

SOMETHINGS WE DO, JUST BECAUSE WE WERE TAUGHT THAT WAY. SO MANY TIMES THIS GOES ON WITHOUT NEED FOR EXPLANATIONS. WHICH REMINDED ME OF A STORY SOME OF YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARD.

THIS LADY WAS KNOWN FOR HER FAMOUS HONEY-BAKED HAMS. THEY WERE THE BEST AROUND. ONE DAY HER HUSBAND WAS WATCHING HER PREPARE HER HAM AND NOTICED HER CUTTING THE ENDS OFF EACH SIDE OF THE HAM. WHEN HE INQUIRED ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROCEDURE, SHE GOT QUITE DEFENSIVE. THEY WENT BACK AND FORTH FOR A WHILE UNTIL SHE FINALLY CONFESSED THAT THIS WAS ALWAYS THE WAY HER MOTHER DID IT. SO HE SAID "LET'S CALL YOUR MOM!" WHEN THE MOM WAS ASKED WHY SHE ALWAYS CUT THE ENDS OFF THE HAM SHE TOO GOT DEFENSIVE. AFTER MUCH DELIBERATION SHE TOO CONFESSED THAT THIS WAS THE WAY HER MOTHER HAD ALWAYS PREPARED HAMS. SO THEY DECIDED TO CALL GRANDMA.....WHEN ASKED WHY SHE ALWAYS PREPARED HER HAMS BY CUTTING OFF THE ENDS, GRANDMA REPLIED....."MY POT WAS TOO SMALL."

I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED WHY WE OPEN ALL OUR STATED COMMUNICATIONS ON THE MASTER MASON'S DEGREE. EXCEPT FOR GIVING THE SIGNS AND THE COMPASS CONFIGURATIONS ON THE BIBLE, THERE IS LITTLE TO SHIELD FROM OUR ENTERED APPRENTICE AND FELLOWCRAFT BROTHERS.

LAST YEAR, SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER I SPOKE ON THE TRESTLEBOARD LECTURES THAT OUR EUROPEAN BROTHERS HAVE. THEY OPEN ON DIFFERENT DEGREES, JUST FOR MASONIC EDUCATION PURPOSES ON WHICH TRESTLEBOARD PRESENTATION WAS GOING TO BE GIVEN THAT EVENING.

OUR ENTERED APPRENTICES AND FELLOWCRAFTS ARE GIVEN STRICTLY IN CHARGE TO ACT AS MASONS BUT, NOT GIVEN ANY ATTENDENCE INTO THE LODGE UNLESS A DEGREE IS BEING CONFERRED IN WHICH THEY HAVE ALREADY PASSED THROUGH.

THE EUROPEAN MASONS CAN GO LONG PERIODS OF TIME BETWEEN BEING PASSED TO THE NEXT DEGREE. THEY CAN NOT PASS ON TO THE NEXT UNTIL THEY FULLY UNDERSTAND THE PRECEEDING DEGREE. WE GO THROUGH OUR CATACYSUMS AND RAISE OUR BROTHER'S MUCH FASTER. NOT SAYING ONE WAY IS BETTER THAN THE OTHER BUT, WE IN AMERICA, USE TO BE MORE LIKE OUR EUROPEAN BROTHERS IN THIS ASPECT.

NO, THE MASONS IN WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN, AND REVERE'S DAY HAD A SLOWER APPROACH. THE AUTHOR OF THE ARTICLE I READ ON THIS SUBJECT TRIED TO BLAME OUR DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP AND OUR SHORTER DEMITTED TIMES ON THIS FASTER PACE WE AMERICAN MASON TAKE. ON THIS I DISAGREE. THE GROWTH IN EUROPE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO MORE LEISURE TIME. AMERICANS WORK MORE, GO TO CHURCH AND OTHER ACTIVITIES LESS. AMERICAN LODGES HAD HUGE GROWTH DURING THE WWII ERA. OUR PRESENT SYSTEM WAS IN TACT THEN AS IT IS NOW. ALSO, AS THE WWII BROTHERS PASS ON TO THAT HOUSE NOT MADE BY HANDS, THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER TO REPLACE HERE ON EARTH.

EVEN THOUGH THIS ARTICLE ON THE DIFFERENCES IN EURO/AMERICAN MASONRY WAS QUITE NEGATIVE, I STILL FOUND THE REASON WE CHANGED TO "ALL MASTER MASON DEGREE" STATED COMMUNICATION INTERESTING. SO HERE IT IS....

Excerpts from an article by: By Bro. Steve Schilling and W. Bro. Christopher Hodapp

"Society turned against Freemasonry, especially after the disappearance (and probable death) of William Morgan in upstate New York in 1826. Morgan was what folks back then used to quaintly call a ne'er do well. He claimed to be a Mason, and shortly after his arrival in the area, he attended

lodge meetings and began to put the touch on his brethren. When his honor, and his status as a Mason, came into question and Masonic wallets closed to his advances, he hit upon a surefire way to make cash. He decided to publish an exposé of Masonic ritual. It is debatable whether the Masons of Batavia murdered Morgan or not, but he did disappear after being "taken for a ride." And America went into a four-alarm anti-Masonic rage. Lodges closed. Grand lodges shut down. Openly Masonic politicians were targeted, and America's original third-party, the Anti-Masonic Party was formed. Masonry was in a bad way, and in some parts of the country, faced extinction.

In 1842, a Masonic convention was called in Baltimore, and grand lodge representatives from all around the country assembled to determine a "uniform mode of work throughout all the Lodges of the United States and to make other lawful regulations for the interest and security of the Craft," and hopefully, "to recommend such measures as shall tend to the elevation of the Order to its due degree of respect throughout the world at large." These were the beginnings of the dramatic changes for Masonry in the United States.

Because of the fear that, like Morgan, "cowans and eavesdroppers" might join the fraternity, be initiated, view a meeting or two, then publish Masonic secrets, it was decided to bar Entered Apprentices and Fellow Craft from participating in lodge business meetings. One hundred and sixty four years later we are still carrying on that tradition. Through the generations the true meaning of why we have barred the lower degrees from our lodge halls has been lost, replaced with business as usual. By expelling the EAs and FCs from participating in regular meetings of the lodge, the slow, thoughtful advancement through the degrees was abandoned. Time between degrees was uniformly reduced, from months or even years down to a week or less. Masonic study was replaced by the rote memorization of the Q&A lectures, or catechism. In some parts of the country, there are "fast start" type initiations that allow a person to advance three degrees in one day, leaving the understanding of what he experienced to come later."

THIS IS PROBABLY THE REASON FOR NO TRESTLE BOARD LECTURES. (ALTHOUGH WE DO HAVE LECTURES AT THE END OF EACH DEGREE) AND WHY OUR MEETINGS ARE ALL MASTER MASON MEETINGS.

I DID NOT DILEBERATE AS TO IF THEIR WAY IS BETTER THAN OURS. THIS SERVES NO PURPOSE BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THESE PROCEDURES. WHAT IT DID MAKE ME REALIZE, MORE THAN EVER, WAS THE IMPORTANCE OF MASONIC EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY TO OUR NEWER BROTHERS. THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARING LESSONS, WITH OUR OTHER LODGES. WE NEED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRESTLEBOARD, AND THE WEBSITE FOR ALL TO SEE. FOR EVERYONE TO CONTRIBUTE. IS THAT NOT WHY WE ARE HERE, TO GAIN FURTHER LIGHT? KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT.
ONE FOR ALL, AND ALL FOR ONE.
FRATERNALLY YOURS,
PETE BARNHARDT