



The Occasional Bulletin

Texas Lodge of Research, A.F. & A.M.



Number 1

Spring

2011

At Galveston quarterly meeting

Morris installed 17th Fellow in Masonic Research

Unquestionably one of the most memorable meetings in many years for Texas Lodge of Research was held this past Jan. 15 in Galveston.

Not even a sullen sky and rainfall could dampen the spirits of those members and wives who braved Houston traffic to be able to wind down at the TLR hospitality room at the Tremont House Hotel on Ships Mechanic Street in the historic Strand District on Friday evening. Senior Steward Brad Billings laid out a great Mardi Gras-themed hospitality room with snacks of "Moon Pies" and the usual liquid refreshments. He also brought along Mardi Gras beads which were supplemented by Worship Master Sirmon, who offered everyone special flashing light beads from the Krewe to



Dr. S. Brent Morris receives his Fellow in Masonic Research from Worshipful Master Wayne Sirmon.

which he belongs in Mobile's Mardi Gras celebration. At supper time, members found their way to several local eateries in a town renowned for great seafood and Italian cuisine.

On Saturday morning, members and a few spouses found their way to the nearby Scottish Rite Cathedral, the Mother Consistory in Texas, for pastries and coffee.

Worshipful Master Sirmon dropped the gavel in the beautiful auditorium at 10 a.m. for a short but productive business meeting, before the lodge

was closed. After a brief recess, papers were delivered by two first-time presenters.

Harmony Lodge No. 4 was our host for the event and their Worshipful Master and former TLR Chaplain, Rabbi Jimmy Kessler, offered a fine catered lunch of sandwiches and pastries at no cost to TLR. However, at the morning meeting, WM Sirmon insisted that a "kitty" be put on the table for lodge members to make a voluntary contribution to the lodge as a "thank you" for the

Next Stated Communication Lockhart, Texas

Friday, March 18, 2011

4 p.m. Hospitality Room opens at the Plum Creek Inn. Dutch-treat dinner at a local restaurant.

Saturday, March 19, 2011

9 a.m. Quarterly Meeting of Texas Lodge of Research hosted by Lockhart Lodge No. 690. See back page for details and addresses.

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On the web at:

www.texaslodgofresearch.org

By Wayne Sirmon

A message from the Master

THANK YOU!

What else could I say for the wonderful support that the members of TLR have given me during the past year? Kind words have been whispered to keep me on track and on time as I have worked to keep Texas Lodge of Research the model after which other research lodges seek to pattern themselves. This year has seen excellent papers presented; the installation of a new Fellow in Masonic Research; energetic officers; and enjoyable Friday night hospitality.

Our quarterly meetings are a wonderful blend of new and longtime Masons; men who are just discovering the wealth of Masonic outside the covers of the ritual and men who have spent decades enjoying the history and philosophy of our fraternity. TLR is not an isolated group of "Masonic scholars" but rather a group of "Masonic students" who are involved in a wonderful variety of other Masonic endeavors. Looking around the lodge room you see the fresh faces of the college student and those of well traveled past Grand Officers. At the hour of refreshment, Brothers share experiences in virtually every branch of Freemasonry.

One of the strengths of Texas Lodge of Research – perhaps its greatest strength – is the insistence of high standards. The lodge's administrative, financial, social and ritual work is above average for the "regular" lodges I



visit. Publications continue to draw very positive comments from the readership and the procedures and product of Masonic research mark TLR as the standard of excellence for others.

During my term of office, we have been contacted by new research lodges in Mississippi and Alabama. Our input has been sought out by researchers around the world and our members continue to serve in the advancement of the principles of the Order – not only with our words, but with our deeds.

One of the earliest goals set for us by Masonry is that we should improve ourselves. I can think of no better way to do this than by active participation in TLR. Through study and writing we learn about our past and consider that the future may hold. Through the sharing of ideas and experiences we become better prepared to be of service to our mother lodges, the appendant bodies and to our individual Brothers. Without

Galveston

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warm hospitality.

Members of the Galveston SR Bodies Order of St. Andrew and Scottish Rite Stage Crew were invaluable before, during and after the meeting as the go-to guys when something, or someone, was needed to move the meeting along.

Following lunch, many TLR members assumed academic robes and in grand procession escorted the 17th Texas Lodge of Research Fellow in Masonic Research, Dr. S. Brent Morris, into the auditorium for his induction and oration. He was introduced by FMR Pierre G. "Pete" Normand, PM, who outlined the many facets of our honoree in his professional career as a mathematician and cryptanalyst for the Federal Government, and his many Masonic accomplishments. Dr. Morris, Editor of the *Scottish Rite Journal*, is often quoted in national media on Masonic topics and is the "go-to" when it comes to interviews following big screen, Masonic-related, movies, like the series of books by Dan Brown. His presentation, augmented with Powerpoint illustrations, was titled "A Time Line of High-degree Masonry." The well researched presentation, was warmly received and we look forward to its publication in an upcoming issue of the *Transactions*.

