

The Cable Tow

The newsletter of the Juneau Masonic Community

Summer 2017



Scottish Rite Reunion
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The newsletter of Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge No. 21, Free and Accepted Masons of Alaska and the Juneau Masonic Community.

Published quarterly.

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Cover image:

M.W. Bro. John Bishop, Grand Master of Masons in Alaska, pours the Oil of Joy onto the Symbolic Lodge during the March 18, 2017 Dedication of the Juneau Masonic Center. Photo by Michael Penn.

Send submissions to charlesward4@me.com. The deadline for submissions for the next edition is August 15.



A drawing of our dearly departed Brother



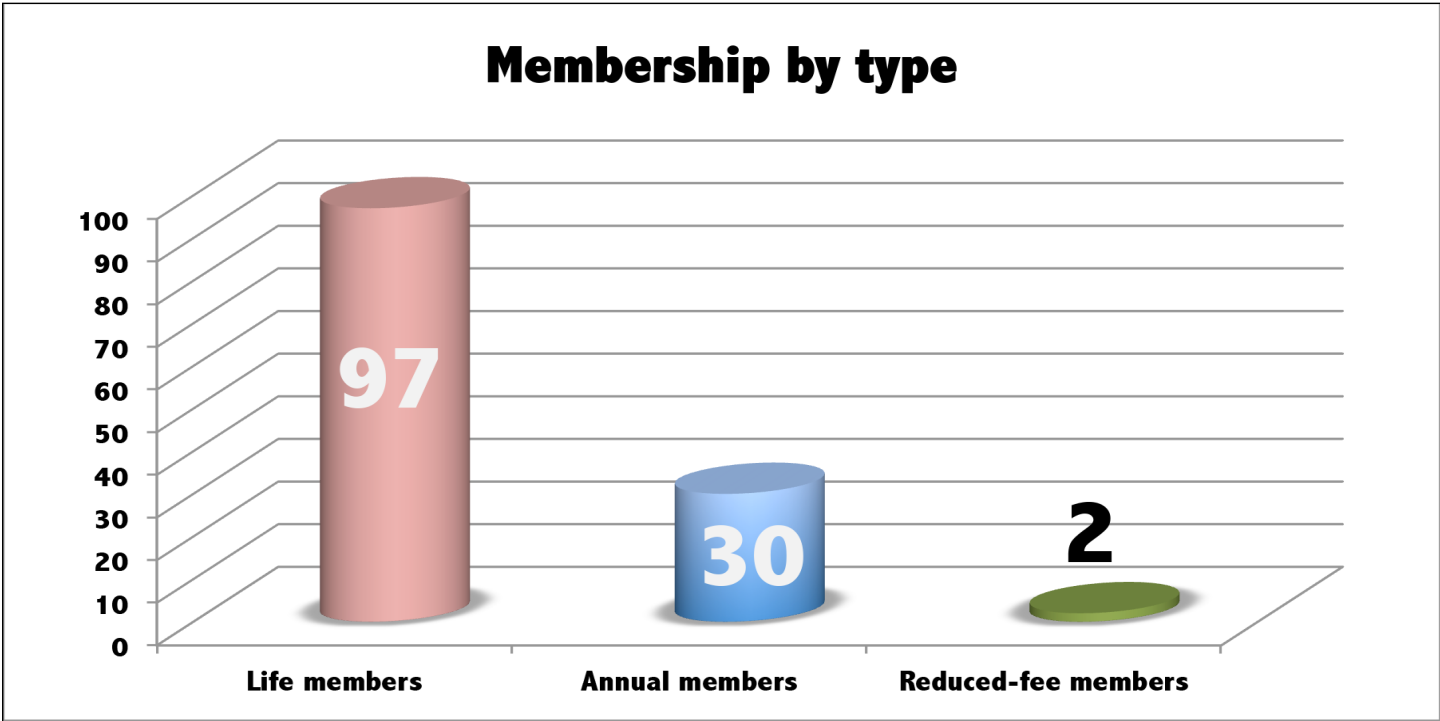
Portrait by Bro. Travis Simpkins The Juneau Valley of the Scottish Rite recently commissioned a portrait of Ill. Bro. Ed Nygard, 33°, which was unveiled at the 2017 Scottish Rite Reunion. The Valley dedicated the Reunion to Nygard's memory. Bro. Travis Simpkins, 32°, of Massachusetts created the drawing from pictures provided to him. For more on Simpkins' work, visit arcrimeillustrated.com.

