



Work & Lectures

A Metropolitan Atlanta Masonic Newsletter

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October 2009

The Lost Symbol

http://news.morelight.org



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The DeKalb County Masonic Association Report

DCMA This Month

Saturday, 10 October will find your DeKalb County Masonic Association bringing the children (and some of the staff) of the Masonic Home of Georgia to Stone Mountain 449 for lunch, then to Stone Mountain Park for an afternoon of adventure. We'll serve dinner at one of the pavilions, and then our guests will stay for the Lasershow Spectacular. One of the highlights of the DCMA calendar year, come along and show the kids we care.



Stone Mountain 449

840 V.F.W. Drive,
Stone Mountain, GA
30083-3653

Metro Area News

The 5th Masonic District Convention for 2009 was held at the Atlanta Masonic Center on Saturday, 12 September. The meeting was opened in very good form by the officers of Fulton 216 under the direction of WM Adam Brodofsky.

WBro. Frank Vexler, District Master, dedicated the convention to the memory of Past District Master Sheldon Little. He also gave a heartfelt plea for all Masons, but especially Past Masters, to attend the upcoming Grand Lodge Session and vote their consciences as Masons, adding that the future of our gentle Craft is at stake.

The usual reports were summarized and approved, and the following brethren were elected or appointed to serve the district for the ensuing year:

District Master:	William R. Kayma	Sandy Springs 124
Deputy Master:	Charles R. Beasley	Ben Hill 674
Senior Warden:	Gregory E. Smith	East Point 288
Junior Warden:	Jack J. Bell	Alpharetta 235
Sec. / Treas.:	Ross M. Laver	Flint Hill 371
Chaplain:	C. Wayne Glass	East Point 288
Senior Deacon:	David M. Herman	Chamblee-Sardis 444
Junior Deacon:	Larry R. Boyett	Grant Park 604
First Steward:	Jeremy Conlon	Clarkston 492
Second Steward:	Paul Anderson	Atlanta-Peachtree 59
Third Steward:	Tony Gonzalez	Douglasville 289
Tyler:	Brett Goodnough	Sandy Springs 124

WBro. Kayma, who also serves on the GM's Masonic Education and Leadership Development (MELD) Committee, thanked every one for their continued support, and expressed that this year will have a strong emphasis on Education.

East Point 288 won the attendance banner again, with 15 present; a feat they have managed for the past several years. Gate City 2 and Alpharetta 235 tied for second, with six each.

Special thanks to Bill Marsh for proofreading this mess - and my sincere apologies for being so late this month.

DCMA Next Month

November brings our year to a close - join us at EA Minor 603 for our Annual Meeting.

DCMA Last Month

Monday, September 28th did indeed find us back at Tucker 42, with Bro. Cliff on the spoons Tucker 42 won the Banner (even, as host lodge, dividing their attendance by four); Clarkston 492 took the Gavel with second.

DCMA This Year

Pres: David Herman, Chamblee-Sardis 444 & Gate City 2
david @ morelight . org, 404 421 5279
1st VP: James Tyroff, Philologia 178 & Metro Daylight 743
jtyroff @ hotmail . com or 770 378 9531
2nd VP: Jim Cline, Clarkston 492 (*Jim needs a second lodge!*)
jclinejdcpa @ mindspring . com
Sec/Treas: Bill Eleazer, Glenwood Hills 703 & EA Minor 603
billjoane256 @ aol . com or 770 922 5412

*The DCMA... Determined to Cover Masonry in Atlanta!
We'd like for your lodge to join us - ask one of us how.*

Standard Disclaimer

This publication is created to inform the brethren. Any views or opinions that manage to sneak in are solely those of the editor, who does **NOT** speak for any organization whatsoever. Really.

Where's YOUR News?

We'd be honored to support the community by publishing *your* news and events - all you have to do is let us know by emailing david @ morelight . org with all the information you'd like listed.

Old Tiler Talks

by Carl H. Claudy
PGM, District of Columbia
Mostly written in the 1920s

Bluff

"You are the only man in the lodge I can talk to and say what I think!" announced the New Brother to the Old Tiler.

"Do you think me the only one with understanding, or am I the only man stupid enough not to take exception to your remarks?" smiled the Old Tiler.

"I don't exactly know," confessed the New Brother. "You are not offended when I say that which you don't agree. For instance, I think there is a lot of bluff about Freemasonry. You won't get offended with me; you'll probably convince me I don't know what I am talking about."

