



# Trestleboard

A monthly bulletin of information for the members, families and friends of  
Blackmer Lodge #442, Free and Accepted Masons, California, USA

August, 2006

Volume XCIII, Number 8

## JACOB'S LADDER

*"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."*

Gen. 28:12

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, the candidate sees and hears Freemasonry's lesson symbolized by the star-decked heavens, or clouded canopy which covers the material earth. This symbolism is of such significance that many European and domestic lodges continue to reinforce its lessons by painting the ceilings with stars, planets and other heavenly luminaries. Concealed within that symbolism is the additional veil to certain wise and serious truths known as "Jacob's Ladder."

We read in the book of Genesis that a man named Jacob fell asleep one night out in the open during his travels from Beersheba to the land of Haran. In his dreams he saw a great ladder with one end set on earth and the top reaching far into the heavens above. Jacob seemed to see the "angels of God" ascending and descending the ladder. As he looks higher up, he also seemed to see God Himself standing above it and heard Him promise that Jacob and his descendants would inherit the land where Jacob slept. Upon awakening, Jacob declared the ground sacred, arranged the stones he used for a pillow into a pillar and named the spot Bethel, which means house of God. (Genesis 28:10-19).

Like so many other stories in the Old Testament, for those who do not insist upon a literal interpretation, the legend of Jacob's Ladder conveys a deep concern and belief that is actually centered in a very old culture. A careful reading of the book of Genesis reveals to the discerning eye that the entire book, when read as a whole, appears to be disjointed, difficult to read as one continuum and seemingly missing some

very essential background information. Recent academic research has concluded a reason for this fact that tends to more fully explain why Egypt was so important to our Masonic ancestors.

Jacob's vision was but a fragment of a richer living tradition; an ancient teaching about the link between the earthly and divine worlds. This tradition is further emphasized in Masonic ritual by the explanation given concerning the pillars named Boaz and Jachin, discussed in an earlier chapter. In this tradition we are told that the link between the two worlds has been broken. Angels with flaming swords block the entrance to the Garden of Eden and, as we read further in the story about Jacob's Ladder, Jacob is admonished against climbing that ladder to heaven. For many who read this story, it is a significant event in describing the Fall of man to sin and his need for divine redemption. Yet, the ancient tradition behind that story is much more enlightening.

The ancient Egyptians absorbed much of the earlier cultural and religious practices of Mesopotamia, from which the legends of Gilgamesh arose. Within that legend is a startling tale about men who walked the earth seemingly having come from nowhere known to mankind. They were on earth to learn what the earthly existence had to teach and once those lessons were learned, they left earth to travel to heaven to enrich that divine environment with earthly influences. (The book of Genesis actually contains a piece of this legend in the story about the "Watchers," or "Giants.") This legend later became a benchmark for Hermes Trismegestis whose philosophy known as Hermeticism emphasis the divine slogan "as it is above, so shall it be below."

According to the ancient tradition, the story about Jacob's Ladder is both instructional  
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## FROM THE EAST

In the July issue we saw that The Masonic Information Center in a publication "Moving Masonry into the 21st Century" concluded that all the good about Freemasonry notwithstanding, there is currently an acute lack of knowledge, understanding, and awareness among American citizens about Freemasonry and Masons. And like in Real Estate the key word is Location, Location, Location, in our daily life, on the road of getting more members, and results, the key word is INFORMATION, INFORMATION, INFORMATION.

We, Masons, have to become visible in the public eye. We have to show that Masons are men who build community through brotherhood that is based on a principled life-style. A Mason's life is deeply rooted in a system of values like: Integrity, Diversity, Inquiry, Community, Vitality. Masonry cannot be kept inside the individual; it is a philosophy of fraternity that must be shared in action through numerous experiences, which are Masonic Lodge based, personal, and professional.

Freemasonry's significance to our culture is timeless and offers a major stabilizing influence within our communities. The Masonic **identity** needs to be **understood** and **observed** by the following;

- \* The general public, specifically the individuals who seek knowledge about themselves and their humanity
- \* Our existing members
- \* Potential members who need information about the fraternity's benefits
- \* Members of the media community
- \* Religious leaders who need to understand the distinction between Masonry and religion
- \* Civic leaders - We want to attract as potential members men who can see Masonry as a fraternity not limited by age, ethnicity, race or religious denomination.

By showing that Masons are men who:

- \* Seek fulfillment through multiple levels of experience, including body, mind, and spirit
- \* Enjoy brotherhood
- \* Desire a community enriched by participation, dialogue, and inquiry
- \* Are principled, disciplined, and compassionate.

