



DAMASCUS LODGE No. 290 F. & A.M.

# THE TRESTLEBOARD

Volume VIII, Issue 3

March 2011



## HOW MANY DEGREES?

I asked this same question last year. It's not a question about the cold weather. It's a question of just how busy will we be this year. The past two years we were lucky enough to be doing degree work all summer long. We've got petitions and we have Brethren working through the degrees. This year may prove to be just as busy. Keep those petitions coming!! Watch the 'On Line Calendar' and come out to support our candidates. Let them know Damascus Lodge is proud to have them!

## YEEE HAAW!!

A brief spot of warm weather was just what the doctor ordered. Winter is long and we need a break, and that's just what Damascus Lodge had in mind for the Damascus Lodge Hoedown!! Bring your family to the Lodge on Sunday, March 27th at 3:00 pm for a great day of food and fun!

'Cookie' and his boyz will be hitchin' up the Chuck Wagin', stirrin' up some great grub for all to enjoy. Wear yer dancin' boots cuz 'Singin' Cowboy Sean' will be ticklin' our ear drums. We gar-n-tee all you Cowgirls and Cow Pokes will have a shootin' good time.

Call Sheriff Mattyew at 414-254-5677 with your reservation before March 17th. Wear yer 'Cowboy Best' and bring yer best Cowgirl and yungins. Just \$5 for Ma and Pa, but the yungins iz free!!

## A NEW MASTER MASON AND HIS FELLOWS



### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

-  *Damascus Hoedown*
-  *Master's Message*
-  *Upcoming Events*
-  *Upcoming Degree Work*
-  *Senior Warden Message*
-  *Chaplain's Pew*
-  *Traveling Men*

MARCH 2011						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 3/4 - Henry L. Palmer Lodge No 301 - Master Mason Degree 7pm
- 3/08 - Stated Meeting - 6pm Dinner, 7pm Lodge
- 3/11 - Honor Masons Night and Pie Auction - Jobs Daughters Bethel No. 6.
- 3/15 - School of Instruction - West Allis Lodge
- 3/22 - Lodge Meeting - 6pm



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## THE MASTER'S MESSAGE

### **“Is this all?”**

“As he sank low in the water, a strange hollow voice sounded within him. There’s no way around it. I am a seagull. I am limited by nature. If I were meant to learn so much about flying, I’d have charts for brains. If I were meant to fly at speed I’d have falcon’s short wings, and live on mice instead of fish. My father was right. I must forget this foolishness. I must fly home to the Flock and be content as I am, as a poor limited seagull.” -- From the book “Jonathon Livingston Seagull” by Richard Bach

Jonathon Livingston Seagull questioned himself as we all do. In his quest to learn all he could about flying, his mother and father worked hard to convince him that he could do no better than fly from shore to sea for food, then back to shore. He was after all; a seagull and seagulls only flew for food.

Anyone who is familiar with the story knows that in the end, Jonathon cannot resist his obsession for flying and transcends the criticism of the flock, his parents, and then his limitations to flight.

Like Jonathon, we as Free and Accepted Masons, have all at one time stood at the water’s edge of life and questioned “is this all there is to life?” We, as Masons have answered that question with a loud and resounding “NO!”

The draw to the World Wide Fraternity we call Masonry is different for each of us. Whether we were drawn to the new and true friends we would make, or the fellowship and brotherly love at our outings, meetings, and practices; or even because the fraternity offered structure in our lives, the fact is that we are here to improve ourselves, not only in Masonry, but to improve ourselves in our every day lives.

We discover through being active in our Lodges that those things we thought impossible are, in fact, possible and even easier than we first thought. The encouragement and gentle pushing we receive from our first contact with a Mason is all we need to start on a path of building self confidence, personal esteem, and even to discover hidden talents. In short, we are indeed good men, becoming better men.

Your regular appearance at our meetings is earnestly solicited. At your leisure hours, that you may improve in Masonic knowledge; you are to converse with well know Brethren....