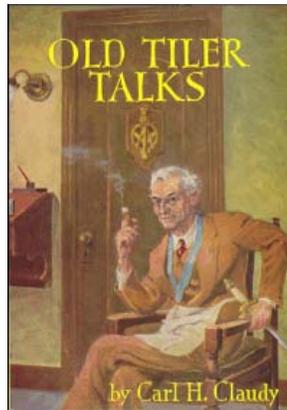
"Assuredly I am not offended," answered the Old Tiler, "but give me some examples of Masonic Bluff. To me, the fraternity seems honest, upright, aboveboard, simple, sincere."

"Oh! It intends to be," rejoined the New Brother, impatiently. "But it does bluff. For instance, we prate about 'Masonic light,' 'further light,' 'more light,' yet Masonry never gives it to you!"

"Don't you mean it never gives it so an ignorant and unintelligent man can understand it? I have been Tiler for more years than you have lived. I have grown old and gray in Masonry, always getting a little more light through its gentle ministrations. Now you try to tell me it is all a bluff!"

"There, there, old chap, don't get sore! I am puzzled as to why we promise so much and give so little."

"I think we promise much and give more!" retorted the Old Tiler. "We give the path at the end of which the light shines in glorious brightness. Masonry is not a school, a college, a university. It doesn't attempt to hold classes, to use textbooks, to pump the young and uninformed mind full of information. It veils its truths and their application in symbolism and allegory. Masonry points the



way to study, to new vistas, to a new beauty to life, a new truth to philosophy, a new meaning to religion.

"The simple facts and the simpler faith of the ritual are learned in a couple of lessons. But the inner meaning requires many lessons. Earnest students have spent their lives trying to reach the bottom of the well of information which is Masonry, nor ever plumbed its depths. Masonry teaches men how to think, and to think for themselves. Masonry teaches men the real beauty of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Masonry instills into men's minds a new conception of God. It makes no difference what religion you follow, Masonry amplifies it, clarifies it, helps you to understand it. No man with a heart in his breast and a brain in his head can stand before a Masonic Altar without a new conception of his relations with his fellow men. If he hears with deaf ears he is a Mason in name only.

"Masonry's ritual is a key by which to read the symbols. If you are lazy, or unable to think, Masonry safeguards herself by requiring effort of you. If she wrote every truth she has, she would cast the pearls of her wisdom before the swine of brethren who cannot appreciate her. The winding tortuous road of knowledge is difficult; Masonry's wisdom is only for those with the brains and the perseverance to pursue her secrets through her symbols into the broad light of understanding."

"You mean that if I find the 'further light' of Masonry a bluff the fault is in me and not in Masonry?"

"Absolutely! That so many learned men devoted their lives to fathoming Masonry should show the young Mason that when he is entitled to wear the square and compasses he has just begun! Masonry has vast knowledge, but only for those who look. Masonry gives a wonderful reward, but only for those who are willing to follow where she leads.

"The bluff in Freemasonry is in the minds of brethren who expect all and give nothing; who try to appear Master Masons when they are but lodge members. The bluff is not in the system of philosophy we call Masonry, but in the unthinking, dull-witted, unimaginative, and non-useful members of the lodge who are Masons in name only!"

"Ouch!" cried the New Brother, "I shall go away from this company to hunt the library!"



List of Special Events - October & November, 2009

The Grand Master's Calendar

8 Oct, Thu - Official Visitation
at Chamblee-Sardis 444, Chamblee. 6:30 meal, 7:30 meeting.

16 Oct, Fri - Roast of DGM Leondar Buffington
at the Atlanta Masonic Center, Atlanta. \$30 per plate,
proceeds to benefit the Grand Master's Travel Fund. 6pm.

27-28 Oct, Tue-Wed - Grand Lodge (*corrected dates*)
- sorry, I couldn't find the actual location of the GL session on
the GL site, only that the "Headquarters Hotel" is the Marriott
Macon City Center Hotel, 240 Coliseum Drive, Macon.

Degree Conferalls

Conferral schedules are TENTATIVE. Please confirm with host lodge.

15 Oct, Thu - Master Mason Conferral
at Roswell 165, Roswell. 6:30 meal, 7:30 meeting.

22 Oct, Thu - Master Mason Conferral
at Chamblee-Sardis 444, Chamblee. 6:30 meal, 7:30 meeting.



Associations, Clubs, Instruction

10 Oct, Sat - DCMA Masonic Home Outing
begins with lunch at Stone Mountain 449, then afternoon
passes to Stone Mountain Park, then dinner at a pavilion, then
the Laser Light Show. Sponsored by the DeKalb County Masonic
Association.