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From the Secretary's Desk

A data-driven discussion



By W. Bro. Ken Vaughan

This spring I spent some time updating records, as the Grand Lodge of Alaska changed computer databases. The new system has some good features, and some that will require still more polish.

Such work leads to an interest in the data while looking for glitches and fixes. One of the paths I took when reviewing the facts and figures was to look at the demographics about who and where we are as a group.

There are currently 129 Master Masons on the rolls of Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge No. 21. That number has crept downward from 141, where it stood in

2010. In seven years, we have a net loss of 11 members. Deaths, dimits and NPDs are outpacing our degree work at a little more than one per year, on average.

Those members further fall into three different dues classes: life members, annual members, and annual members with reduced dues.

Life members pay a sum, either one-time or a few payments across five years, that are invested to return income for the Lodge. In 2014, the Lodge voted to make the cost of a life membership 25 times the annual dues at the time the membership is purchased. Prior to 2014, however, the multiplier was considerably lower,

which played a role in the Lodge having 97 current life members. In recent years, the income from the life membership fund after inflation proofing pays about one-half of the Grand Lodge per capita assessment. For the average life member, someone else has to subsidize the direct cost of service to the lodge member of about \$25-\$50. The difference in costs of services are printing and postage of communications.

Our 30 annual members pay dues each year. The current dues rate is \$150 with \$29 going to Grand Lodge and \$1 going to the George Washington National

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A Grand Opening

By W. Bro. Charles Ward

After a wait of more than a decade, members of the Juneau Masonic Community have a home of their own, and celebrated by dedicating the new Juneau Masonic Center on March 18.

The approximately 5,500-square-foot facility is home to six separate organizations: Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge No. 21; Juneau Chapter No. 7, Order of the Eastern Star; the Juneau-Douglas Shrine Club; the Juneau Valley of the Scottish Rite; and Juneau's Rainbow Girls and DeMolay chapters.

A library and museum showcasing Juneau's — and Alaska's — Masonic history is also on site.

The Juneau Masonic Center's opening marks the end of a more-than-decade-long series of temporary homes for the six groups. Members have met in various locations around Juneau since the sale of the downtown Scottish Rite Temple to the City and Borough of Juneau in 2006.

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Photos by Michael Penn
Opposite page: Sorch Hazelton, member of the Order of the Eastern Star, waits for the March 18 Dedication ceremony for the new Juneau Masonic Center to begin. **Above:** W. Bro. Steven Stewart, right, escorts M.W. Bro. John Bishop, Grand Master of Masons in Alaska, into the Lodge Room of the Juneau Masonic Center at the beginning of the March 18 Dedication ceremony. Behind them is R.W. Bro. Keith Herve, Deputy Grand Master. **Right:** Bro. Alex Simpson carries the Symbolic Lodge into the Lodge Room of the Juneau Masonic Center at the beginning of the March 18 Dedication ceremony. Behind him is W. Bro. Ken Vaughan.



2 capped, 2 recognized at Reunion

By Bro. Larry Fanning, 32°, KCCH

The Juneau Valley of the Scottish Rite recognized two of its members as Masons of the Year at the concluding ceremony for the 2017 Reunion, held April 27-29 at the Scottish Rite Temple.

Bro. Michael Franks, 32°,

brought his design, engineering and construction administration skills to the task of transforming a day care facility into a Scottish Rite Temple and the creation of the Juneau Masonic Center. Additionally, his carpentry skills built walls and covered windows, and he even designed

and built a secretary's desk. Franks dedicated many nights, weekends and even weeks prior to his moving to Georgia on this project.

Bro. Ray Rusaw, 32°, gave endless Saturdays, Sundays and evenings texturing, painting, constructing and doing whatever

he could to make the Temple a success, even sacrificing, for a time, his hobby, searching for gold.

