



The Occasional Bulletin

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

Number 2

Spring

2011

At Lockhart quarterly meeting

Grand Master Carnes installs 2011 TLR officers



New officers of Texas Lodge of Research were duly installed at the March quarterly meeting in Lockhart. Installing Marshal and Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master James Brumit is at right. Incoming Worshipful Master Merlen Howe, Junior Past Master of Lockhart No. 690 continued the practice of asking his home lodge to host the quarterly meeting and installation. The morning session and installation had an attendance of almost 100 members, unaffiliated Masons and guests.

LOCKHART - The annual transitional meeting of Texas Lodge of Research was held in incoming Worshipful Master Merlen Howe's lodge in Lockhart on March 19.

Senior Steward Brad Billings kicked off the weekend with a St. Paddy's Day themed hospitality room, complete with tasty emerald flaked cupcakes and Irish beverages. After a break for barbecue supper at famed Kreitz Market, members and wives returned to the hospitality room where soon-to-be First Lady Judy Howe broke out the dominoes for games late into the night.

Saturday morning, the usual meeting hour was pushed back to 9 a.m. to accommodate installing officer and Grand Master Gene Carnes' busy schedule. Members of the National Sojourners' Heroes of '76 organization presented the colors and toasted the national standard. Worshipful Master Howe was elected last year the National Sojourners'

third vice president. He will lead the organization of Masons who are also current or retired NCO-rank, or above, servicemen.

Outgoing Worshipful Master Wayne Sirmon reported on his visit with the TLR Study Group in County Durham earlier in March. He went on to say that his wife is ready to go back in July! They also visited the Grand Lodge of England headquarters in London and Wayne was invited to attend a lodge meeting and degree presentation in Durham.

While the wardens advanced, there was a spirited race for the South with Past Grand Master Reese L. Harrison Jr. of San Antonio and Oscar Orum of Austin being nominated. RW Harrison

Next Stated Communication Fort Worth, Texas

Friday, June 17, 2011
No Hospitality Room or social activities planned.

Saturday, March 18, 2011
Noon lunch provided by host lodge, Southside No. 1114.
2 p.m. Quarterly Meeting of Texas Lodge of Research.
5:30 p.m. Reception, dinner and Anson Jones Lecture.
See back page for important details and addresses for this meeting.

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Texas Lodge of Research Tableau of Officers 2011-2012

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Editorial Committee	James McCrae, <i>ex officio</i> David B. Dibrell, PGM Raymond Bronk, PM Gordon W. Kelso, PM
Webmaster Emeritus	Pete Martinez, PM
Bulletin Copy Editor	Herbert C. Arbuckle III

On the web at:

www.texaslodgereasearch.org



By Merlen Howe

Message from the Master

Many moments in life are treasured. The first of a lot of things: the first date, the first kiss, obtaining a driver's license, going hunting, the first new home, earning an advanced degree, and getting married are but a few. I remember all those and more. When I was Worshipful Master of Lockhart Lodge, I celebrated being a Master Mason for 50 years. As Master of Texas Lodge of Research, I celebrate with Judy 50 years of marriage.

The officers of TLR were truly honored by being installed by Most Worshipful Gene Carnes as installing officer, Right Worshipful Jim Brumit as installing marshal and Past Master Clyde Kenneaster as installing chaplain. What a privilege it was to be installed by these great Masons and all members of TLR!

Our Junior Past Master, Brother Wayne Sirmon, created a memorable year with his leadership and enthusiasm. He must have breathed a sigh of relief upon being relieved of duty. Now he has the time to reflect on the achievements of the years spent as a vital member of the TLR leadership team. An often heard naval expression is appropriate for him: "May you have fair winds and following seas."

I have a few goals for TLR.

One is to have a program developed and implemented for the Masons of Texas to enhance their knowledge of Freemasonry and its history. This concept was approved in March 2010; however, the assembling of information and the creation of questions have taken longer than expected. This effort will reward the Masons of Texas as they pursue the trail of ever in-



Merlen Howe

creasing exploration of Freemasonry.

Another goal is for TLR to visit West Texas, specifically Odessa, and hold a joint meeting with New Mexico Lodge of Research. The joint meeting was suggested by our Senior Warden, Jim McCrae. Each lodge of research will have a member present a research paper.

