



# Huachuca Lodge #53



B U S I N E S S   N A M E  
S I E R R A   V I S T A ,   A R I Z O N A

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

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## From the East

**WM Matt Covell**

Spring is imminent my Brothers, and with it comes a feeling of growth and newness to the world. Our lodge is growing both in Membership and in activity. We have both, new Apprentices who are learning the Work, and Candidates awaiting entry at the West gate, eager to receive our great education. Our fund-raising team is busy and working to get our building the necessary repairs it needs, and our Education and Mentorship programs are thriving. Truly this is a very exciting time for our Lodge.

Yet even beyond our Lodge this truly is an exciting time for Masonry and our whole Masonic Family. The Order of the Eastern Star is gaining new Membership and important Bridges are being built, reuniting our organizations, and revitalizing the ideas of group programs that the Masonic Family of organizations can accomplish when approached together.

Growth and Togetherness. Newness and possibility.

Exemplifications of Spring, but also of our Masonic Family here is Cochise County.

To our New Brothers: I Welcome you.

To the Brothers Actively assisting in our programs: Thank You.

To my Brothers whom I have not seen in a while or may never have met: our doors are open to you.

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## Past Masters Day

King Solomon Territorial Lodge #5 will host their annual Past Masters Day on May 16th 2009 at their Lodge in Tombstone. More details will be published as they become known. For now, mark that day on your calendar as one not to miss.

## Masonic Losses

### **Martha Rebecca Gardner Foster**

**Sept. 26, 1922 - Jan. 27, 2009**

Martha Rebecca Gardner Foster was born in Murdocksville, Pa., to Harold and Ruth Ellen Mason Gardner on Sept. 26, 1922. She passed away in her home in Tombstone, Ariz., on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009.

Rebecca met her husband, Al Foster, when she volunteered to dance with soldiers home on leave during World War II at the local dance halls.

Photography also was a passion of Rebecca's, and she won many awards. Pets, Southwest scenery and historic Tombstone events were among her favorite subjects. Rebecca loved everything to do with outer space, including scientific and UFOs. She was a huge Star Trek fan.

Rebecca and Al bred and raised quarter horses in Pennsylvania before they retired, packed up and traveled around, looking for place to settle in for their retirement. Their first pass through Tombstone left an indelible impression, and it was easy for them to decide to move permanently to Tombstone in the late 1970s.

Rebecca was a member of the Tombstone Vigilettes for more than 20 years. In addition, she was a proud member of the Order of the Eastern Star and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Her ancestors can be traced back to the Jamestown, Va., Colony of 1611, and she was a descendant of Captain William Powell, the vice governor of Virginia in the 1600s.

Rebecca was preceded in death by her husband, Al, and her brother Jimmy. Her cousin Charlotte White Truesdell of Florida, sister-in-law Mary Gardner, nephew Eric Gardner and niece Nan Gardner Shoeib of Pennsylvania survive her. Interment will be next to her husband, Al, with an Eastern Star ritual at the Tombstone Cemetery will commence at 1:30.

### **William 'Bill' Henry McFie**

**June 9, 1929 - Feb. 8, 2009**

William "Bill" Henry McFie, 79, of Benson, Ariz., died on Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009. He lived in the area for three years. He previously lived in Turner, Ore.

William was born on June 9, 1929, in Florence, Colo., to Stanley and Mae McFie. He was an engineering technician and received his high school degree and went to college.

He was a member of the Masons, Lyons Lodge No. 29 in Independence, Ore., and the Fremont Lodge No. 97 in Florence, Colo.

He was in the U.S. Navy in World War II as part of the Seabees.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; siblings, Gary, Terry and Sharon; six grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

## Masonic Losses

### Robert E. Cowan

Lifelong Cochise County rancher Robert E. "Bobby" Cowan passed away on Feb. 14, 2009, in his home in Sierra Vista, Ariz. He was born on April 5, 1934, in Douglas, Ariz., as Ralph and Mattie Cowan's youngest son. Bobby called the Cowan Ranch and Cochise County his home for his entire life; first at the 4 Bars near McNeal, Ariz., and then at the JO Bar near Tombstone, Ariz.

As an active member of the community, Cowan was a member of the King Solomon Masonic Lodge #5 for more than 50 years serving as Master more than once. He was a member of the York and Scottish Rites and a 50 year member of the Pearl of Venus #6 Chapter of the Eastern Star. He was by Merle's side as she ascended to the office of Worthy Grand Matron in 1994-1995. He was a member of the Sabbar Shriners where he participated in the Fliver and Mounted Patrols raising funds for the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

He served on the Tombstone Unified School District School Board for 33 years, receiving a commendation from President George H.W. Bush, and overseeing the relocation of the new high school. He also participated in the Los Charros Trail Ride for many years.