Without Franks and Rusaw's extraordinary skills and dedication, the Scottish Rite Temple and the Juneau Masonic Center would not be what they are to-

day.

The 2017 Reunion was the first in the new Temple, and the Juneau Valley welcomed two new members to its ranks: Bro. Jim Herr, 32°, and Bro Alex Simpson, 32°. Both also joined the Knights of St. Andrew at the KSA's annual meeting on April

29. Herr and Simpson received their 32° black caps at the concluding ceremony.

More than 10 Scottish Rite Masons came from outside Juneau for the event, and one of the Reunion's highlights was the from-memory performance of the Fourth Degree by the Sitka



Photos by Donald Hale, 32°, KCCH

Above: The two newest members of the Juneau Valley Scottish Rite, Jim Herr, 32°, and Alex Simpson, 32°, hold a portrait of Ill. Bro. Ed Nygard, 33° at the ceremony that concluded the 2017 Reunion. The Valley dedicated the Reunion to Nygard's memory. For more on the portrait, and for a better look at it, please see page 2. **Opposite page: Top left:** Bro. Doug Harris, 32°, communicates a degree to the 2017 candidates on April 28. **Bottom left:** Members of the Sitka Scottish Rite Club prepare to perform the Fourth Degree on April 27. From left, they are Eric Swanson, 32°, Ken Kramer, 33° and Jerry Neel, 32°. Right: Bro. Larry Fanning, 32°, KCCH, presents a plaque to Bro. Ray Rusaw, 32°. Rusaw is one of the Valley's two Masons of the Year for 2016-2017. The other was Bro. Michael Franks, 32°.



Taking the next steps towards success



The Juneau Masonic Center on March 18.

Photo by Michael Penn

By W. Bro. Charles Ward

The construction of the new Juneau Masonic Center is complete and, believe it or not, we’ve been meeting in it and enjoying its use for nearly six months. This new building is the fruit of a well-executed construction and financing plan built by the Juneau Masonic Center Association and the former Scottish Rite Temple Association trustees.

That plan and those efforts have given us our present. Now our new building needs an effective financing plan to ensure its future. To that end, JMCA voted at its April 24, 2017 meeting to request contributions from its owners — Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge No. 21; Juneau Chapter No. 7, Order of the Eastern Star and the Juneau-Douglas Shrine Club — to fund the operation of the Juneau Masonic

