



DGGL NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 3

Education Committee Publication

November 2006

Roslin Park Jubilee

Freemasons the world over can justifiably hold their heads high when questioned by the profane regarding their contribution to the welfare of their fellow man.

None more so than the Brethren of this District Grand Lodge of Central South Africa, whose shining example of Brotherly Love and Charitable Actions are evinced in the shape of Roslin Park Home for the Aged.

This haven of peace and security in today's uncertain world stands out as evidence of our Masonic Obligations being practiced to the full. There are few, if any Homes of this type outside of the Masonic fold managed and financed in the manner in which it is. It is to the credit of all the Brethren in our District, who directly or indirectly, are responsible for the Homes continued existence, whether it be through management, maintenance or financial contributions.

Our District Grand Master has on many occasions, encouraged Lodge members to visit the Home, as a group or as individuals and witness first hand the efforts our Brethren are making to ensure the well-being of the Residents in their twilight years. Throughout the year, Lodges and individual Freemasons entertain the Residents and Staff and at the same time, raise much needed funds required for the running costs of the Home. These events such as Bingo afternoons, Potjie Competitions and Jumble sales etc are thoroughly enjoyed by the Residents and are much appreciated by the Staff.

This year marks the Jubilee of Roslin Park, being consecrated in March 1956. To commemorate this magnificent achievement the District Grand Lodge have bottled and specially labelled a limited edition of Red and White wines which are available for purchase through the District offices or Brother Tommy Hair, a Desk Jewel marking the occasion is also available. The District Grand Lodge encourages all of our Daughter Lodges to make a special contribution during this Jubilee year towards the continued happiness of our elderly Brethren and their families resident in the Home.

This Month's Law:

Law 133: Subject as hereinafter provided, any Qualified Member of a Lodge may be nominated for and elected to any elective office in that Lodge. Unless by Dispensation from Grand Committee, or, in a District abroad, from the District Grand Master, a Brother cannot at the same time be the Master of more than one Lodge, hold two offices in the same Lodge nor be an Office-bearer in two Lodges in the same Province or District except that a Brother may be Tyler in more than one Lodge. A Brother who holds office in or is a member of Committee of a Lodge under any Masonic Constitution shall not be entitled to hold office in any Lodge abroad unless under Dispensation from the District Grand Master, Grand Superintendent or, in the case of a Lodge under direct supervision of Grand Lodge, by authority of Grand Committee.

Any Dispensation granted under this Law shall be for a specified period not exceeding two years.

Comment from District Grand Lodge:

Whilst it is extremely unlikely that a Brother would be granted dispensation to assume the Chair of two Lodges concurrently, it is quite common in this District that Brethren hold membership and are office bearers of two or more Lodges. This fact does not obviate the need for the necessary dispensation.

Masonic Etiquette:

Ritual: As a rule, masonry is progressive; therefore one can usually expect to proceed through the offices within the Lodge in a sequential manner. This, lends itself nicely for knowing what will be expected of each individual during the forthcoming year, with regards to ritual.

All too often, the RWM of the Lodge can be heard complaining that he hasn't had time to learn the necessary obligation, or the SW the investiture. This is generally unacceptable as, even with the rapid rate of promotions, one knows in advance what will be expected of them.

The Master Elect, prior to installation, confirms that he is "... well skilled in our science ..." and as such, should only have to brush up on the Master's workings and spend the year learning, firstly the Ceremony of Installation, then, if he has aspirations of joining District Grand Lodge, the workings normally allocated to Stewards.

This practise shows respect for your Lodge, its members and the District.

In forthcoming editions of this Newsletter further discussions regarding the duties of Office Bearers will be discussed.

November Installations:

Opherton 886 – Wednesday 1 st
 Caledonian 1046 – Thursday 2 nd
 Energy 1760 – Saturday 4 th
 Benoni Kilwinning 993 – Wednesday 8 th
 Alba Gu Brath 1802 – Friday 10 th
 Commonwealth 958 – CANCELLED
 Far East Caledonian 1274 – Thursday 16 th
 Bloemhof-Fontein 1250 – Saturday 18 th
 Somah Herber 1485 – Wednesday 22 nd
 ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE – Sunday 26 th

Almoner's Corner:

The District Grand Almoner, Brother Nick Hadassin, has requested that Brethren please assist him to perform his duties by contacting him should you know of any Brother, or member of his family, who may be indisposed, going into hospital, requiring company or a lift, to and from meetings.

Brethren I remind you that: -

".... Every member of the District is urged to be the 'eyes and ears' of our Almoners."

Contact Nick Hadassin on 083-227-0848 or any of the Brethren listed below.

Contributions: If any Brother has suggestions for articles, or questions for which they are seeking answers, please address them to any of the below mentioned and we will endeavour to provide the required information.

"HE PLUCKED OFF HIS SHOE....."

In the Master's Lecture of the Entered Apprentice Degree, we learn that in ancient Israel it was customary for a man to "pluck off his shoe and give it to his neighbour" in order "to confirm all things." We further learn that as Masons we have adopted this custom, to demonstrate the "sincerity of our intentions in the business in which we are engaged."

Why would plucking off of one's shoe be a confirmation of anything? We do it all the time. Many of us have even given shoes to an unfortunate child, or given shoes to charitable organizations to help the destitute. There is nothing really uncommon in the act of plucking off our shoes and giving them away. Or is there?