He is survived by his lovely wife of almost 36 years, Merle; Merle's daughter, Patti and their granddaughter, Jenna Bright (Tombstone); Merle's son, Rick O'Steen and his family in Florida, and his daughters, Caren Cowan (Albuquerque, N.M.), Connie Cowan (LaJolla, Calif.), and Carol Cowan (Tombstone); one grandson, R.W. Cowan Wood, numerous nieces and grand nephews; and his former wife, Mary Ella Cowan.

He was preceded in death by his parents Ralph and Mattie; his brothers, Jim and Bill; his aunt, Florence Cowan Snure; and his grandson, Jeremy Bright.

Services will be held at the Tombstone High School Gymnasium located at 1211 Yellowjacket Way, Tombstone, at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2009.

### Isabell McGregor Durrenberger

Jan. 7, 1929 - Feb. 17, 2009

Funeral services were held Friday, Feb. 20, 2009, in Warrenton, Va., for Isabell McGregor Durrenberger, who passed away on Feb. 17, 2009, at the Fauquier Hospital of congestive heart failure.

Isabell was born on Jan. 7, 1929, at the Copper Queen Hospital in Bisbee, Ariz. She attended Bisbee High School and the University of Arizona. She went to work for the Phelps Dodge Corp. in 1956 and later became secretary to the manager. She was a member of the Covenant Presbyterian Church and the Order of the Eastern Star.

Isabell married Joseph W. Durrenberger in October 1988, and they both retired from Phelps Dodge on Feb. 1, 1989. They spent many years traveling and enjoying family and friends. Joe preceded her in death in March 2004.

After spending almost 75 years in Bisbee, she went to live with her family in Warrenton, Va. She spent happy years there, but her love for Bisbee was always foremost. She was dearly loved by her family and will be greatly missed.

Interment will be held in the Masonic Plot at Evergreen Cemetery in Bisbee on Monday, Feb. 23, 2009, at 2 p.m.

Survivors include her sister, Marjorie McGregor Chambers of Warrenton, Va.; three stepsons, Joe Durrenberger of Anchorage, Alaska, Ed Durrenberger of Philomath, Ore., Fred Durrenberger of Columbia, Mo.; and stepdaughter, LoreLee Taylor of Chandler, Ariz.

## From the West

### Bro. Harry Brown

Huachuca 53 has had two stated meetings and have had candidates balloted on in each one. We had budgeted for eight candidates for the year and have surpassed that already. It was very gratifying to see the number of Brothers that have come out for the stated meetings and the degree work. The Brothers of Huachuca 53 are doing great things for the Blue Lodge.

We have more Brothers able to give the degree lectures. This is a great benefit for our Lodge and a heavy load off of our DDGL WB Johnnie Wagener. Come out and support the candidates and the Brothers as they present the degree lectures and work for our Brothers.

WM Matt Covell gave the first degree lecture 18 February and it was very impressive. Yours truly plans to present the first degree lecture at the next EA degree (possibly 11 March).

**See the accompanying article from the Southern California Research Lodge on “Leaning and Memorizing Masonic Ritual”.**

An achievable goal and my hope for this year is to have Brothers competing to present the degree lectures. Huachuca 53 is approaching this goal but we have a long way to go to take the work load off the few Brothers that are proficient in presenting the lectures. Learning the ritual work is very educational and satisfying. Come down to the Lodge on Tuesday evening or Wednesday to practice ritual and socialize with your Brothers. Make your desires known in order for you to be included in the degree programs. The SD, JW, and SW will be pleased and more than happy to include you in the Trestle Boards for degree work.

## Calendar of Meetings for 2009

### Stated Meetings

7th of	January	7p.m.
4th of	February	7p.m.
4th of	March	7p.m.
1st of	April	7p.m.
6th of	May	7p.m.
3rd of	June	7p.m.
1st of	July	7p.m.
5th of	August	7p.m.
2nd of	September	7p.m.
7th of	October	7p.m.
4th of	November	7p.m.
2nd of	December	7p.m.

### Charity, Finance and Fund-Raising

4th of	February	5p.m.
1st of	April	5p.m.
5th of	August	5p.m.
4th of	November	5p.m.

To be held in the Secretaries office and open to all members

### Meetings of the Board of Trustees

4th of	March	5p.m.
6th of	May	5p.m.
2nd of	September	5p.m.
2nd of	December	5p.m.

To be held in the Secretaries office and open to all members

## Fund Raisers

### Bro. Phillip Shulsky

The fund raising committee has raised \$784.00 so far.