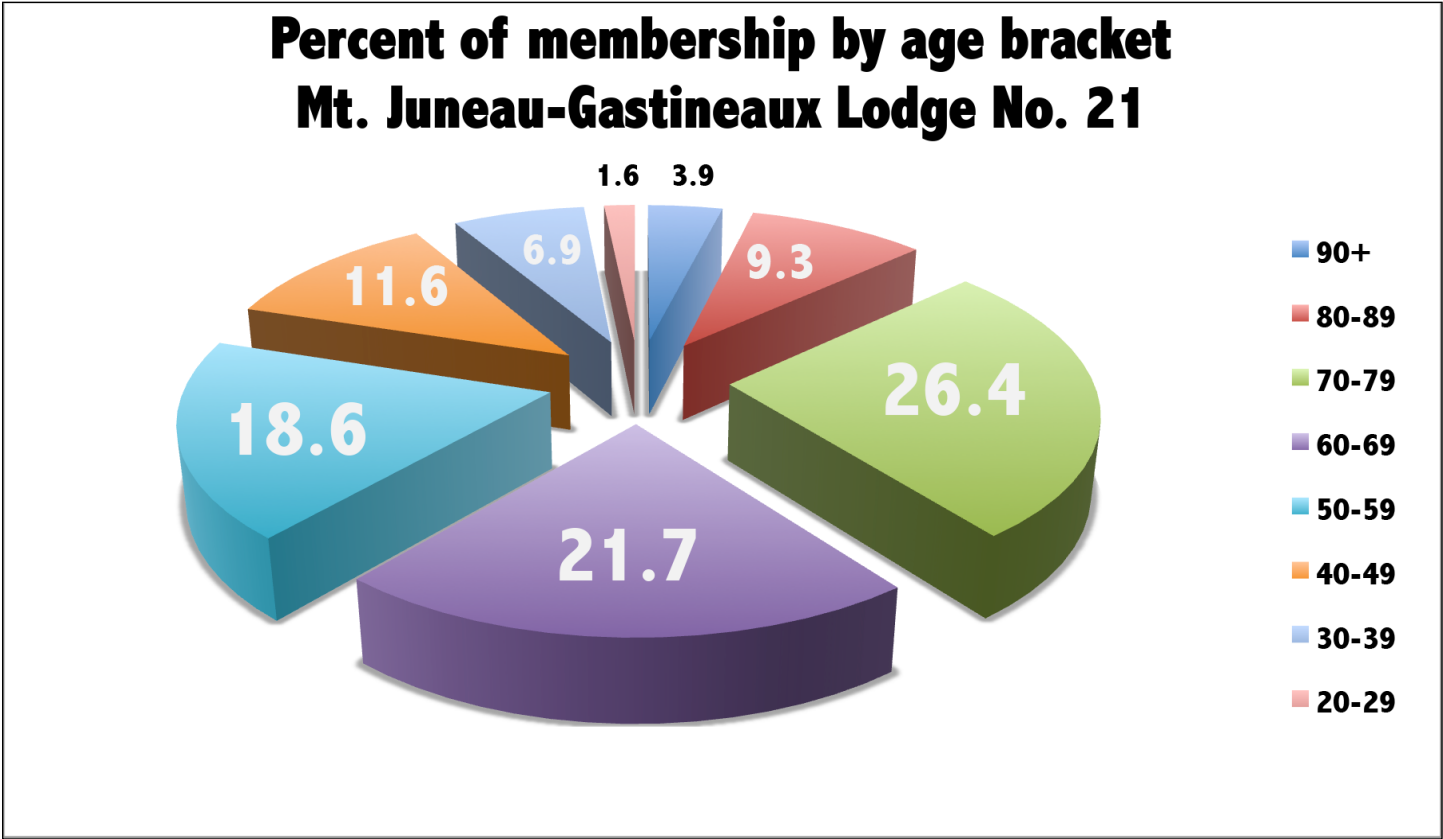
Center for 2017 and 2018.

- 2017**
For 2017, JMCA is requesting a total contribution of \$44,000, broken down as follows:
- \$36,800 from MJG 21.
 - \$5,000 from OES
 - \$2,200 from JDSC
- Past contributions have been in accordance with ownership share — MJG 21 at 90 percent,

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Data

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Masonic Memorial.

In 2014, annual members 70 years old or older who have paid dues for 10 or more years pay only the Grand Lodge assessments. There are currently two members in this group, with four more soon to join them.

Beyond our membership classes, I looked at the age breakdown of our membership. The median

age of our members is 65, meaning half our members are older than that. For a more detailed breakdown of our numbers, please see the chart above.

Finally, the majority of our members live somewhere other than the City and Borough of Juneau. Sixty members, or 46.5 percent of our roster, reside within CBJ. Some of our other brothers

reside in Southeast, Anchorage and elsewhere in Alaska. The remainder live in places as scattered as Florida to New England, Washington to Texas and overseas.

The goal of this piece was not to induce sleep. Rather, it’s hoped it creates an awareness of where we are as a fraternity, and gives us an idea of where we need to go.



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Social Media on the Square

@JuneauMasons



Steps

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OES and JDSC at 5 percent each. This request would alter that breakdown a bit. MJG 21 would pay about 84 percent of the total, OES about 11 percent and JDSC about 5 percent (numbers are approximate). While all bodies will need to approve these requests independently, I want to thank OES for its willingness to consider paying a larger percentage than normal.

To be sure, all owners are being asked to pay significantly more than in recent assessments. With a new building comes new opportunities, but also new operating expenses and new taxes. I'm happy to break these down further at a meeting, other gathering or individually.