Fundraisers

10 Oct, Sat - 59th Annual BBQ
at Roswell 165, Roswell. \$8 plates; \$3 kids' plates; \$50 whole
hams (~14 lbs); \$30 picnic hams (~6 lbs); \$30/gal Brunswick
stew. Proceeds to benefit local charities.

Special Programs

13 Oct, Tue - Gate City Religion & Culture Series
Topic: Scottish Heritage. Address to the Haggis, Bagpipes, an
overview of Scottish contributions during the industrial age;
Robert Burns' poetry; and, of course, tatties and neeps!
at Gate City 2, Atlanta. 6:30 meal (\$7 per plate), 7:30
meeting. rsvp@gatecity2.org

GACHIP Programs

17-18 Oct, Sat-Sun - Highland Games at Stone Mountain
by Gate City 2. 8-5 each day, at Stone Mountain Park.

Shooting Events

21 Nov, Sat - Yaarab Legion of Honor Pistol Shoot
at the Walton County Pistol Range. 10:00 start.



Where Were You First Made A Mason? - An Answer To Fundamentalists

By WBro. Frederic L. Milliken, PM of both Plymouth Lodge and Paul Revere Lodge, Massachusetts; presently Chaplain, Pride of Mt. Pisgah Lodge No. 135, Prince Hall, Texas. Fred is also the Executive Director of the Phoenix Masonry website and museum.

Me: Bill, I had a great time this weekend with my Lodge. We went out to Union Park with our families and had a big BBQ. The swimming was good and the food was great. But the best time was just sitting under the shade tree and reminiscing with old and new friends.

Bill: You are always talking about your Lodge but I don't get this Masonry thing. I never could see why a man would join. I know you get a lot of pleasure from it but I don't see what is so special about it. I go out to Union Park with friends now and then myself but none of them are Masons.

Me: Well Bill, Masonry is more than social good times. It's also about reverence, respect, knowledge, a helping hand and close bonding relationships. As a matter of fact it is a philosophy, a virtual way of life.....ah, a method of looking at the world and yourself through a different prism.

Bill: So how does this new way of life, this different prism do for you at Union Park with all your Mason friends?

Me: Well I know where the heart is of all my Brothers, even the ones I don't know. And that's important to me. Someone once said that - "you are who your friends are." My contention is that nobody is perfect and that it is possible to be led into or to follow the wrong path in life. One can get lost in superficial and unrewarding patterns of life by constantly associating with corrupting influences. I choose to surround myself with those who try to be noble and righteous and I believe that encourages me to "make something of myself" and to improve myself as a person and that is what God wants for me.

Bill: I didn't realize how deep Masonry is. I have to say now that it sounds almost like a religion. Would you say that your Brothers look upon their Lodge as church?

Me: I am sure some mistakenly substitute Lodge for church but their reasoning is faulty and their actions bespeak of one who is lazy. Masonry has many religious people in the fraternity but the approach in Lodge is more spiritual than religious. By that I mean that it has nothing to do with sectarian dogma but everything to do with an appreciation of the Creator and the wonders of His creation.

Bill: My Pastor does not speak complimentary about Masonry. He says that I don't need another Guidance System, the one I have right here in church has everything I need.

Me: Well Bill, church is about worshiping the Almighty Creator. Its focus is salvation, its work the improvement of the soul. Lodge is not focused on the Hereafter. Its theme is the interrelationships right here on earth. It delineates an earthly philosophy the practice of which points you to seeking that relationship with your Creator. It sends you to church to complete the edification of the other half of yourself.

Bill: But it sounds to me from all that I have heard and of what you have had to say that you are offering a system of morality, a way of life as you call it, that teaches a certain path that should be taken to live your life. That sure sounds to me like a competing Guidance System as my Pastor believes.

Me: Look Bill, we talk about the virtues of Masonry.....er, of being a virtuous person using the already established patterns of life that are universally accepted by all cultures. Masonry is the application of your creed not a competing way of worshiping. Being a believer in Democracy rather than totalitarianism is a philosophy, a way of life. But no one is calling that path a competing religion or guidance system.

Bill: I'm a little bit confused and I am not sure how to separate the two, Masonry and church.

Me: Many facets of life, Bill, don't compete with each other they are intertwined. There is a lot of crossover here in the applications used to take this journey we call life. You can chop them up into neat little boxes but that is a separation that is artificial and does not deal with the complexity of actually living life. Try looking at what you call -competing guidance systems - as interrelated, intertwined aspects of the same discipline all leading to the same end.