Earlier, following the tiled meeting, the ladies and other family guests were invited into the auditorium for the presentation of two research



Worshipful Master Sirmon (left) greets Jeffrey P. Modzelewski and Brady T. McNulty following receiving their Full Member aprons. Editorial Committee-man Herbert C. Arbuckle III (right) presented Bro. and fellow Corpus Christi resident McNulty with his apron.

papers. Bro. Jeffrey P. Modzelewski, Secretary and PM of Harmony Lodge No. 6, presented a paper titled "In Search of What Was Lost: The Perspective of W.L. Wilms-hurst on the Essence of the Craft." Brother Brady T. McNulty, Junior Warden of Oso Naval Lodge in Corpus Christi presented a paper titled "Why an Altar?" Both papers were warmly received and most deserving of Full Membership for their authors.

Galveston was certainly a prime location for our great event.

From the Master

a doubt I can say that my association with Texas Lodge of Research is one of the great pleasures I have found in my Masonic travels. To serve as

Billings named Webmaster

GALVESTON – Senior Steward Brad Billings has been appointed Texas Lodge of Research Webmaster effective immediately. Long time Webmaster Pete Martinez, PM, becomes Assistant Webmaster.

Contact Brad by email at bradbst@yahoo.com.

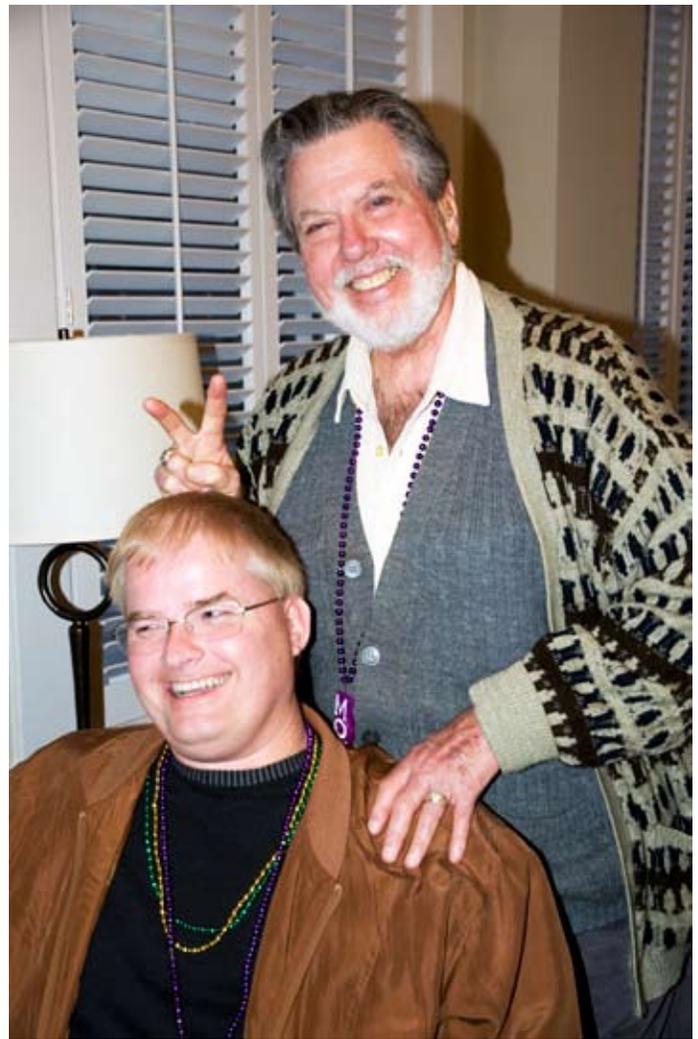
The lodge website is at www.texaslodgeofresearch.org.

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its Worshipful Master has been a great honor.

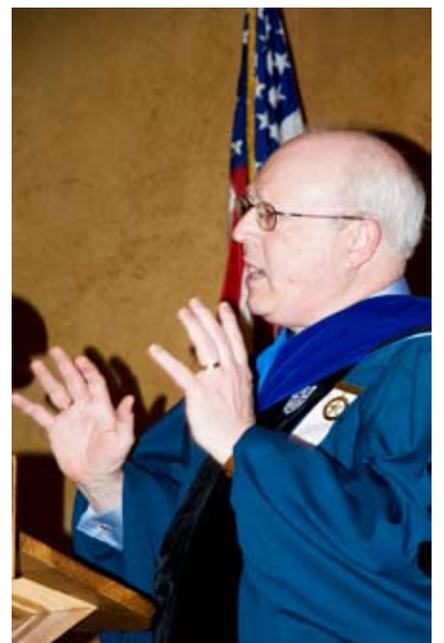
Now go study – write – share – enjoy your Texas Lodge of Research.