2018

For 2018, JMCA is requesting a \$230 per person assessment from each member of an owner body. This would not be a per-dues-card request, rather, it would be one \$230 request for each person who is a member of any of the three owner bodies. In other words, if you, like me, are a member of MJG 21, OES and the JDSC, your assessment would be \$230, not \$690. Some logistical issues will need to be worked out, but the assessment will be paid to one of the bodies you are a member of, who will then pass that on to JMCA and

verify your payment to any other bodies you are a member of.

JMCA's numbers are approximate, but it estimates 220 brothers and sisters would be subject to the assessment. This request also estimates a little more than 10 percent of those assessed will be unable or unwilling to pay. If paying this assessment will create a true financial hardship, please contact one of the members of the leadership teams of any organization you belong to, or me. Masonic tradition is rich with examples and instructions on granting relief to worthy brethren, and this assessment will be no different. Further, there may be some who will be able to cover the contribution asked and contribute to the assessment asked of others. If this is a possibility for you, please reach out in confidence, and we will work with you to ensure your generosity goes to the maximum benefit.

Future assessments

JMCA partnered with the Juneau Valley of the Scottish Rite to construct the new Juneau Masonic Center, including remodeling the former Spunky Sprouts facility into a space suitable for Scottish Rite use. That partnership included a \$75,000 loan from Scottish Rite to JMCA and a four-year lease agreement for Scottish Rite's use of its

portion of the Juneau Masonic Center. JMCA anticipates paying off the loan in December 2020, which will coincide with the lapse of the Scottish Rite's lease. JMCA derives a small amount of income from this arrangement, but most of the Scottish Rite's rent payments are washed out by JMCA's loan payment and the payment of sales taxes to the City and Borough of Juneau. I'm happy to cover those arrangements in greater detail upon request.

While there is nothing definite, and moods can change with the leadership of both JMCA and Scottish Rite, both parties anticipate renewing the lease for 2021 and beyond. Should the lease be renewed as expected, that would give JMCA a source of income for its operations. That should reduce the amount JMCA requests from its owner bodies, but that must be tempered with the understanding operating expenses will only increase, particularly as the Juneau Masonic Center ages. All of our organizations will need to plan, individually and collectively, methods to increase revenue to ensure the long-term health of our Center and our institutions.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

A visit from the District Deputy



Photo by Sister Sorcha Hazelton
Claudia Johnson, Deputy in Alaska to the Most Worthy Grand Matron, visited Juneau Chapter No. 7, Order of the Eastern Star, on May 23. This followed a dinner earlier that evening and a School of Instruction the day prior.

Juneau Assembly No. 3, IORG

Girls gear up for kindness campaign

By Mother Advisor Deanna Browne

This year, the Rainbow Girls are participating in the Juneau Year of Kindness campaign along with other Masonic bodies. Doug Harris and his Rainbow daughter, Stacia, introduced this idea to the Assembly. The Harrises are on the borough-wide steering committee for the Year of Kindness campaign.

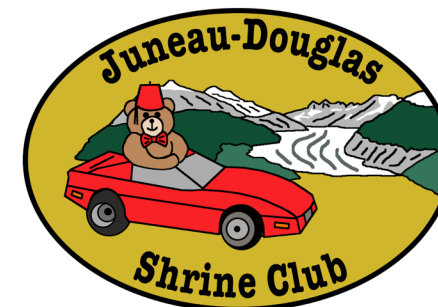
Our chosen kindness activity is a free car wash in August, alongside the Juneau DeMolay chapter. The girls have also de-

cided to work with the AWARE shelter and collect needed school supplies for the children there for the 2017-2018 school year.

Juneau Assembly No. 7, International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, meets on the first and third Saturdays at the Juneau Masonic Center. The Board meets at 11 a.m. on the first Saturday, followed by a business meeting at noon. The third Saturday is an activity day and the details for that day are decided at the business meeting.

Juneau-Douglas Shrine Club

A lunch for the ladies



By Noble Charles Ward

The Juneau-Douglas Shrine Club hosted a group of ladies at its annual Mother's Day Lunch, held at the Juneau Moose Lodge on May 17.

The Club plans to continue its annual presence at Gold Rush Days on June 17-18, where it will conclude its Costco gift card raffle, which began in March at the Juneau Home Show.