\$535.00 from the Pancake Breakfast on 1 Nov 2008

\$249.00 from the 50/50 drawings

The baseball fund raiser is going very well. Though it is a lot of work, and extremely fast paced, it is actually a lot of fun. I am estimating a return to the Lodge of around \$3,000 to \$4,000. There are a lot of assumptions in that figure, but I believe it to be possible. For those that are not participating, start thinking about doing the event next year. With all the work that needs to be done to our Lodge building, we will need all the money we can get.

Starting in April, we will be having a silent auction of items donated to the Lodge by MWB Verne Hegge. The items will be displayed for three hours every Wednesday during the month of April and the winner selected on the final Wednesday (29 April). All proceeds will be used to make much needed repairs to the Lodge.

I am also working on a car wash at a date yet to be selected. It will only require assistance handing out flyers. There will be no actual physical work on our part. More to follow.

If any Brother has an idea for a fund raiser, and is willing to take the lead on it, please let me know. I would absolutely appreciate all the help I can get.

I also need to say, and this comes from the heart, that I really appreciate all the assistance in our fund raising efforts. This note of thanks isn't just for the Brothers that have given their time and energy supporting our fund raisers, but also is meant for the Brothers that have sent in money for the cause. And let us absolutely not forget the very generous donations made by our Masonic relatives from the three York Rite bodies, Electa Chapter #51, Order of the Eastern Star, Chiricahua Court #15 Order of the Amaranth, the Huachuca Shrine Club, the Cochise Scottish Rite Club, and the Cochise High 12 Club. All together, we have raised \$7,006.00 towards the replacement of the heating and AC units.

Our next consideration must be given to the entire electrical system in the building

## Masonic Tour of Distinction 2009

As discussed in a previous edition of this newsletter, a group of 23 Masons from England will be visiting Arizona. Much of their trip will be spent in Phoenix, Sedona and Las Vegas, however from the 7th to the 10th of May they will be in our neck of the woods. Their itinerary for that portion of their trip is as follows:

7 May—Arrive in Tucson

8 May—Visit Old Tucson Studios and "John Wayne's Lodge"

9 May—Perform a demonstration of English Ritual at the Scottish Rite Temple at 2:30PM

10 May—Visit Tombstone

A demonstration of the first three degrees will be presented at the Scottish Rite temple on the 9th of May. Seating is limited to 300 Masons. If you desire to participate you really need to RSVP to 520-622-8364 as soon as possible. Once the seats are gone, they are gone. There is a \$15.00 fee associated with this event. In addition, you may participate in a dinner which is an additional \$10. Your ladies are welcome to join us for dinner for an additional \$10.00

To the best of your ability, try to participate in some of these activities. Seldom will be get a chance to enjoy fellowship with our Brothers across the pond. It is worth pointing out that they will be bringing their wives, so bring yours along as well. You can visit the following website to get more information:

<http://www.masonictour2009.co.uk>

## COCHISE MASONIC HIGH TWELVE CLUB #703

### March issue of the King Solomon Newsletter

The Club hosted the 14th Annual Masonic Widows' Day luncheon attended by sixty Brothers, Sisters and Guest. We had twenty-six Honored Ladies present from five lodges from Cochise County and three presiding Masters present along with four Grand Lodge Officers present. To hear the Honored Ladies talk about their husband and their own Masonic resume is fascinating and really interesting. See the full story below.

There has been a change for the March 14 meeting. It will be held at My Place Restaurant starting at 11:30 AM. There will be a guest speaker. For the June 13th meeting we will honor all Masons of the Year from Lodges in Cochise County with a special lunch and a very special guest speaker. Mark the calendar now and plan to attend.

### RALPH HOOTEN HONORED

On February 14 in Sierra Vista, Cochise Masonic High Twelve Club #703 President, Robert Whitney presented to High Twelve Arizona State President Ralph Hooten the Wolcott Foundation Wolcott Club Award for donating \$1,000 to the Foundation. The Foundation provides scholarships to graduate students in the field of Government Service at George Washington University.

## Chiricahua Court No. 51 Order of the Amaranth

### WB Chuck Fortner

The Order of the Amaranth supports Diabetes research throughout the 9 courts in Arizona. The court in Sierra Vista is Chiricahua Court No. 15. The members are collecting pennies for our major project of diabetes research. We are accepting funds from anyone who would like to make a donation. Bring them to the lodge on meeting nights or on Friday mornings. Bro Chuck Fortner will be more than happy to accept any donations.

These funds are collected by each court and turning in during our grand court session in May each year. Last year Arizona amaranth collected \$33,000.00 for diabetes research.