Brethren, consider the Rough Ashlar that hides the natural beauty of the stone within. What values and actions have we allowed to slip out of sight? How can we find the resources to emerge from the layers of lethargy that block the natural beauty of Masonry from the general public? We must uncover the Mason within us so that we can present Masonry in fact and not in fiction. Neither a public relations agency nor an advertising campaign will substitute for the personal journey that will establish the presence of Masonry in the public's view. Each of us has a responsibility to steward our respected fraternity into the future, calling on our own spirit rather than deferring to those of our predecessors. We must exercise the same determination that we admire and celebrate in our heritage.

*By the Rough Ashlar, we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the Perfect Ashlar, of the state of perfection, at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God.*

Mike O'Zdravkovic, Master, 2006



**SUPPORT YOUR LODGE AND  
ITS PROGRAMS.**

**YOUR  
ATTENDANCE IS NEEDED AND  
ENCOURAGED!**

## FROM THE SECRETARY

It sure would be nice if we could bottle up some of this heat and save it for next winter, but I guess we will just have to struggle with it for now.

We are scheduled to have a first degree in August, check the schedule in this month's newsletter for the date and time.

There are still several members who have not paid their dues for 2006, in several of the Masonic Organizations a member gets life membership after 50 years, unfortunately the Grand Lodge of California does not have this policy. However if you would like to get a Life Membership please give me a call and I will tell you the amount for your age, and you will not have to worry about paying dues every year.

If you or one of your family is under the weather, please give me a call or call our Chaplain both of our phone numbers are listed in the Lodge Officers.

Have a safe and joyful summer and if you are out in the hot sun, drink plenty of water.

Again, it is very important that you make your dinner reservations for the Stated Meeting dinner at least by the Monday before the meeting.

Fraternally, Johnny Johnson, Secretary

**We want YOU.**

**To begin receiving your bulletin by email, send a note saying "I'm in!" to Coren Andrews at [ctandrews@comcast.net](mailto:ctandrews@comcast.net)**

Blackmer Lodge

# Trestleboard

A monthly bulletin of information for the members, families and friends of Blackmer Lodge #442, Free and Accepted Masons, California, USA. Our objective is to disseminate information of interest to the members, families and friends of Blackmer Lodge #442, F&AM of San Diego, California, USA

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and insightful. Owing to the location of the sacred ground where Jacob slept, it is believed that it together with other similar sacred locations serve as the perfect conduits between the earthly and divine worlds. In other words, the ancients believed, as many believe today, that there are more sacred places to worship God than others. In part, this legend tends to shed more light on the earthly significance of Jerusalem to our Jewish brethren, as well as our Christian and Moslem brethren.

For Masons there is yet another lesson to be learned from Jacob's vision. While certain dogmas and doctrines assert the lone entitlement to bridging the gap between heaven and earth, God and man, those dogmas and doctrines are but paths one may select to complete our divine journey. There are other equally valid paths, which fact reminds us that embracing diversity is essential to establishing true freedom. More importantly, Masons are encouraged to think for themselves, pray to God on their own and develop a relationship with the Divine that is not wholly dependent about the intermediary of a specific dogma or doctrine. God created man in His image. He did not create dogma and doctrine in His image – those were created by man.

In that latter regard, the ancient writer Philo affirmed that the Therapeutae practiced what Freemasonry now preaches about the acquisition of divine knowledge. Stories from the Old Testament and elsewhere should be read for their symbolic messages, not for their literal recitation about factual history. The Therapeutae read the Holy Scriptures and sought wisdom from their ancestral philosophy by taking it as an allegory, since they also thought that the words of the text were symbols of something whose hidden nature is revealed by studying the underlying meaning.

Freemasonry teaches by the use of symbols and in so doing encourages its members to understand that God's most enduring lessons are yet to be recovered from the mists of the past. Prophets and seers have told us that mankind has merely scratched the surface of all that is to be learned. Where man once walked on foot to get from one place to the other, he may now fly. While ancient civilizations could not communicate one with another, today's nations are in instant communication. Mankind is drawing ever closer together, hundreds of thousands of people are living in urban environments and men on one end of the

globe are nourishing the needs of men at the other end. Man's relationship with God, direct and unfettered by outside dogma or doctrine, is essential for men to absorb the concept of brotherly love – not as a mere concept, but as a way of life.

Such are some of the lessons learned from the Masonic symbolism of Jacob's Ladder. Can you find others?  
John Heisner, PM

## MASON OF THE YEAR

As Secretary of Blackmer Lodge No. 442, Luverne E. Johnson, affectionately known to his brethren as "Johnny," has assisted 4 different Masters of the Lodge in effectively attending to the administration of Lodge business. Johnny has proven himself so popular with his brethren that he was named the Hiram Award recipient for the year 2005. Before serving as Blackmer's Secretary, he served three years as Secretary for Silvergate Lodge and was President of the Peace Officers Club of Al Bahr Shrine for three years. Johnny's Masonic career includes membership in the Scottish Rite, Al Bahr Shrine and Quetta Grotto, MOVPER where he is a Past Monarch.