The week after the drawing, Potentate Kevin McKinley will be in Juneau to oversee a Ceremonial. The event, the first Ceremonial in the new Juneau Masonic Center, is set for 9 a.m. on June 24.

The Club is also gearing up to drive its mini-Vettes and mini-bikes in the Juneau and Douglas Fourth of July parades.

Tools for the better man

By W. Bro. Charles Ward

At the recent Scottish Rite Reunion — the first held at the new Juneau Scottish Rite Temple — I overheard a Mason dismiss the popular marketing phrase that “Masonry takes good men and makes them better.”

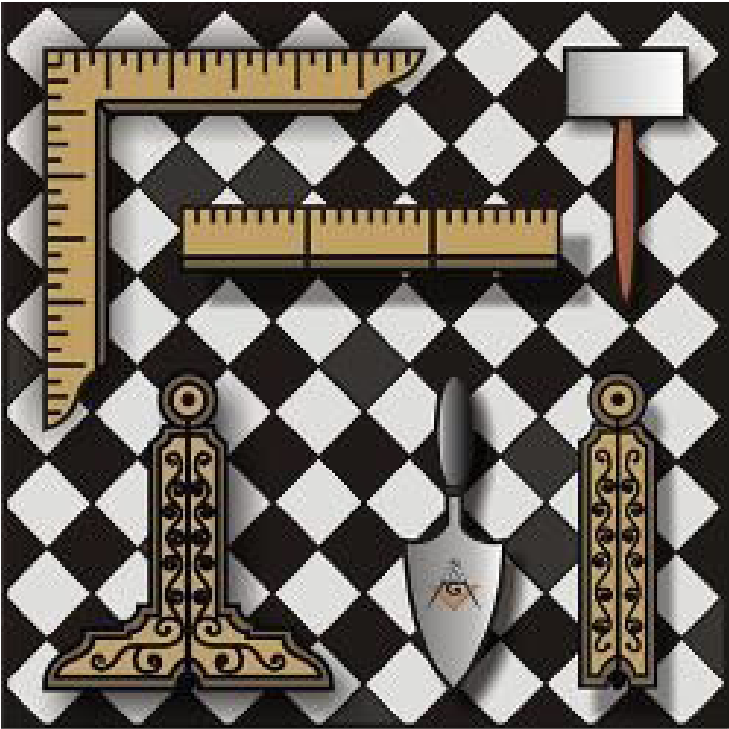
Rather, he said something to the effect of “Men make themselves better, if they want to. Masonry gives them the tools to do so.”

He’s right, to the chagrin of ad wizards hired by some forgotten Grand Lodge in some unremembered jurisdiction.

There are, of course, the working tools we learn the uses of during our journeys through the three degrees — the 24-inch gauge, the common gavel, the plumb, the square, the level and the trowel. We learn their uses during the ritual, and the Monitor is there lest we need a reminder.

There are other tools, of course. Some Masons learn of a somewhat different set of implements when raised outside Alaska, and those collections are no more right or wrong than the

one here in the Great Land. Those tools are a fantastic starter set for a Mason, and he must master their uses to improve his work, and himself. However, as a skilled craftsman’s skills advance, the tools in his chest increase. There are



many additional instruments useful to a Mason as he builds himself into a better man. Four will be elaborated on here: ritual, education, civility and fellowship.

Ritual defines who we are as Masons. It separates us from other fraternal societies — not by making us better than them, but

by making Freemasonry better for the man who seeks self-improvement.

To understand the ritual, it’s of course important to study and practice it. But, even masters of the work stumble or slip a word from time to time. The next perfect opening or degree will be the first. When perfection is pursued but not achieved, meaning can still be gleaned, and a more perfect understanding of the ceremonies can still be had. It is important not to just study the words, but also why certain words are chosen instead of synonyms. Were those decisions based on cadence, or to impart a slightly different meaning than a substitute word?

Actions also carry meaning. A touch can be soothing or jarring to a candidate, depending on where or how it is applied. Does the candidate need positive assurance? Or does the moment call for a bit of apprehension? Knowing these nuances can make the message you take from the ritual — and the one you impart — a stronger one.