Clockwise from right: Treasurer Mark Dermit and Editorial Committeeman Herb Arbuckle clown around in the Mardi Gras-themed hospitality room at the Tremont Hotel on Friday evening. The opulent decor of the Galveston Scottish Rite Cathedral added an air of elegance to the January meeting, presentation of papers and induction of our newest Fellow in Masonic Research. Dr. S. Brent Morris presents his informative paper on the origins of the so-called higher Masonic degrees. Past Master Pierre "Pete" Normand (left), prepares to introduce Dr. Morris for induction as the 17th Fellow in Masonic Research. As new Full Member Bro. McNulty and Worshipful Master Sirmon share the stage. Past Masters Truitt Bradly (left) and Deputy Grand Master James Brumit, PM, enjoy the hospitality room. Carrying out the Mardi Gras atmosphere, members were treated to *Moon Pies* and beads, including special lighted ones from the Mobile Krewe to which WM Sirmon belongs.



Galveston snapshots





Durham Group Festive Board to include Elvis visit



Members and guests of Study Group UK Branch No. 1 take their ties to Texas seriously. Left photo: Reinactors dress in Confederate costumes honoring Confederate Heroes Day, a state holiday in Texas. Right photo: The lodge dining room was decorated with flags from the CSA and USA.

The brethren of Study Group UK Branch No. 1 in County Durham, England are gearing up to welcome Worshipful Master Wayne Sirmon at their March 5, 2011 quarterly meeting in Chester-Le-Street.

Coinciding with a celebration of Texas Independence Day, three days earlier, our Worshipful Master has accepted the gracious invitation of the study group to attend the meeting and festive board.

According to W. Bro. Dr. Alan Bell, *Marshall* of the study group, a feast of western-style ribs will be spread at the festive board to be followed by a social event headlined by none other than "El-

vis." (We always wondered where he went when he "left the building!")

TLR members who might be in County Durham on March 5 are invited to contact Dr. Bell at abell@criticalstratageys.com to make reservations at £10.00 per person, which includes a raffle ticket.

This is the second year the Brethren in County Durham have hosted the Worshipful Master of TLR at the March meeting. One only has to ask Past Masters Jack Harper, or Jim Dougherty, about the hospitality of these good brethren at their inaugural meeting in 2010.

Endowed? What else might I do for my lodge?

Over its history TLR has been blessed with a large number of Endowed Membership purchases. As our Texas brethren know, there have been no returns on those investments for the past two years, and it is expected that only a percentage of what we have expected in the past from Grand Lodge will come to the lodge this year.

Many Endowed Members of Texas lodges have voluntarily donated a portion of what they normally would have paid as a regular member to their Blue Lodge.

If you are an Endowed Member of TLR, please consider a nominal donation to offset the cost of publications which all of our members receive.

Any amount will be appreciated and may be mailed to the Secretary at the address on the back of this magazine.

Form and Style Manual available on website

Texas Lodge of Research's *Form and Style Manual* is available to authors at the lodge website: www.texaslodgeof-research.org for downloading. The document is 23 pages, so make sure you have plenty of paper.

The Editorial Committee and Senior Warden stress that authors who follow the very user-friendly manual will have far fewer corrections to make.

What advice would you give a brother who intends writing a history of his lodge?

(Editor's note: This short paper by Herbert C. Arbuckle III, a member of the TLR Editorial Committee, first appeared in *Transactions* Vol. XIV 1978-79. It contains a great deal of good advice for first-time authors. Keep those lodge histories coming!)

First and foremost, history should be interesting reading. A Masonic Lodge's history should never be the mere transcription of minutes; it should be vibrant and living, as were the people who made it. John E. Kelly's history of Blue Bonnet Lodge, *Behold How Good*, and Frank

S. Tamsett's of Kelly Lodge, *The Good Tree*, are excellent examples.

Remember the 5 W's: who, what, when, where, and why.

WHO organized the Lodge; were charter members; the balls of fire who kept things going through lean times and good; the outstanding members; became G. L. Officers; held local, state or national office?

WHAT was the reason the Lodge was organized; had it done to be outstanding; is it doing today?

WHEN were the Dispensation and Charter granted; did it get its current permanent home; was it honored by G. L.; did it hold unusually important meetings?