On the 18th of Feb 2009 we conferred three EA degrees. Our new brothers are: Bro. John Gentry, Bro. Ian watts, and Bro John Perez.

All EAs

1st row, left to right are Bro. Ron Scott, Bro. Eric Navarro, Bro. John Gentry, Bro Ian Watts, Bro John Perez.

2nd row, Bro Scott Marshall (green shirt).

## VETS CAN NOW SALUTE!!

For years Veterans have wanted to Salute the Flag during the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem instead of just placing their hand over their heart, NOW THEY CAN.

A Congressional Amendment sponsored by Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 specifically states that "members of the Armed Forces and Veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute" Veterans can salute the flag during the National Anthem as well as during "the hoisting, lowering and passing of the flag".

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service" "Veterans and service members continue representing the military service even when not in uniform. The U.S. Code is now consistent for Veterans and all service members in regards to the symbolic gesture of the military salute".

From the Salute Newsletter, Winter 2009 [thesalute@freedomteamsalute .com](mailto:thesalute@freedomteamsalute.com)

## From the South

### Bro. Phillip Shulsky

We're into our third month and things are looking up. We've had a huge number of petitions for the degrees, and more brothers are learning the work. Our fundraising is proceeding at an acceptable rate and our building hasn't caved in—yet.

I would there fore like to bring up two "new" issues for us to think about, and act on.

First is the concept of mentor ship. As I stated before, we are blessed with many petitions for the degrees, but we are also forbidden to provide these men the study material for their proficiencies. This means that the work to move these young men through the degrees must be done from mouth to ear. This will take time; much more time than we are used to.

Right now we have only a few brothers who have stepped in to provide the mentorship. These brothers are the same ones involved in various committees and are working full time on top of that. We NEED the assistance of the more experienced Masons. This would also be a great opportunity for some of you that desire to attend Lodge, but can't for various reasons. All help would be GREATLY APPRICIATED!

Second, is membership. We are doing great in terms of new membership, but we should not and can not afford to forget about our more experienced membership. I would like to encourage each and every one of you to engage with an older member who doesn't, or can not come to Lodge. Encourage them to come to Lodge, offer them a ride if they need it. Or just sit with them and talk. The point is that they have a degree of knowledge that will take us years to accumulate, if we are lucky.

It is a disservice to them and they craft to be left out of Lodge activities. They deserve our support now, just as the active lodge does. If you do nothing more than print out a copy of this newsletter and take it to them, your doing your part. And they will appreciate it.

## 'A Salute to the Widows of Masons'

**Robert R. McElhiney**

Free and accepted Master Masons  
Hold no persons to be more dear  
Than the wives and widows of brothers  
Especially you who are assembled here.

When God laid out his master plan  
On the trestle board of life,  
It was his greatest inspiration,  
To give each man a loving wife.

As free men and Masons,  
We are thankful to the Lord above  
For giving us women of character  
To cling to and to love.

In our salute to the widows of Masons,  
We are most humble in the presence  
Of you who loved and nurtured our brethren  
During their brief terrestrial residence.

Your husband was a Mason.  
In that you must take pride;  
Though, he has demitted to the eternal lodge  
And not here by your side.

The sight of the lambskin apron  
On a loved one in final repose  
Gives a sense of pride and sorrow  
That only the bereaved one ever knows.

The widow's son who cries out,  
"Oh Lord, is there no help for me?"  
Will find the relief he calls for  
In the precepts of Masonry.

If we have been remiss in our duties,  
Your forgiveness we implore.  
In a time of need, please call on us –  
Your cry we cannot, by vow, ignore.

## VALENTINE'S DAY: A SPECIAL DAY FOR MASONS IN COCHISE COUNTY

### Bro. Paul Weishaupt

There's an old proverb that says, "To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world." That's how the Masons of Cochise County feel about the widows of Masons who have demitted to the Eternal Lodge, and each year they show it.

Annually on Valentines Day – Feb. 14, the Cochise Masonic High Twelve Club #703 hosts a Masonic Widows luncheon at Huachuca Lodge #53 in Sierra Vista, where women who have loved and supported their Masons in life and death are honored. How did this truly Masonic event begin? Fourteen years ago, Mason Andrew Anderson saw an opportunity for the Lodges to honor and care for Masonic Widows through the High Twelve Club. It was an idea whose time had come and is still with us today.

This was the 14th annual luncheon and each year the event is more successful than the one before. Twenty-six widows, each escorted by Masons from the lodges in Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista and Tombstone came out to share fond memories and enjoy each others company. All totaled, there were 58 attendees.