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Embrace people, if not their ideas

By V.W. Bro. Jim Robinson

I would like to continue the discussion of civility and fraternity that I started in my last article. I mentioned I was trying to avoid offending my friends and Masonic brethren by not posting or forwarding on the Internet offensive and derogatory snippets of political or religious vitriol. This prompted some civil discussion after one of our meetings between several of the brethren. One person suggested I was being thin-skinned by being offended by other people’s opinions, and demanding political correctness.

I had not thought of those points before, and his comments made me think. I certainly do not think of myself as politically correct, and people who have known me since I started publicly expressing my opinions about 40 years ago would have to agree with that self-assessment. I think there is a definite difference between being generally, cynically offensive and being deliberately hateful and spiteful. To my mind, there is a clear boundary between calling my friend a crazy cat lady and telling my friend that the world would be a far better place if he and all the fascist Neanderthals who vote like him would just die. I don’t know exactly where

the line between being politically incorrect and brutally offensive is, but there is a difference.

So, when I ask people to consider what they are saying before they say it, and try to get along better, I don’t feel that I am being PC, just civil. There was a guest editorial in the Juneau Empire a couple of weeks ago by a progressive political activist from College Place, Wash. by the name of Kris Craig. The author made a lot of good points about how our society is becoming more and more polarized, and this polarization is fueled by politicians of all leanings, by the news media, and by us. She pointed out we are told anyone who is not like us and who doesn’t think like us is not only different, but the enemy. We unfriend people who support things we don’t like, and eventually we only hear from other people who just say exactly what we want to hear. She ended with the thought that people who think differently than we do are not the enemy. We are all on the same team.

We are supposed to be a civilized society. What do we mean by “civilized?” Dictionary.com defines civilized as “having an advanced or humane culture, society, etc.” The same source defines society as:

1. An organized group of persons associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes.
2. A body of individuals living as members of a community; community.
3. The body of human beings generally, associated or viewed as members of a community.

How can we be part of a civilized society if we choose to not associate with anyone not exactly like us, and when we are not civil with each other? We are all individuals, no two alike, and when taken to the extreme, this strategy of despising and treating as sub-human anyone who is not us does not appear to be well thought out. It would make for a **lot** of enemies.

The population of the world is so large now that, without some sort of civilization at work, humanity cannot sustain itself. If we chose to tear society apart so that we can feel good and righteous for a while, the void left by the loss of our civilization will be filled by something. I am willing to bet the new order will

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Tools

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Masonic learning begins with the ritual, but it doesn't end there. Education can come in a lot of forms. It doesn't require poring over Pike or mastering Mackey. There are short pieces long on information in the "Light From the Great Land," the "Scottish Rite Journal" and many other Masonic magazines.

The Internet can be tricky. There's some really good writing, video and audio on the Web, but also a fair amount of junk. Rubbish is often easy to spot, as it will claim Craftsmen say, do and believe things in direct opposition to our obligations and our own experiences. However, it can be tough to separate garbage from the good stuff when it unintentionally and without malice passes on myths. The best practice for online learning is to treat information with a skeptical eye until the source establishes a track record for accuracy.

Perhaps the best, and least utilized, source for Masonic education is your Brother. Take on a topic together you would both like more light on, and discuss it. Don't focus on being right or wrong, but instead on looking at it from as many perspectives as possible. Not only might you acquire knowledge, you might impart it as well.

Listening to your Brother and valuing his viewpoints — even if you don't agree with all of them

— is the cornerstone characteristic of a civil man and a civil Mason. Once you've met the challenge of giving your Brother an attentive ear, it becomes easier to do it a second time, a third time and to repeat that behavior outside of Lodge with people from all walks of life.

Civility requires more than simply being kind, though that's certainly an element of gentlemanly behavior. It requires an appreciation of the viewpoints and experiences of another, and listening to his opinions or concerns provides that. Not only does that acknowledgement provide a path to areas of agreement — which are usually more numerous and larger than the uncivil man realizes — it creates an awareness of his experiences and additional information with which to inform and understand your own viewpoints.

Fellowship is a "friendly association, especially with people who share one's interests."¹ To enjoy true fellowship with your Brother, then, requires knowledge of his passions and motivations. How better to develop a real fellowship than through such discussions and interchanges as discussed above?