WHERE was it organized, its first permanent home and homes throughout the years? Use photographs.

WHY was its name chosen; were the stated communications dates selected; does it do some things different from other lodges?

Masonry in Alabama, a Sesquicentennial History, 1821-1971, by Joseph Abram Jackson, pages 207-14, will be exceptionally helpful.

The basic outline for writing a history of your own lodge includes:

- Organization
- Charter Members
- Dispensation and Charter
- Location
- Finances
- Important Occasions
- Outstanding Members
- Accomplishments
- Contemporary History
- Keep Current

From the Secretary

By Jim Dougherty, PM, Secretary and Occasional Bulletin Editor



By now, members of TLR should have their 2011 dues card and our request for prompt payment. Many thanks to those of you who have already responded. If your card hasn't been delivered, it is probably either lost in the mail or we do not have a current mailing address. Dues cards went into First Class Mail and are usually forwarded; however, older changes, or "undeliverable as addressed" leave us in a lurch for future mailings.

Prior to the Galveston meeting we received dues payments from over 150 members. Thank you to all who started the TLR New Year right.

The next edition of the *Transactions* will be in the mail sometime prior to the June meeting and if we do not have a good address, your copy is not forwarded to you, and ends up in the "dead letter" office. It is important to keep in touch with your lodge.

We also appreciate the notification by next of kin of those members we have lost to the "Celestial Lodge above."

who have responded after the cards were mailed out. Due to a new office printer, addressing of dues cards was delayed until after Christmas. Thanks to our Past Master and Microsoft Access guru, Truitt Bradley, the cards were printed and stuffed along with a self-addressed return envelope, stamped and at the post office on Jan. 2. Boy, is my grand-dog and office assistant, Chubs, the pug's, tongue tired!

One member has questioned the fact that our dues cards do not carry the raised seal of the lodge. Cards do carry the printed seal of the Grand Lodge of Texas on the reverse, along with the authentication of our lodge by Grand Secretary Guest.

TLR went to the "honors system" of mailing of dues cards in order to save the lodge almost \$350.00 in postage, about the same additional amount for extra printing, stationery and countless hours of additional handling by the Secretary.

For any member who wants to "assure" that his dues card is legitimate, the lodge seal will be available at our quarterly meetings.

See you in Lockhart!

I want to send out a big "thank you" to those members who sent in payments in anticipation of the 7 dues statement mailing and those

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Upcoming Meetings

March 18 - 19, 2011 Host: Lockhart Lodge No. 690, Lockhart. Election and installation of officers.

June 17 - 18, 2011 Host: Southside Lodge No. 1114, Fort Worth. Anson Jones Lecture.

September 17 - 18, 2011 Host: H. A. McFarland Lodge No. 1388, Odessa. Joint meeting with New Mexico Lodge of Research.

January 20 - 21, 2012 Host: Tyler Lodge No. 1233, Tyler.

March 16 - 17, 2012 Host: Fredericksburg Lodge No. 794, Fredericksburg. Election and installation of officers.

Lockhart Lodge No. 690 to host TLR for annual election and installation of officers

IMPORTANT TIME CHANGE: Due to previous commitments of Grand Master and Installing Officer MW Gene Carnes, the lodge will open promptly at 9:00 a.m. There will be a brief business meeting, election of officers followed by the installation prior to lunch. Please plan to arrive at the lodge at least one hour earlier than in the past.

Texas Lodge of Research returns to the heart of Central Texas and the city of Lockhart for its March meeting and installation of officers. As has become an unofficial tradition, the incoming Worshipful Master's lodge will host the meeting.

Hotel accommodations have been arranged at Plum Creek Inn. Identify yourself as with "Texas Lodge of Research." Availability and rate of \$68, plus tax, is only guaranteed through March 4.

The inn's address is 2001 Highway 183 South. The inn does not take reservations via internet, so please phone them at (512) 398-4911.

The hospitality room will open at 4 p.m Friday and it is expected that in the barbeque capitol of Texas, no one will go away hungry from the Dutch treat dinner. Supper arrangements have been made at the famed Kreuz Market. Tableware is not normally provided, but will be available for those not wishing to "do as in Rome" and use their fingers.

Lockhart Lodge No. 690 is located at 602 S. Main St.

A research paper by first time presenter and Junior Deacon David Peavy titled "Edward Burleson: Vice President of the Republic, Brigadier General, and Texas Freemason" and a paper by Past Grand Master and former Anson Jones Lecturer Judge Jack Hightower titled "Richard Beshe, Grandson of Benjamin Franklin" will be delivered following the business session and lunch. It's a program not to be missed!