piano that fits nicely in the Blue Room. Both instruments are allowing us to introduce music at our stated meetings and into our degree work.

One of the greatest gifts my mother gave me as a youngster was the gift of music. My training was on the theatre organ and began at age 8. Until the age of 16, my Mother insisted that I practice 30 minutes a day. I do remember fighting her and sneaking out to get out of the chore. My teachers had great motivators as well that didn't involve restrictions or switches (one of my teachers had a real Pipe Organ at her home).

The teachers I had focused on traditional theatre music, classic jazz standards, marches and an occasional polka. Think of songs from the 40's to 80's primarily. And of course, many hymns and religious music. One genre of music I really was not trained on was Classical Organ masterpieces (Bach, Beethoven, etc). I have a few pieces in my repertoire but they are honestly limited.

For our stated meetings, I try and pick a theme for the meetings. I'll play gathering music about 20 minutes before lodge opening and a song as you exit. Some recent theme examples have been selections from the Beatles, Disney classics, Rogers and Hammerstein's Sound of Music, and Jazz Standards (Stardust, Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans, Fly me to the Moon). I even have a couple of Grateful Dead numbers to surprise on our Worshipful Master on occasion (he's a Dead-head). Over the next few stated meetings, I'll be featuring the fantastic works of one of my favorite composers, Andrew Lloyd Webber. Look for numbers from Phantom of the Opera, Sunset Boulevard, and Cats to name a few. You will likely recognize all of them. November and December will bring out the Christmas favorites.

Degree work takes a different approach. While the "gathering" music may be similar to our stated meetings, music for our degrees primarily consists of improvisation of major and minor chords, depending

on the scene and situation. The dimensions of the Blue Room make this a great approach. We'll continue to experiment in degrees. So far, the reaction from candidates has been very positive and rewarding.

I hope you can attend lodge, both stated meetings and called degree work. While it sounds like I have played a lot, I really haven't played publically except for an occasional Masonic occasions. Saying that my skills are "amateur" would probably be giving myself too much credit! I will try my best to deliver pleasing sounds and notes that won't cause you to grimace! Practice makes perfect. Where's Mom when you need her?

----Dave Waller, Lodge #12 Musician

~Upon the Secretary's Desk~

Brethren, as we begin a new Masonic year, look for great things from Austin Lodge 12.

Although attendance still remains low, participation from our young Masons (new to the craft) continues to be exceptional. We are continually conferring degrees and meeting young men with an interest in Masonry. The trend in Lodge 12 shows Masonic membership to be on the rise.

Come to a meeting, I am sure you will find the fellowship habit forming.

Hope to see you at Lodge soon,

Victor

Happy Birthday to all who have had birthdays since our last Trestleboard.

Please keep these following Brethren and their families in your hearts, thoughts and prayers.

DEATHS

Connell Ray Dennis 6/24/09
Floyd Ralph Rich 7/3/09

SICK LIST

Rene Aguirre, Samuel Baker, John Brengle, Everett Bohls, George Davis, Marvin Feil, Bill Fogle, C.O. Jones, Gordon Kelso, Claude King, John McNamaram, Grover Nibouar, Jr., Whitey Ray Huitt

NOTE: The Trestleboard is now being edited by John Brengle, PM. Please contact him with any information or changes you may deem necessary.

Contact him at: editor@austinlodge12.com

Menu for August Stated Meeting

King Ranch casserole
Spanish rice
refried black beans (w/ queso fresco)
Texas sheet cake

--Senior Steward, Stephen Penn
--Junior Steward, Jesse Obed

If you would not be forgotten,
as soon as you are dead and rotten,
either write things worth the reading,
or do things worth the writing.

--**Benjamin Franklin**

Attitude is more important than the past, than education,
than money, than circumstances, than what people do or
say. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or
skill.

--**W. C. Fields**

~UPCOMING SCHEDULE~

AUSTIN LODGE #12 CALENDAR

Mon. Aug 3 : CALLED MEETING (FC turn in, MM Degree)

Mon. Aug 10 : CALLED MEETING (EA Degree – certified)

Mon. Aug 17 : **STATED MEETING**

Mon. Aug 24 : CALLED MEETING (More Light Masonic
discussion)

Sat. Aug 29 : Theater Night - Dinner at 5:30pm (location
TBD), then we will attend 'As You Like It' at the Scottish Rite
Theater.

Mon. Aug 31 : CALLED MEETING (2x EA Degrees)

Tues. Sept. 1 : Visit Hill City #456

Mon. Sept. 7 : DARK : LABOR DAY

Mon. Sept. 14 : CALLED MEETING

Mon. Sept. 21 : **STATED MEETING** (We will award Service
Pins, and honor our Veterans at this Stated Meeting)

You can also check the latest schedule on the Austin Lodge
#12 website at : <http://www.austinlodge12.com>