A third goal focuses on modifying our Bylaws, if necessary, after those of Grand Lodge, but more specifically to develop Rules and Regulations for TLR. Currently TLR has no Rules and Regulations. A committee of wise brothers will explore and ascertain what might be included and submit suggestions to the lodge for consideration. Topics will include evaluation of a way to learn which Full Members might desire to make themselves available for Junior Warden, criteria for the selection of recipients of the Carter Literary Excellence Award, clarification for the process of nominating and selecting the Fellows in Masonic Research, feasibility of a committee to facilitate the

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Message,

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selection of the Anson Jones lecturer, selection of celebrations around Texas where TLR might have representation, and consideration of honoring our ladies with certificates of appreciation. Other topics may be submitted in writing by anyone to the committee chair for consideration.

The fourth goal, which is critical to our cyber existence, is an interactive web site with appropriate links and frequent updating. Brother Brad Billings merits our gratitude for his leadership in developing the new Web site and Brothers Howard Brown and David Brindel for their skills. This committee is BBB, Billings, Brown and Brindel!

The fifth goal will have a Fellow in Masonic Research present "good and wholesome instruction" during each upcoming meeting.

And sixth is to have up to 10 papers written, reviewed and available for presentation. Brethren, every Texan has a story to tell. Every Texas Mason has a story to write before the valuable information is lost in the dust pile of history. Search for the truth of your story, research the available materials and formulate a paper contributing to the body of Texas Masonic knowledge and history. TLR and all the Masons of Texas will thank you and you'll feel good by accomplishing a vital project.

Above all is the commitment of the elected and appointed officers to expand the peace and harmony among the brothers who attend each meeting so that upon departure all can say: "How good and pleasant it was to be together."

Upcoming meetings of the lodge

FORT WORTH - See information on back page of this *Occasional Bulletin*.

ODESSA - The Sept. 17, 2011 stated meeting will be hosted by H.A. McFarland Lodge No. 1338, 700 Lettie Lee, Odessa. Light breakfast will be available one hour before the stated meeting. Lodge will be opened at 9:00 a.m. The earlier hour will provide more time in the afternoon for travelers to return home. This will be a historic joint meeting with the New Mexico Lodge of Research. It is anticipated that a paper will be delivered by a member from each research lodge.

Accommodations are available at the Grande Hotel Fundome, 6201 E. Business I-20. Contact is via Web at www.mcmgrande.com or by phone at (866) 432-2311. The group name is Texas Lodge of Research. Room rates are \$87.99 (interior), \$82.99 (exterior) and \$119.99 for a suite. Complimentary hot breakfast is provided as are 5:30-7:00 p.m. complimentary cocktails. Cut-off date is Sep 1, 2011. Bro. Max Hirrill is the local coordinator.

TYLER - The Jan. 21, 2012 meeting will be hosted by Tyler Lodge No. 1233, 1329 E. Fifth St. Tyler. Light breakfast will be available before TLR opening at 9 a.m. The earlier hour will provide more time in the afternoon for travelers to return home. Accommodations will be at the Holiday Inn Express. The website is www.hietyler.com. Ask for the Texas Lodge of Research rate of \$99. Bro. Pete Martinez is the local coordinator.

Information about the March meeting in Fredericksburg will be forthcoming.

Please note that these details are subject to change, so consult the TLR Web site for updates.

Martinez recipient of Golden Trowel



Past Master and retiring TLR Web Master Pete Martinez was surprised at the Lockhart meeting when the Committee of Nomination for the Golden Trowel named him as the 2010-11 recipient. Worshipful Master Sirmon presented the award as Grand Master Gene Carnes looks on.

Right: Grand Master Carnes (center) and his State Coordinator and new TLR Senior Warden Jim McCrae (left) visit with Grand Treasurer Archie Scott. Below: Members and ladies returned to the Plum Creek Inn hospitality room after supper to socialize. Judy Howe brought out the dominos and fun was had by all.



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was elected. Both Treasurer McDermit and Secretary Dougherty were reelected.

Two major issues were brought before the lodge regarding the future of the TLR Web site and the *Occasional Bulletin*. These are covered in the Secretary's column on page 7.

In a surprise to the honoree, the Golden Trowel Committee reported the nomination of long time TLR member and contributor to Masonic research, Pete Martinez, PM. Pete humbly accepted the award.

During the afternoon open session two papers were presented. First time author Archie Smith of Burnet presented a great lodge history of Blazing Star Lodge in the Texas Hill Country. Past Master Gordon Kelso presented a historical sketch of the life of Richard Bache, early Texan, Mason and grandson of Benjamin Franklin authored by Past Grand Master Judge Jack E. Hightower.