Also attending were Ralph Hooten, Deputy Grand Master for District #9 and Andrew Anderson, Grand Tyler. Another honored guest was Joan Lopshire, Past Grand Matron Order of the Eastern Star. Past Royal Grand Patrons of the Order of the Amaranth, Chuck Fortner and Ed Reed, were also present for the event.

The Widows were provided with transportation, if they desire, to and from the luncheon. They also received a corsage and a Valentine's box of chocolates. But the event is more than lunch, a flower and sweets. Each Mason escort introduces his honored guest and talks about her Mason. After the introduction, the widows had a chance to reminisce about their Masons and Masonry.

The widows praised what Masonry, over the years, did for their husbands and for them. Masons never leave one of their own behind and always leave the door ajar for anyone in the family to ask for help or just to be with someone who cares. That was the sentiment echoed by all.



## Recitation for Black History Month

By Shar Porier

Herald/Review

Published on Monday, Feb 09, 2009

“Say it loud! I can read, and I’m proud!”

That was the message of Berthe Simpson and the rest of the Condon Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star members at a special event held Sunday in honor of Black History Month. It is an annual event that was hosted this year by the ladies at the Masonic Lodge in Huachuca City.

“We wanted to promote literacy in our young people, but I was surprised at the number of adults that don’t read. There’re some who don’t read at all,” she said.

The event offered anyone a chance to read from his or her favorite black author, and several people signed up.

Frank Bothwell was the first. He began, “I like to talk about our culture, and it made me think about Dr. King and his words to believe in ourselves. Dr. King walked into a place one night, where the audience’s morale was pretty low. Because he was walked in, and he said this, ‘I want you to believe in yourselves and believe that you are somebody. Nobody else can do this for us. No document can do this for us. No Emancipation Proclamation can do this for us ... If a negro man wants to be free, he has to move down into the recesses of his own soul and sign with pen his own emancipation proclamation. Don’t let anybody take your manhood. Be proud of our heritage. As somebody said earlier tonight, we don’t have anything to be ashamed of ... Someone told a lie. They couched it in language. They made everything black ugly and evil. Look in the dictionary for the word black. It’s always something degrading. Look at the word white. It’s always something pure and high and clean. I want to get the language right tonight. I want to get the language so right tonight that everybody here will cry out, yes, I’m black and I’m proud of it ... ’ ”

One by one, individuals took the podium and read the thoughts, strivings, successes and hopes of black authors like Beverly Jenkins, Pearl Cleage, Maya Angelou and even the popular talk show guest, scientist Neil deGrasse Tyson.

There was one 8-year-old who bravely read an excerpt from one of her favorite books, “This Is My Song” by Vy Higgensen. Jazzelyn Green, a second-grader at Johnston Elementary on Fort Huachuca, read her excerpt on the Sunday School song, “Jesus Loves Me.” The song actually comes from a 19th century American novel, she noted. “It’s quite stirring to hear 2- or 3-year olds singing this song as one of the first he or she has ever sung,” she recited.

In Jeffrey Stewart’s book “1001 Things Everyone should know About African American History,” many misconceptions and startling revelations are presented. Tom Reardon was working on a history of Washington, D.C., and became aware of the book and what it had to offer its readers. From the unauthorized freeing of slaves in Georgia, Florida and South Carolina by a Yankee general, David Hunter, in 1862 to why the Emancipation Proclamation was postponed until the North had won a major offensive, many little known facts are given. Reardon also said making the war about slavery served a military objective — to prevent the British from entering the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy.



## Electa Chapter #51 Order of the Eastern Star

Moving forward in the goal to strengthen the Masonic Family, the membership committee is starting to plan the next Masonic Family Day. One will take place in July. We would like to see the other bodies participating in the presentations and events. As details come the community will be informed.

Electa Chapter would like to welcome the future members of the Chapter. A number of petitions have been read in the last month.

### Special events to put out to the community:

Electa Chapter 51 will be hosting a High Tea at Huachuca Lodge 53 on 8 March 2009. There will be 2 seatings, noon and 3PM. Tickets will be available for purchase. If you would like to purchase tickets contact Worthy Matron Janice Hogan. There will be a smorgasbord of food and a variety of tea. Come hungry and sit down to enjoy with friends.

Electa Chapter will be hosting a Mason Appreciation Day on 16 April. Please join us for Dinner at 6PM.

