

Golden Gate Speranza

Brotherly Love

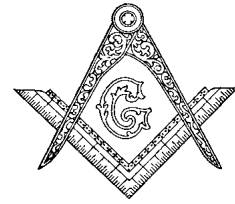
Relief

Truth



Lodge No. 30, F. & A.M.

Bulletin



Our 151st Masonic Year

MAY 2004

Volume 152, Number 5

TRESTLEBOARD

Tuesday, May 4

6:30 P.M. Dinner with the Ladies

7:30 P.M. Stated Meeting

Reservations required

Tuesday, May 11

6:30 P.M. Dinner Members only

7:30 P.M. First Degree Conferral

Mr. Leigh Williams Skilling

Tuesday, May 18

Golden Veterans Award

6:30 P.M. Dinner

7:30 P.M. Presentations

Recipients:

Elroy D. Joyce, PM

Donald McKinsey

Reservations required with

Anastasia Jouganatos

(415) 221-2907

Tuesday, May 25

DARK

Monday, May 31

Memorial Day

Tuesday, June 8

6:30 P.M. Dinner with the Ladies

7:30 P.M. Stated Meeting

Reservations required

FROM THE EAST



There is good news for the month of May.

On May 11, Mr. Leigh Williams Skilling will receive the First Degree in Masonry. It is hoped that we will have a good turn out for this occasion, so please Brethren, let us show Mr. Skilling our sincere interest in his initiation by attending.

One of the proudest accomplishments this year will be the presentation of 50 Year Golden Veteran's Awards to those distinguished Veterans of Golden Gate Speranza Lodge. Nine of our Brethren will become eligible for 50 year awards; some of whom we will be able to make presentations to personally. For those who cannot be at Lodge, suitable other arrangements will be made. The following are the Veteran Award recipients: Elroy D. Joyce, P.M., Donald McKinsey, Walter Zolezzi, P.M., Herbert L. Werner, Ernest G. Batchelor, George S. Youngling, Ephthemes J. Chituras, Harry Wielen, Lorren E. Abbott. Congratulations to each of you!

The night of May 18 will be the presentation of 50 Year pins and certificates to those Brothers raised January through April during 1954. The dinner at 6:30 p.m. will precede the presentation. Please mark your calendars and be with us to help honor Elroy D. Joyce, P.M. and Brother Donald McKinsey. This will be an open meeting with family and friends most welcome.

Another reason to celebrate in May is Mothers' Day, Sunday May 9th. There is no doubt our Ladies exert a strong influence in our personal and family life and while we may often take this fact for granted let us at least remember them and wish them Happy Mothers Day! On June 27th, we will give special attention to a special band of Ladies, mothers all, whether real or figurative: the Widows of our Lodge. These ladies are as much a part of our Lodge as their husbands had been, and we have designated June 27th to honor them with a special Widows' Banquet Lunch and the matinee show of 'Annie Get Your Gun.' For all the Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts, this invitation is extended to you, your families and friends as well. Those of you who have misplaced your flyers just call your Master and join the group. We are anticipating a fun filled day. Thanks to the kind efforts of Worshipful Edward Woodward, P.M. we will be able to park in the garage below the San Francisco Scottish Rite Building located at 19th Avenue and Sloat Blvd. The bus will depart at 8:00 a.m. sharp.



Monday, May 31st is Memorial Day Observance. Since May 25th is dark because of the Alaska Cruise, please come one come all to the Stated Meeting on June 8th where we will remember in our prayers the deceased members of the Armed Forces who fought hard to defend our country and to secure our nation's freedom, as well as the departed Brother Masons dispersed around the globe. To them, we owe much of what Freemasonry is today. Let us carry on the ideals and tenets which they have passed on to us.

NOTE: Because of the Alaska Cruise, June Stated Meeting will be held on June 8th, instead of June 1st. Please make a note of this important change on your calendars.

Looking back to April, the Mediterranean Night on April 27th was a huge success. Everyone brought their appetite with them and enjoyed an authentic Middle Eastern dinner: Marinated Lamb Shish Kebab with Rice Pilaf, Greek Salad, Hummus, Pita Bread and Pakhlava for dessert. Following dinner, we were entertained by the mysterious belly dancer known as Sacha who captivated our attention with her sleek and stylish moves leaving us all breathless!

Looking ahead, the bus for the Reno Trip on August 27-28 has been chartered and further plans for the trip are being completed now. Please mark you calendars now and watch for details in June Bulletin.

See you all at the Lodge.