Johnny's lovely wife, Joyce, has also been an active participant in several Masonic organizations. Together, Johnny and Joyce have truly made Freemasonry a "family affair." He is retired from law enforcement and his own import/export business.

In spite of physical ailments and urgent health crises at home, Johnny has been the backbone of Blackmer Lodge. His willingness to be available at times when many others would rather simply sit and put their feet up is Johnny's trademark. He is truly a reliable man and worthy of being named "Mason of the Year."

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### DINNER AND RECEPTION HONORING THE GRAND MASTER AND MASONS OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2006 AT THE SCOTTISH RITE CENTER  
SOCIAL HOUR 5:30, DINNER 6:30 AND PRESENTATIONS AT 7:15  
\$17.00 per person  
RSVP 619-741-6929 by Aug. 14**

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## BIRTHDAYS

Bernard Burchette	8/04
Edward Cook	8/22
James Furrh, Jr.	8/16
Freeman Graham	8/13
Charles Hoffman	8/7
Gary Hollcraft	8/07
Perry Hooper	8/05
Matt Kaufman	8/16
Paul McNitt	8/16
Ernest Miller	8/07
C. Robert Millhouse	8/10
Robert Newman	8/08
Alex Royter	8/23
Sam Rubino	8/29
Melvin Stanley	8/26
Herbert Strangman	8/17
David Tobias	8/07
Paul Wilton	8/02

Happy Birthday to these Brethren! We would like to wish you a happy birthday in person at the Stated Meeting dinner of your birth month. Please do join us and remember that your dinner is on the Lodge.

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## DINING OUT

This month our dine out will be on Monday, August 7th. We will be dining out at Pinnacle Peak in Santee. The address is 7927 Mission Gorge Rd. You know the place!

## WE HAD THE PLEASURE

We had the pleasure of conferring the Second Degree of Masonry upon Larry Gerster and Nicholas Prodanovich on July 20th. The Degrees were particularly well done by your Blackmer Officers. That means they were excellent! Brethren, the Third Degrees will be coming up pretty soon for these two Brothers. Be sure you take the time to come to Lodge and witness the raising of two new Master Masons.

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**PLEASE CHECK YOUR DUES CARD. IT SHOULD SAY "PAID THROUGH DECEMBER, 2006.**

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Please be considerate and make your dinner reservations early. If you are going to come to one of our dinners, make reservations. Two days in advance is sufficient, but please reserve.

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**Trestleboard**



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United We Stand, Together we can  
 Make a Difference,  
 The Family of Freemasonry

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- COREN ANDREWS, PM<sup>4</sup> home 951-698-9924 work 951-786-6422

**AUGUST 2006 CALENDAR**

**AUGUST**

- Thurs 3rd** **Stated Meeting** at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
 Reservations must call 619-291-0465. **Dress Hawaiian**
- Mon 7th** **DINE OUT FAMILY NIGHT at Pinnacle Peak, 7927 Mission Gorge Rd, Santee 619-449-8882, 6:30 p.m.**
- Thurs 10th** Officers' Practice, First Degree, 6:45 p.m.
- Sat 12th** **Annual All Masonic Picnic at Adm. Baker 10 to 3, free parking with pass, free food, fun and fellowship**
- Mon 14th** Officers' Practice, First Degree, 6:45 p.m.
- Thurs 17th** Officers' Practice, First Degree, 6:45 p.m. (tentative)
- Mon 21st** **First Degree, 7:15 p.m.**
- Thurs 24th** Dark
- Mon 28th** Inspector's School of Instruction - 7:00 p.m. - All officers to attend unless excused by the Inspector, call him at 619-461-5724
- Thurs 31st** Dark

**SEPTEMBER**

- Sat 2nd** **Grand Master's Reception and Mason of the Year at Scottish Rite - 5:30 Social, 6:30 Dinner, 7:15 program**
- Mon 4th** LABOR DAY
- Thurs 7th** **Stated Meeting** at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
 Reservations please call 619-291-0465.
- Mon 11th** Dine-Out Family Night, location to be announced

**AUGUST STATED MEETING DINNER MENU**



- Mahi Mahi and Chicken Teriyaki
- Wild Rice and Oriental Stir Fry
- Caesar Salad and Assorted Rolls
- Black Forest Cake and Beverages



**You must call your reservations to Johnny at 619-291-0465**