### Upcoming OES Events:

5 March, 7:30PM – Stated Meeting  
6 March – Grand Chapter Official Visit  
8 March – High Tea  
19 March – Stated Meeting

**Tanya L. Covell**  
Electa Chapter #51 OES  
Esther, Newsletter Editor

## New Lodge website on the way!

### Bro. Phillip Shulsky

As an advanced warning, the Lodge will soon have a new web site. The address will be [www.huachuca53.org](http://www.huachuca53.org). The web space has been purchased and several of the pages developed. I expect that it will be up and operational in the next couple of weeks. Please pass this information along.

## Cochise Scottish Rite Club & Huachuca Shrine Club

### Tom Jones

Well Brothers here we are in beautiful Arizona, with near record temperatures. Baseball fever is in the air and the Lodge has a full calendar, what a blessing that is in today's world. We are so busy that the sideliners who want to help are doing great work to assist the Master in getting this task done.

As the Secretary of two clubs I would like to remind everyone that that the Scottish Rite Reunion is the first weekend in May. And the Shrine Club dinner will be at the Mesquite Grill March 21<sup>st</sup> @ 5:30. Do I dare throw in that the Vidila Onions are around the corner in May or the Shrine picnic is fast approaching.

# Calendar of Events for March 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Mar 1st</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 2nd</p> <p><b>King Solomon #5 Stated Meeting</b> Time: 7PM</p>	<p>Mar 3rd</p> <p><b>Campstone #77</b> 7PM</p> <p><b>Pearl of Venus #6 OES</b> Time: 2PM Place: Bisbee</p>	<p>Mar 4th</p> <p><b>Huachuca #53 Stated Meeting</b> Time: Dinner at 6PM; Meeting at 7PM</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 5th</p> <p><b>Electa Chap #51 OES</b> Time: 7:30PM</p> <p><b>Perfect Ashlar Lodge #12</b> stated meeting at 7 PM</p>	<p>Mar 6th</p> <p><b>Electa Chap #51 OES Official Visit by the GWM</b> Time: 7:30PM</p>	<p>Mar 7th</p> <p><b>Pearl of Venus #6 OES Official Visit by the GWM</b> Time: 2PM Place: Bisbee</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>
<p>Mar 8th</p> <p><b>Electa Chap #51 OES High Tea</b> Time: 12:30 and 3:00PM</p>	<p>Mar 9th</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 10th</p> <p><b>Mt Moriah Lodge #19</b> stated meeting at 7 PM</p>	<p>Mar 11th</p> <p><b>Huachuca Lodge #53</b> EA Degree Dinner at 6PM; Degree at 7PM</p>	<p>Mar 12th</p> <p><b>Wilcox #10 Stated Meeting</b> Time: 7PM</p>	<p>Mar 13th</p> <p><b>Campstone #77 Awards Dinner</b> Time: 5PM Place: Huachuca City VFW</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 14th</p> <p><b>Cochise High 12 Club #703 Meeting</b> Time: 11:30AM at My Place</p>
<p>Mar 15th</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 16th</p> <p><b>Chiricahua Ct #15</b>, Order of the Amaranth stated meeting at 7:30 PM</p> <p><b>King Solomon #5 EA Degree (Courtesy for Huachuca #53)</b></p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 17th</p> <p><b>Pearl of Venus Chap #6</b> stated meeting at 2 PM</p> <p><b>Adoniram Council #14</b>, Cryptic Masons stated meeting at 7 PM</p> <p><b>Coronado Chap #20</b>, Royal Arch Masons stated meeting at 7 PM.</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 18th</p> <p><b>Huachuca Lodge #53</b> EA Degree</p> <p>Dinner at 6PM; Degree at 7PM</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 19th</p> <p><b>Electa Chap #51 OES</b> Time: 7PM</p>	<p>Mar 20th</p>	<p>Mar 21st</p> <p><b>Huachuca Shrine Club</b> meeting at 5:30PM at Mesquite Tree</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>
<p>Mar 22nd</p>	<p>Mar 23rd</p> <p><b>San Pedro Lodge #55</b> stated meeting at 7 PM</p>	<p>Mar 24th</p> <p><b>Burning Taper Commandery #15</b>, Knights Templar stated Meeting at 7 PM</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 25th</p> <p><b>Huachuca Lodge #53</b> Open lodge from 5:30 to 8PM Work TBA</p>	<p>Mar 26th</p> <p><b>Lodge of Perfection Tucson Scottish Rite</b> Time: Carpool from Huachuca #53 at 5PM</p>	<p>Mar 27th</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 28th</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>
<p>Mar 29th</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Mar 30th</p>	<p>Mar 31st</p> <p><b>Campstone #77</b> EA Degree (Courtesy for Huachuca #53)</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Apr 1st</p> <p><b>Huachuca #53 Stated Meeting</b> Time: Dinner at 6PM; Meeting at 7PM</p>	<p>Apr 2nd</p> <p><b>Baseball</b></p>	<p>Apr 3rd</p> <p>Grand Lodge Leadership Academy in Prescott</p>	<p>Apr 4th</p> <p>Grand Lodge Leadership Academy in Prescott</p>