Fraternally,
Vrej M. Mekhalian, Master

FROM THE WEST

By Patrick J. Burke

Brethren,

I spent the weekend of April 2nd considering the future of Masonry as well as the future of our Lodge. This mental exercise came via the 2004 Senior Warden's Retreat in San Ramon, California. This year's focus was on Leadership as opposed to Lodge Management. So instead of pondering the ins and outs of program and event planning, budgets, and protocol, we were taught to reflect on our own thoughts and dreams for Freemasonry in general and our Lodges in particular. This doesn't mean that management isn't important; it is! From now on management will be taught in a series of Lodge certification courses, and leadership will be the focus of the Junior and Senior Warden's retreats.

So, under the direction of Deputy Grand Master-David Doan, Senior Grand Warden-Fred Sorsabal, Junior Grand Warden-Mel Stein, and Assistant Grand Secretary- Allan Casalou, I started the journey to answer this question: What does Freemasonry, and our Lodge in particular, need to be in order to be relevant and useful to future generations? Wow, were does one begin? I am told it's a question that inspires some and strikes fear in others. Personally, I think we all seek inspiration, and we all feel at least some of that fear, and that fear, of course, is the fear of change. So the trick here is to turn our thoughts to the future and take it one small step at a time. Just as we learn our ritual one word, one sentence, one paragraph and then one page a time, we must face the future in the same step by step manner. The first step is to build a consensus of where we are headed and then form those ideas into a statement or vision of the future.

Well, by now, some of you are nodding in agreement and others are probably convinced that I have been totally brainwashed by Grand Lodge. Be assured, there is no brainwashing going on here. I have been concerned with the future of this Fraternity since day one of my membership. How can anyone not be concerned when they see a declining membership that so far has gone unchecked. So you see, no matter how you feel about Grand Lodge, its influence or direction, I think we can all agree that it is time to peek into the future. Just a peek mind you, to think about who we are and where we are going, what is working and what is not. No major changes, no upheaval, just some thought. Masonic life will continue just the same for Golden Gate Speranza but maybe with a little deeper understanding of who we are and were are headed.

For the remainder of the year, I will be striving to develop a statement, a paragraph if you will, that will describe how we would like this Lodge to be in the future, say five years down the road. To start this process, I have tried to complete the following two statements. The statements come from the Senior Warden Retreat materials. The answers are mine and your input will be greatly appreciated:

1. In five years our Lodge will be an organization which:
 - values harmony and is friendly to all men
 - is involved in community education
 - supports Masonic youth groups

- gives worthwhile Masonic education to its members
2. A man who joins our Lodge in the 21st century will receive the following benefits from his fraternity:
 - lifelong friends
 - a feeling of belonging
 - support when in need
 - an understanding of Masonry
 - an understanding of service to others

The journey has begun and your participation is vital. Does any of this ring a bell with you? What do you think? How would you describe this Lodge five years from now? Well, however we shape our vision, one thing is for sure. This Lodge resonates with a great deal of harmony. Let us preserve and enrich that harmony for it will be a great asset as we move forward and shape our future.

The Northern California DeMolay Alumni Association

The Northern California DeMolay Alumni Association is proud to announce that it's annual Degrees Day will be held on Saturday, August 28, at 1 p.m., at the Rockridge Masonic Hall, 5449 College Avenue, Oakland. We will be conferring both Degrees and the Majority Service. This event is open to all Master Masons, DeMolays, and Advisors.

Any Senior DeMolay interested in participating in these degrees can register at www.norcaldemolay.com/alumni/degrees.html. This is your chance to relive your special DeMolay memories and show the young men of DeMolay how we do ritual. Practice for the degrees will commence at 9 a.m., followed by a free lunch.

All brethren are welcome to attend. For further information, please contact Tim World, at (510) 415-9292 or e-mail ODRMaster2003@aol.com.

Tim World, PM
Chairman, Northern California
DeMolay Alumni Degrees 2004

Houdini, Master Mason And Master of Illusion

William E. Parker, 33°
(Continued from April 2004)

World War I put a stop to his European appearances, and, fiercely patriotic, he tried to enlist in 1917, but, at age 43, he was

rejected as too old. Not to be deterred, for the next two years, he performed at American military benefits, canteens, and training camps, usually at his own expense and often working with stars such as Bro. Will Rogers, 32°, Tom Mix, and Jim Corbett. Also active in selling Liberty Bonds, he chalked up sales of \$1,000,000 virtually single-handedly.

Interestingly, while he later began to expose spiritual charlatans, he had himself followed the same path and had given psychic presentations early in his career, spiritualism then being in vogue. In time, he became embarrassed at the gullibility of his audiences and revised the act to emphasize magic and escapes rather than spiritualism. Could mediums communicate with the Netherworld? While keeping an open mind on the subject, he developed a total aversion to psychic fraud, spending years both studying and lecturing on the issue and becoming a fervent crusader in exposing fraudulent mediums.