Lockhart snapshots

Photos by Doug Collins, Jim Dougherty and Pete Martinez

Right: Herb Arbuckle presents framed copies of a picture that ran in the American Automobile Association magazine featuring long time Kreuz Market employee Miss Ella Townes. The famed Lockhart barbecue joint was the location for Friday's supper. Below: Senior Steward Brad Billings didn't miss a trick for our St. Paddy's Day hospitality room. Derby-shaped rings adorned tasty cupcakes and Irish beverages marked the event.





Top left: Worshipful Master Howe welcomes Bro. Archie Smith to Full Membership after he presented his paper. Top right: A Heroes of '76 Color Guard enters the lodge room. Above left: Retiring Worshipful Master Wayne Simon greets Grand Master Gene Carnes prior to the installation. Above right: Installing Marshal RW James Brumit presents Worshipful Master-elect Howe for installation. Junior Warden Reese L. Harrison Jr. and Senior Warden James McCrae await their turn. Right: Worshipful Master Howe presents roses to wife of 50 years, Judy and daughter, Paula Howe.



Durham Group Festive Board includes visit by Elvis



Above, left: Worshipful Master Wayne Sirmon and wife, Maryella, share the head table with Study Group “Marshall” Alan Bell and wife, Hazel.

Above, right: Several pistol-packing mamas dance to the music of what appeared to be a “Mid-life Elvis.”

Left: Two rather rough characters enjoy themselves during a lull in the program.

Photos courtesy Geoff Hadaway

Worshipful Master Wayne Sirmon and his wife Maryella participated in the March 4 meeting of the County Durham Study Group of TLR in the United Kingdom.

Meeting at Freemasons Hall in the city of Chester-Le-Street, the Masons gathered in the lodge with opening ceremonies that included the singing of “God Save the Queen” and reciting the pledge to the Texas flag. After all present were properly vouched for by the UK Branch officers, the usual administrative business was handled in an efficient manner. The gavel (which bore a strong resemblance to a cap and ball revolver) was presented to Bro. Sirmon who thanked the Brothers for their warm welcome and then presented a short paper on “Masonic Heroes of the Alamo.” He then outlined the procedure for submitting a paper to TLR and urged each member to

consider possible topics.

After taking a collection for charity, the Study Group was closed and all retired to the banquet hall where we were joined by the ladies, all decked out in western wear. After enjoying excellently prepared ribs with sides of beans and potatoes, toasts were made to Queen, country and Freemasonry. The Festive Board was then entertained by an Elvis tribute artist who portrayed “The King” with skill and enthusiasm.



As the spirit of the assembled members and guests reached Mardi Gras levels, “Elvis” led the crowd in “The Eyes of Texas.” Upon hearing the opening notes, Bro. Sirmon (who attended UT 1970-72) quickly rose with hand held high signaling “hook’em horns.” The fellow Masons taking their cue, rose and soon the room shook from the robust singing.

Two nights later, the Durham Brothers arranged for Sirmon to attend a Fellowcraft Degree at John Readhead Lodge No. 3217 in South Shield. Four TLR members were introduced and Bro. Sirmon was permitted to offer the response to the Toast to Visiting Brothers during the Festive Board. While everyone extended the hand of true friendship to their visitors from the “Colonies” special thanks is given to Brothers Alan Bell and John Dale and their ladies.

WM makes committee appointments

Worshipful Master Howe has made the following committee appointments for the coming year:

Audit Committee: Truitt Bradly, chair; Eric Sims, Robert Risko Sr., Roberto Sanchez, Keye Perry Sr. and Senior and Junior Wardens.

Budget/finance/investing Committee: Truitt Bradly chair; Leonard Harvey, Jack Harper, Charles McKay, Brad Billings and Senior and Junior Wardens.

Necrology Committee: Jim Dougherty and David Counts.

Technology Committee: Brad Billings, chair; Harold Brown and David Brindle.

Dr. James David Carter Award Committee: Ray Bronk, chair; Herb Arbuckle and Doug Collins.

Committee to develop Rules and Regulations and review TLR Bylaws: Gordon Kelso, chair; Jim Dougherty and Truitt Bradly.

Masonic Education Program and Certification Committee: Bob Northcutt, chair; Wayne Sirmon, Pete Martinez, Mark Dermit, Ross Cox and Jim Dougherty.

Committee on TLR recognition events: Jim McCrae, chair; Herb Arbuckle and Clyde Kenneaster.

Mentoring committee: Jim McCrae, chair, Roy Harris and Pete Normand.