A proper environment can foster fellowship. An activity that allows men to enjoy each other's company can very naturally lead to civil discourse, whether

that be a philosophical examination of a topic, an exchange of jokes or even a ribald tale (in the right company). Dinners and cookouts are prime examples of such events. Sometimes, even a beer or glass of wine can forge the fellowship faster, though, of course, libations aren't always appropriate for an event, and are never an absolute condition of festivities. It becomes increasingly difficult to dislike a man, and ever more easy to like a man and treat him as your Brother, when you've had true fellowship time with him.

The improvement offered by Masonry, which is spoken of from a man's first introduction into the fraternity to the time his apron-draped remains are lowered into the ground, is self-improvement, and it requires a man to want to be better. Once he reached that point internally, the tools of the Craft can provide the external forces to guide that betterment. I encourage you to seek these tools — ritual, education, civility and fellowship — whenever you come to Lodge or consider Masonry on your own and use them to make yourself better.

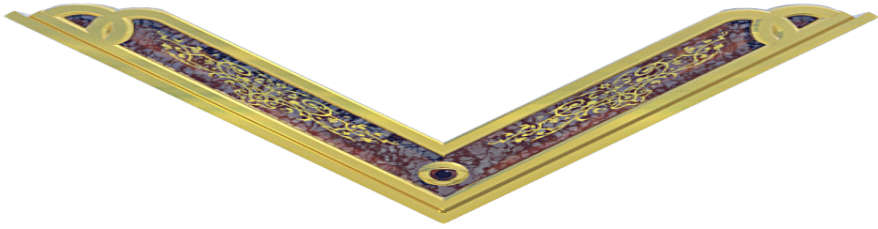
¹ Stevenson, Angus, and Christine A. Lindberg. New Oxford American Dictionary. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford U Press, 2013. Apple Dictionary application. Web. 21 May 2017.

Looking through the lens



Photos by V.W. Bro. Donald Hale

Top: Jason I.W. Cornish, center right, joined Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge No. 21 as its newest Entered Apprentice on May 13. V.W. Bro. Jim Robinson, center left, conferred the degree. **Left:** Gabrielle Hazelton, Worthy Matron of Juneau Chapter No. 7, Order of the Eastern Star, visited Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge No. 21 prior to its May 16 Stated Meeting. Hazelton delivered a speech about the state of OES and her goals during her year as Worthy Matron. She later entertained questions from the members there. Also seen is W. Bro. Charles Ward.



Embrace

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not be something we — any of us — will like very much.

I admit this is far-fetched. Society will not end because we refuse to signal when changing lanes, or because we are all

calling each other fascists. I do believe though, that the world is diminished if we deliberately cut ourselves off from each other, and associate only with our own little cliques. And that is

why I love Freemasonry, where we are all brothers, and why I believe we can help society, by being examples of how people can get along better with each other — all of us.

Grand

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Photos by Michael Penn

Members of the Grand Lodge, led by W. Bro. Kenneth R. Larimore, Grand Bible Bearer, left and W. Bro. Claude Roberts, Grand Sword Bearer pro tem, right, enter the Lodge Room at the Juneau Masonic Center at its Dedication Ceremony on March 18. They are followed by V.W. Bro. Donald Hale, Past District Deputy, and V.W. Jim Robinson, District Deputy.

“We’ve had some fine places to meet, and some great hosts,” said Charles Ward, chairman of the Juneau Masonic Center Association. “But we’re ready to once again have a place of our own to call home.”

M.W. Bro. John Bishop, Grand Master of Masons in

Alaska, along with R.W. Bro. Keith Herve, R.W. Bro. John May and R.W. Bro. Norman Gutcher dedicated the Center to Freemasonry, Virtue and Universal Benevolence.

The Dedication ceremony was part of Bishop’s official visit to Mt. Juneau-Gastineaux Lodge

No. 21, which began the evening before with a dinner and called communication.

An open house, with an opportunity to tour the Center and meet members of Juneau’s Masonic Community, followed the dedication ceremony.