To us today, perhaps not, but it should.

The Book of Ruth in the Holy Bible is a thought-provoking story. Among the many lessons it contains is the story of Boaz and Ruth. Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, the widow of Mahlon. Boaz wanted to purchase a piece of land in order that he might wed Ruth. To confirm the land purchase, Boaz "plucked off his shoe."

Boaz then told the elders that they were witnesses to this purchase. "Moreover," he told the elders, "Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place."

Boaz then plucked off his shoe. This was a simple but significant act, because for a man to give up his shoes in ancient Israel meant that he had to walk barefoot over hot, rough and rocky ground. It meant that he was giving up an important portion of his creature comforts. To regain his shoe, he had to fulfil his pledge.

In plucking off his shoe, Boaz was pledging his honour, just as until recent times a business deal could be confirmed by a handshake. Some decades ago the extending of the right hand proved that a man came in peace. So the extending and joining of right hands became a friendly gesture.

Every man who enters Freemasonry plucks off his shoe. In doing so, you made a solemn pledge to keep all the obligations you assumed as you advanced in the Craft, one degree at a time.

Have you kept this pledge? Of course you haven't. Nor have I. No human being can. But the important thing we have to ask ourselves is: "Have I tried? Have I plucked off my shoe since I was initiated?"

A brief story will illustrate what we mean here. In a small town in mid-19th century America a young man said to his wife, "Mary, you have a shawl you never use. May I have it?"

She was puzzled for a few moments, but got the shawl. He thanked her and left the house. She was also suspicious, because several evenings during the past few months he had left after dinner without any explanation. He was never gone long, and when he returned he seemed to have an inner peace about him. He said nothing, and neither did she.

About a week later, Mary was shopping in the village when she saw her shawl again. She was shocked. It was on the shoulders of a beautiful young lady. Angrily Mary followed the girl to a shabby shack. Mary knocked on the door. The girl opened it and smiled when she saw the visitor. She held the door open and Mary stomped in.

As Mary looked around she saw an elderly lady propped up on a cot. The lady smiled and said: "How nice of you to visit us."

Mary was stunned. She did not really know what to say. The girl asked if she could fix her a cup of tea. Mary nodded and the girl turned to put a kettle on the stove.

While the water was heating, Mary said "I do not know exactly what to say, so I will tell you the truth. I saw my shawl on your daughter and I was furious. Last week my husband asked me for it, but didn't tell me why. I still don't understand how you have it."

The mother said "We have no idea who left it. We have no idea who has been doing some nice things for us for the past several months. Perhaps now we can solve the mystery. It started soon after my husband died. We had no money

and I am unable to work. And Nancy couldn't find a job. We were desperate. We had no food and no fuel. Then one morning when Nancy opened the door she found several packages of food, clothing and coal on the doorstep. You have no idea what that meant to us.

"A short time later, along with more packages, Nancy found a note telling her to see Mr. Tompkins, the lawyer, if she would like a job. She did and Mr. Tompkins hired her. He sent a doctor to see, who has been coming regularly ever since. And he won't take any money. And we still find packages, but have no idea where they come from."

They drank their tea and chatted pleasantly for some time. The mysterious packages were mentioned from time to time. Suddenly Mary asked: "Was your husband a Mason?"

"Yes, he was," said the lady. "He loved his Lodge. I don't think he ever missed a meeting." A short time later Mary left, promising to visit often.

After dinner that evening, Mary worked on a quilt she was making while her husband read. She looked up from her work and said "I think I learned the great secret of Masonry today."

Her husband looked at her with alarm and asked, "And what is it?"

Mary answered, "To do good and not say anything about it."

The Masons of that small town had plucked off their shoes to help those in need. SHOULD WE DO ANYTHING LESS?

Millions of great men have been and are members of the Craft. Many have become truly Master Masons. But more have not. Actually, only a few Freemasons over the years literally plucked off a shoe and worked for the Fraternity. Imagine what a wonderful difference it would make throughout the world if only those millions who have received the Degrees would fulfil their obligations.

Will you ask yourself: "Have I sincerely plucked off my shoe in testimony of my fidelity to Freemasonry?"

If your answer is "No," will you consider plucking off your shoe? Will you work for your fellowman through Freemasonry? If you will, you'll make a difference for the better in today's uncertain world.

The Lodge Where I Belong - Arthur R. Herrman

Though my lodge may lack the splendour
Of a Temple or a Shrine,
Or possess the gaudy fixtures
that are classed as superfine.

Yet the fellowship it offers
is in a price beyond compare.
And I wouldn't trade it ever
for life's treasures rich or bare!

The handclasp firm, the word of cheer,
Oh, such meanings they impart,
The mystic ties of brotherhood
that links us heart to heart!

You'd really have to travel far,
For the friendships quite so strong,
As those one always find right here
In the Lodge where I belong.

When all my earthly travels end,
And at last I'm borne to rest
Where mortal hands no longer toil
and I cease life's endless quest.

Why there's nothing I'd like better,
should I join the heavenly throng,
than to meet with all the Brothers
of the Lodge Where I Belong.

Websites: District Grand Lodge: www.dgl-sa.com - District Grand Royal Arch Chapter: www.dgrac-sa.com

Contact: John Grant: john.grant@inl.co.za or Grant Baird: grant@cadplan.co.za (083-293-2425) or Charlie Wilson: wilsonch@telkomsa.net