Bill: So what you are saying is that while we all think that we are doing something different we are really all doing the same thing?

Me: Now you are getting the idea, Bill. Which is why a Jew, a Muslim and a Christian can all sit in Lodge together. We are all worshipping God but we are not holding a worship service. And all that we talk about in Lodge is universal to them all.

Bill: I can see why some people misunderstand all this. It takes a little bit of thinking about it to grasp Masonry's niche in the scheme of things. But I can see now that Masonry is a universal application of all that is good and righteous in life. I would now have to say that makes it complimentary not competing. I wonder why my Pastor and others think of it as a competing religion?

Me: Because in most instances we do it so well. We end up being more influential in a man's life than his Pastor and some Pastors just can't take that.

Bill: So how come you have never asked me to become a Mason?

Me: Oh but I have. Not in so many words, but as you have said I talk about my Lodge quite often. That information is then there for you to act upon. We do not invite you in, you ask to join.

Bill: So when I go through the ceremonies of initiation I will come out this new person?

Me: No.

Bill: Just when I thought I had a good handle on what is going on here I find myself lost again. Again I am confused.

Me: The ceremonies are required so that your mind has a logical understanding of where your heart already is.

Bill: So are you saying that I am already there?

Me: Where is a man first made a Mason?

Bill: I don't know.

Me: In his heart.

Bill: I finally, finally got it! All I have to do now is ask.



Read the author's "Bee Hive" column at <http://freemasoninformation.com>





THE MASONIC SOCIETY

"The ultimate success of Masonry depends on the intelligence of her disciples." - Albert Mackey

A group of passionate Masons have created what aims to be nothing less than the premier North American research society in Freemasonry. The Masonic Society welcomes brothers who have a deep and abiding desire to seek knowledge, explore history, discover symbolism, debate philosophies, and in short, who will be at the forefront of charting a path for the future of Freemasonry. The goal of The Masonic Society is not just to look backward at the history of Freemasonry, but to foster the intellectual, spiritual and social growth of the modern Masonic fraternity.

Benefits of membership include:

- Commemorative pin, patent of membership, and dues card.
- The quarterly Journal of The Masonic Society will present articles that enlighten our past, and explore solutions to the challenges facing Freemasonry today and tomorrow. The Journal will feature articles by the best-known authors in Freemasonry, as well as the brethren from the lodges in your neighborhood. There will also be articles from the non-Masonic academic world that is looking with greater interest than ever at our fraternity and its place in society.
- Members-only access to the Masonic Society online Internet forum.
- Annual First Circle gatherings - Each year, The Masonic Society will be an active participant in the Allied Masonic Degrees "Masonic Week," held in February in Alexandria, Virginia. This will include the annual First Circle gathering.

An additional symposium will be held elsewhere in the US or Canada once a year. These events will be educational, informative, but most of all, fun and memorable to attend.

Membership in the Society is open to regular Master Masons in good standing of regular, recognized grand lodges in good standing with the

Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America (CGMMNA), or a grand lodge in amity with a member grand lodge of CGMMNA.

Non-Masons, libraries, lodges, and members of other obediences may also subscribe to the Journal at the \$39 annual rate.

Visit The Masonic Society online at <http://themasonicsociety.com>



THE LOST SYMBOL & FREEMASONRY

1. What is "The Lost Symbol?"

The Lost Symbol is a novel written by Dan Brown and published by Doubleday. It is the sequel to his 2003 novel, The Da Vinci Code. The publisher announced in the summer of 2009 that the book would be released on September 15th, 2009. The novel again features the fictional, mystery-solving Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon. It is set in Washington D.C., and the story takes place over a 12-hour period. The Langdon character also appeared in Brown's 2000 novel, Angels & Demons.

2. What does "The Lost Symbol" have to do with Freemasonry?

When the hardback edition of "The Da Vinci Code" was published, Dan Brown intentionally placed clues within the cover artwork about his next novel. Brown's books make frequent use of symbolism and secret code breaking. On the inside paper flaps of the original hardback edition, certain letters were printed darker than others. When copied down in order, they revealed a phrase of ritualistic significance specific to Freemasons. The first announced title of the book was "The Solomon Key," and the biblical story of the building of King Solomon's Temple in 1000 BC is central to Freemasonry's ritual ceremonies and mythical origins.