# Southern California Research Lodge F&AM

## Learning & Memorizing Masonic Ritual

By Wor Mark Waks

*Our ritual work is the life's-blood of Freemasonry. It is what sets us apart from every other fraternal and charitable society in existence. In this essay our Wor. Bro. Waks reveals what every actor learns and what every lodge officer should know. There is almost nothing I could add to this excellent explanation of how to learn our ritual.*

*If you give this an honest try, and are careful not to skip to the next step before mastering the previous ones, you will be a skilled ritualist. You will enjoy doing the ritual work, and most importantly, your candidates will be moved and will learn something of the heart of Freemasonry from your presentations.*

*Please feel free to copy this article to share with your lodge officers.*

*Fraternally yours,*

*Rt. Wor. G.L. Dryfoos Web-master*

*"A Page About Freemasonry"*

<http://masonry.mit.edu/>

One of the problems that most often plagues Masonry is poor ritual. By this, I don't just mean getting the words wrong -- I mean ritual that is drab and uninspiring, which fails to actually teach a candidate. Ritual is often mediocre, and it doesn't have to be; anyone can do ritual well, provided he knows a little about acting.

It isn't hard, actually, it's mostly a matter of knowing how to do it, plus a lot of practice. This article is intended to impart some guidelines on how to do Good Ritual. It doesn't demand a lot of time, or any particular talent, just a little drive to do well. Read it and play with it. With some practice, you should be able to use these techniques to good effect in your Lodge. The course is specifically aimed at dealing with the

longer speeches, but much of it is also relevant to shorter pieces. I commend it to junior officers.

This is adapted from a lecture that I worked up for my own lodge. Having done that, I figured I should try to spread these tips around for the common weal of the Craft. (Caveat: I do assume that you have some kind of cypher book, with encoded ritual. If your jurisdiction doesn't use this, you'll have to adapt these lessons.)

### 1: Figure out the Words

The first step of learning any ritual is to know what you're saying! This should be obvious, but is often overlooked, because brethren are afraid to admit that they don't already know the right words. Don't be afraid to admit your own limits -- I've never met anyone who gets every single word right every time.

Start out by listening to someone say the speech, preferably several times. (You should be doing this the entire previous year, listening to your predecessor.) Listen carefully, and make sure you understand what's being said; ask questions if you don't. (After lodge, of course.)

Next, go through your cypher or code book carefully, and see how much you can read. Mark words that you can't figure out, or that you're unsure of -- this is the point: to catch any mistakes you may be making. Then call or get together with a Ritualist or a reliable Past Master, and talk through it, reading out of the book slowly. Have him correct any mistakes, and fill in the words you don't know. Take notes (preferably somewhere other than in the book), because you will forget the corrections as soon as you're on your own.

### 2: Understand the Speech

This step gets overlooked even more often than the previous one. Read through the ritual a couple of times, and make sure you really grasp it. Don't just know the words -- know what it's talking about. Find out who the characters being talked about are. Again, ask questions.

Now, start trying to understand the speech structurally. Any ritual is made up of components, separate pieces that are linked

together. For example, a section may be talking about symbols, with three paragraphs per symbol: concrete meaning, abstract meaning, and purpose. Figure out what these pieces are -- you'll use them later.

The next step is especially useful for long speeches - visualize the speech. Any speech can be thought of in terms of movements, places, rooms, stuff like that. Words are hard to remember in order; places are easy. The canonical example is the Middle Chamber Lecture, which walks through King Solomon's Temple. That's no accident -- that path is easily visualized, and makes a good example of how to learn ritual, which is probably why it is the first major speech an officer learns. This is why we use symbols in the first place -- because they are easy to learn and internalize. Use them.

### **3a: Small-Scale Memorization**

This is never anyone's favorite part - anyone can do it, but no-one finds it simple. It's considerably easier if you do it right, though.

Start out by reading the speech over and over. Don't move on to the next step until you can read it from the cypher quickly, without breaks or hesitation. Read it out loud, when you get the chance. This step is particularly important, and skipped more often than any other. Don't skip it -- this is how you get your brain and mouth trained to the words. It may sound silly, but it really matters -- the mental pathways used to talk are distinct from those used to read.