Important information about the *Occasional Bulletin*

By Jim Dougherty, PM, Secretary and *Occasional Bulletin* Editor



Shortly after the last edition of the *Occasional Bulletin* was published, I was informed that our printer, the Texas School for the Deaf, would be increasing the cost of each copy of the magazine from roughly 30 cents to \$3.00 per copy, effective immediately. This also affects the Texas Grand Chapter and Council publication, *Through the Veils*.

Frankly brethren, having been in the journalism business for almost 50 years I've seen the evolution of mass communications, and anticipated change coming. We simply have been priced out of the market in producing the fraternal news magazine our members have come to expect.

At the Lockhart meeting the situation was brought before the lodge. Treasurer McDermit commented on the approximately \$8,000 difference in what we budget for the OB and what future annual costs will be. A motion to discontinue the print version after this issue was narrowly defeated, but the financial issue still exists and the lodge will undoubtedly revisit the future of the print version soon. The *Occasional Bulletin* continues to be posted

on the TLR Web site: www.texaslodgeofresearch.org.

We are painfully aware that some of our members may miss the "feel" of a printed magazine in their hand, or in a very few instances, may not be able to access the Web site. We are sincerely sorry for these brothers, but our current dues structure and budget do not offer enough cushion to continue our current mode of publication. Undoubtedly there will be more discussion between now and the Fort Worth meeting. Ideas are solicited.

Please be aware that the annual *Transactions* in book form will continue to be published as usual for the foreseeable future. However, the first 40 volumes of the *Transactions* have been scanned by Past Master Pete Martinez. This initial collection and future volumes will be available in electronic files on CD at a later date.

Of course, putting the magazine together for the Web site will be no easier or less time consuming than in the past. But finances would seem to mandate a change.

The silver lining in all this is that the electronic *Occasional Bulletin* is available to members within days after the stated meeting. Quicker information on meeting locations and hotel accommodations will make planning your trip to future TLR weekends much easier.

During the Lockhart meeting, Webmaster Brad Billings presented an informative proposal for a professionally designed Web site for TLR and the lodge voted funding for the project. While there are a few contractual matters to be addressed, we expect to see a new face for TLR on the Web very soon.

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.texaslodgeofresearch.org for downloading.

The Editorial Committee and Senior Warden stress that authors who follow the very user-friendly manual will have far fewer corrections to make. Members of the committee often hold mini-forums for prospective authors at our quarterly meetings.

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Bro. Secretary: _____ E-mail address: _____

Please reserve _____ meals for the 2011 Anson Jones Lecture at \$30 per plate. I wish _____ steak plate(s) and/or _____ chicken plate(s). My check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Reservations and payment must be received by June 9, 2011 to insure reservation.

CLIP ON DOTTED LINE AND RETURN TOP HALF OF PAGE TO:

TEXAS LODGE OF RESEARCH
P.O. BOX 684684
AUSTIN, TX 78768-4684

Southside Lodge No. 1114 to host 2011 Anson Jones Lecture

The June 18, 2011, quarterly meeting and annual Anson Jones Lecture will be hosted by Southside Lodge No. 1114, 7000 Crowley Road in Fort Worth. A light lunch will be available at noon and the lodge will be opened for its usual business session at 2 p.m.

Upon adjourning, members may return to the hotel to change and drop by the hospitality room before returning to the lodge hall for the 5:30 p.m. reception honoring our 2011 Anson Jones Lecturer, Dennis Zahrt, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Iowa.

Music will be provided during the reception by Michael Cote, who performed at the recent Grand Lodge Annual Communication. Dinner follows the reception.

Most Worshipful Zahrt's lecture will explore the influence of Freemasonry on Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter Day Saints and the influence of the Mormon Church on Freemasonry.

Formal dress is requested for the reception and dinner.

Reservations must be made by mailing the reservation form above and payment payable to "Texas Lodge of Research." Deadline for reservations and payment is June 9, 2011. Please indicate e-mail address for confirmation. Reservations are essential as meals may not be purchased at the door.



The cost is \$30 per person; please indicate either steak or chicken. The meal ticket covers all expenses of the reception and dinner.

Accommodations have been made at the Comfort Suites, 6450 South Freeway (I-35W), Fort Worth. Exit Altamesa Blvd. and go to the west side of the freeway. The entrance is shared with the Best Western. The room rate is \$79.99, plus tax. The group name is "Texas Lodge of Research." Reservations may be made by calling (877) 492-4567. The Web site is www.comfortsuites.com/hotel-fort-worth-texas-texa84.

There will be no Hospitality Room on Friday afternoon. For those wishing to stay longer, the same rate is available from Thursday through Sunday. The cutoff date for hotel registration is May 17, 2011.