A member of the Craft, Houdini was not alone among Masonic magicians, a group which included such notables as Harry Keller, Howard Thurston, and Harry Blackstone. [See "Howard Thurston, Master Mason and Magician" by Ill. S. Brent Morris, 33°, G.C., *Scottish Rite Journal*, March 1998.] Initiated in St. Cecile Lodge, N.Y., July 17, 1923, he was Passed and Raised July 31 and August 21, and in 1924 he entered the Consistory. Immensely proud of his Masonic affiliation, he gave a benefit performance for the Valley of New York, filling the 4,000 seat Scottish Rite Cathedral and raising thousands of dollars for needy Masons. In October 1926, just weeks prior to his untimely death, he became a Shriner in New York's Mecca Temple.

On October 22, 1926, during an engagement at the Princess Theater in Montreal, a first-year college student asked permission to test the entertainer's abdominal muscle control and strike the magician. This was often a part of his act, so Houdini, accepted the challenge and mumbled his assent, but the student struck before Houdini could tense the necessary muscles, obviously a critical requirement. Houdini ignored later stomach pains in the tradition of "the show must go on."

Arriving in Detroit the next day, he was diagnosed with acute appendicitis but again insisted on performing. Finally, with a temperature of 104, he was taken to Grace Hospital where a ruptured gangrenous

appendix was removed, but peritonitis had unfortunately set in. Despite medical predictions of imminent death, his strong will to live was such that he held on almost a week. On the afternoon of October 31, 1926, Halloween Day, at the age of 52, he finally succumbed. Halloween was perhaps a symbolically magical date for his final curtain.

His body was taken to New York with funeral services held at the W. 43rd Street Elks Lodge Ballroom with some 2,000 in attendance. The impressive service included eulogies by Rabbis, a Broken Wand Ceremony by the Society of American Magicians, tributes from the National Vaudeville Artists and Jewish Theatrical Guild, rites by the Mt. Zion Congregation and the Elks, and Masonic Rites by St. Cecile Lodge No. 568. Burial was then in Machpelah Cemetery, Brooklyn, a site Houdini had personally selected.

The Literary Digest called Houdini "the greatest necromancer of the age—perhaps of all time." Be that as it may, before Houdini died, he said he would send a message to his wife from beyond the grave, if it were possible. Many séance attempts have been made to bring Houdini's spirit back, but none have succeeded.

In the Middle Ages, Houdini would likely have been burned at the stake by the authorities as a sorcerer. By the beginning of the 20th Century, however, history had moved on, and in today's world, the magical arts enjoy unprecedented prestige.

There is little doubt Houdini presented his death-defying escapes in a dazzling manner peculiar to his own personality. Today, Houdini's name not only endures, but has entered into the hallowed realm of legend.

William E. Parker is a Past Grand Senior Warden of the French National Grand Lodge in Paris. He is a prolific Masonic writer whose articles have been printed in numerous Masonic publications. The above article is reprinted, edited for length, from *The Short Talk Bulletin* (Vol. 78, Jan. 2000, No. 1) distributed by the Masonic Service Association of North America. This Bulletin is itself a reprint of Ill. Parker's two-part article on Houdini as it originally appeared in *The Philalethes* magazine in February and April 1998. Recently, Ill. Parker was awarded the *Philalethes* Certificate of Literature in recognition of his article "Mozart and Die Zauberflöte," judged the best article published in *The Philalethes* magazine in 2000.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



We extend greetings to the following members of Golden Gate Speranza Lodge who will be celebrating their birthday during the month of May.

John G. Peterson	2
Moses D. Garay	3
Marco A. Machado	4
Joseph Arone	5
Lorren E. Abbott.....	7
Eugene H. Latter.....	9
Edward G. Woodward, P.M.	9
A. Jack Podesta, P.M.	12
Preston M. James	13
Ray Berns	14
Laurence A. Schriber	15
William A. Capilos	15
Robert F. McFadden	16
Aden Lyle Cuykendall.....	16
John A. Loscutoff	16
Herbert L. Werner	16
Gerald W. Maurer	26

Brethren celebrating their birthdays this month are invited for a complimentary dinner.



IN MEMORIAM

Franklin Boides

Raised August 19, 1965
Entered into Rest
November 6, 2003

David Arnold Williamson

Raised August 29, 1968
Entered into Rest
February 5, 2004

Burch Caspar Bachtold

Raised September 29, 1949
Entered into Rest
March 26, 2004

Almighty Father Into Thy Hands

*We Commend the Souls of our
Dear Departed Brothers*