Now, start trying to learn sentences. Just sentences. Read the first word or two of the sentence, then try to fill in the remainder from memory. Don't fret if you can't do it immediately; it will probably take at least 5 or 10 times through before you're getting most of the sentences. You'll find some that are hard -- hammer those ones over and over (but don't totally neglect the rest while you do so). Again, get to the point where you're doing reasonably well on this, before going on to the next step.

### **3b: Large-Scale Memorization**

Once you've got most of the sentences, try to

move on to paragraphs. Again, some will be easy and some hard. Try to understand exactly why this sentence follows that one -- in most cases, the ritual does make sense. An individual paragraph is almost always trying to express a single coherent thought, in pieces. Figure out what that thought is, and why all the pieces are necessary. Keep at this until you're able to get most paragraphs by glancing at the first word or two, or by thinking, "Okay, this is the description of truth," or something like that.

Finally, start putting it all together. This is where the structural analysis in Step 2 gets important. You visualized the speech, and figured out how it hooks together; use that visualization to connect the paragraphs. Make sure you have some clue why each paragraph follows the one before. In almost every case, the next paragraph is either a) continuing this thought, or b) moving on to a related thought. In both cases, you can make memorization much easier by understanding why it flows like that. Convince yourself that this paragraph obviously has to follow that one, and you'll never forget the order.

### **4: Smoothing It Out**

You're now at the point where you've got pretty much all the sentences down, and most of the paragraphs, and you're able to get through the whole thing only looking at the book a few times. Now, start saying it.

When you're driving in the car; when you're alone at home; pretty much any time you have some privacy, try saying it all out loud, at full voice. Trust me, it sounds very different when you actually say it aloud. You'll find that you stumble more, and in different places. Some words turn out to be more difficult to pronounce than you expected. Try it a few times.

Start out by trying to do this frequently -- once, even twice every day. It'll be hard at first (and it's a real pain to pull out the cypher book while you're driving), but it'll gradually get easier. When you're starting to feel comfortable, slow down, but don't stop. Practice it every couple of days, then every week. Don't slow down below once a week. If you feel up to it, see if you can

speed up your recitation. (But do not ever speed-talk the ritual in open Lodge -- that's for memorization and rehearsal only.)

#### **5a: Mindset**

Last part. You're now at the point where you pretty much have the ritual memorized. Now, the trick is learning how to perform it well. Very nearly everyone has some amount of stage fright; us acting types often have it even worse than most. The trick to overcoming it is control of the nerves.

Now that you're comfortable reciting the ritual, observe how you do it. By now, you're not thinking about it so much; your mouth is doing almost all the work, with the conscious mind simply making a few connections between paragraphs. That is the right state to be in. Think about how that feels, and learn it.

Before you go in to "perform", do some basic acting exercises. Take a few deep breaths; concentrate on not thinking. I think the ideal is a little light meditation, but it takes a fair bit of practice to be able to drop into that state on demand; for now, just worry about being calm. Being calm is far more important than anything else. If you're calm, you're unlikely to screw up too badly; if you're tense, you're far more likely to. Some people like to exercise the body a bit, to relax the mind; you should do what works for you.

#### **5b: Acting**

Now the final nuance, which separates merely competent ritual from the really good stuff. Now that you're able to let your mouth do all the talking, start listening to yourself. Think about the ritual again, but don't think about the words, think about what it means. What are the important bits? Emphasize those. How could you use your body or hands to illustrate a point? Try talking to the person in front of you, not just at them -- look them in the eye and make them get the point. You are teaching important lessons here; try to capture a little of the emotional intensity of that importance.

Think of your "performance" as a melding of

two parts. Your mouth is providing the words, your mind and heart the emotion. Again, nothing beats practice. This is what rehearsal should really be for -- taking a dummy candidate in hand, and learning how to really get the point across. Don't fret if you find that you need to change "modes" now and then -- here and there you will need to think about the words briefly, when you change paragraphs or hit a hard sentence. That won't throw you, though, so long as you keep track of what you're saying; you've already figured out why each part leads into the next, and that will guide you when you stumble.

#### **Conclusion**

Don't expect to get all this down instantly; it takes most people a few years to really get good at it. Just try to advance yourself bit by bit. Learn the transitions and pieces first -- if you have that, you can get through the ritual. Next time, work on memorizing more thoroughly. The time after that, work on getting it really smooth. After a while, you can build up to the point where you have the luxury to act. And at that point, you will find that you start doing the kind of ritual that Masonry is meant to have -- both moving and interesting, enough so that the candidate (who is, remember, the whole point) actually learns what you're saying, and what it actually means. And if you really do it well, you'll find that you come to understand the meaning of the ritual a good deal better yourself.

Wor. Mark Waks, PM  
Hammett Ocean Lodge - Saugus,  
MA

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