In May of 2004, Brown made a rare speech in Concord, New Hampshire, and said his sequel to The Da Vinci Code would be about the Masons. He added that Masons should be happy because there is so much misinformation about the group.

Once The Lost Symbol was published, speculation came to an end. Freemasonry does indeed appear throughout the book, and is central to the story. The headquarters of the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction, the House of the Temple, is the setting for important (and harrowing) sequences in the story.

3. Why are Freemasons concerned about their treatment in a novel that is clearly labeled as fiction?

Dan Brown has stated in his novels that the secret societies and organizations that appear in his novels are based on fact. While groups like the 18th century Bavarian Illuminati and the modern Catholic organization Opus Dei have indeed existed in fact, they bear little resemblance to Brown's fictional universe. That is the prerogative of the novelist. Unfortunately, readers are not always aware of the difference between fact and fiction.

Dan Brown's treatment of Freemasonry is overwhelmingly positive in The Lost Symbol, but he does engage in some dramatic license for the sake of his plot.

For three centuries, almost immediately after its modern formation in 1717 in London, the fraternity of Freemasonry has been the subject of wild accusations and disinformation. This website has been created to address the subjects concerning Freemasonry that are found in Brown's The Lost Symbol, as well as to explain its references to the history, practices, ceremonies, philosophy and symbolism of Masonry.

Read all the information at <http://www.freemasonlostsymbol.com/>

Dava Digresses: Quick Reviews of *The Lost Symbol*

So, it's here, and it's out. The book that many people have been waiting for, and many Masons have been anxious about – Dan Brown's third installment in the adventures of Robert Langdon, Symbologist: The Lost Word, which has long been rumored to have Masonic content, and which some dreaded would treat some Masonic teachings as its predecessor, *The Da Vinci Code*, treated some Christian teachings.

Well, rest easy. I just finished the book Sunday (sorry the newsletter is a week late), and I personally found his treatment of our gentle Craft to be quite respectful. As some other sources have quoted from the beginning of the book, I will take the liberty of quoting from near the ending:

The *truth* was that the brotherhood's focus on death was in fact a bold celebration of *life*. Masonic ritual was designed to awaken the slumbering man inside, lifting him from his dark coffin of ignorance, raising him into the light, and giving him eyes to see. Only through the *death* experience could man fully understand his *life* experience. Only through the realization that his days on earth were finite could he grasp the importance of living those days with honor, integrity, and service to his fellow man.

Masonic initiations were startling because they were meant to be transformative. Masonic vows were unforgiving because they were meant to be reminders that man's honor and his "word" were all he could take from this world. Masonic teachings were arcane because they were meant to be *universal* ... taught through a common language of symbols and metaphors that transcended religions, cultures, and races ... creating a unified "worldwide consciousness" of brotherly love.

It is refreshing to see a non-Mason with such a grasp on the teachings of our order. I only wish more of our members saw them in the same light.

Here is an excerpt of a review by WBro. Chris Hodapp, of Freemasons For Dummies fame:

Just finished "The Lost Symbol" tonight. No spoilers here, but I do not exaggerate when I say it is very respectful of Freemasonry. My early fears were unfounded, and I owe Dan Brown an apology for all those terrible things I was thinking.

The Scottish Rite SJ's House of the Temple is indeed a centerpiece, and the George Washington Masonic Memorial has a brief cameo. Brown does have fun with Masonic internet claims (map in the street of DC, Star of David on the dollar that spells "MASON"). He also ridicules the wildest claims commonly made by anti-Masons. In fact (and again, I do not want to spoil anything here), one of the principal fears in the story involves the negative perception the ignorant public might get by misinterpreting Masonic ritual.

And here is an excerpt of a review by WBro. Ross Laver, from the October issue of the Fulton Fellowcraft:

Once again, author Dan Brown is tickling the curiosity of his readers with facts and yarns. This time his fictional alter ego Robert Langdon is in our Nations Capitol pursuing another mysterious happening. Read it and you'll find reference to most if not all of the Masonic Institutions in Washington D.C. as well many of our National Monuments. June and I have already decided that we want to head back to D.C. next year to visit so many places we have missed.

In each of his books featuring the Harvard Professor, Brown starts with facts and then proceeds to spin some tall tales and yarns. All of the fiction continues to wind around more facts leaving the reader [to] wonder where the fiction and reality meet.

As the days for the release of the book approached, many Masonic bodies were concerned about how our fraternity would be treated. In Chapter Six, he does an excellent job of explaining many truths about us.

I encourage each of you to read this book for yourself.

David Herman