While this paragraph alludes to Masonic instruction, it also aptly applies to improving ourselves as Masons and men. If you have not been to Lodge in a while, come and see the improvement, improvement wrought from conversing with and being around well informed Brethren.

Come to Lodge for a good dinner. Brother Steve “Cookie” Manthey alone is responsible for several of us reaching Lodge weight. Dinners beyond belief, that wake up taste buds long thought in hibernation.

Whatever your reason may be, come to Lodge and YOU might re-discover the reason you became a Mason in the first place. We meet on the second and fourth Tuesday’s of every month. Dinner at 6:00 P.M. and Meetings at 7:00

Be there AND be square

Bro. Michael L. Fairbanks  
Worshipful Master

## THE CHAPLAIN'S PEW



### “A Gage, A Scale, or a Ruler?”

In my drafting and architectural class, a twenty-four inch gage is called by many names, but each name indicates a different usage. I was instructed to never confuse the name with the purpose, and to NEVER call either of them a ruler!

As free Masons, we know that the twenty-four inch gage is divided into equal parts, representing the hours of the day, divided again into three equal parts; whereby we find eight hours for service to god and the relief of a distressed, worthy brother, eight for our usual vocations, and eight for refreshment and sleep. Many times I have found that the equal parts sometimes just don't add up to allow sufficient time for the many things that need to be accomplished in a day. This is when I turn to my scale.

In drafting, a scale does just what it implies, it scales. Increasing or decreasing the size as needed. I have found that many times throughout my day I need to 'scale' my time, as many of us do, to complete all of the day's duties. Even then, it doesn't work all of the time. While the twenty-four inch gage is an instrument used to assist us in dividing our time, sometimes the scale can help us even more.

Eight hours for service to God. Seems like a pretty large undertaking, right? Not really, when service to God means many things. Assisting family members, housework, chores, errands, even holding a door open for a person are all service, because we are all helping each other in service to God. Our service may also entail assisting those less fortunate who may not have a vocation at this time. Whether it is a donation to a food assistance program, or volunteering at a job fair, or babysitting while they 'job search', we can assist.

Eight hours for our usual vocations is self-explanatory. To some this is just a hope to be done with work within this time frame. To others, especially in today's world, they wish they were employed and able to devote eight hours to work. Never forget how fortunate we are to have a vocation, even when it may seem like a burden.

Another eight hours for refreshment and sleep? Right... Many times sleep is a bonus in this world. Refreshment is often accomplished at a drive-thru, eating in the car while driving to the evening's activities, IF you are fortunate to have gotten out of work in only eight hours! Always remember not to take time for yourself, but to MAKE time for yourself. We all need a moment now and then.

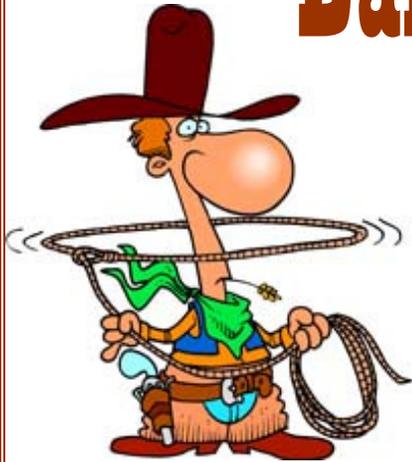
I wonder if God used a scale to plan the Universe? I can't even plan a day without a gage! He must have taken more time and used a scale... But as we all plan our lives, always rely on the twenty-four inch gage as your rule and guide.

Bro. Bert  
Chaplain

**Swing yer pardner Roun' 'n Roun'**

**Bring 'er to the**

# **Damascus Hoedown**



**Sunday, March 27, 2011**

**3:00 pm**

**At the Lake Lodge Corral!**

**Enjoy a Damascus Style B.B.Q.**

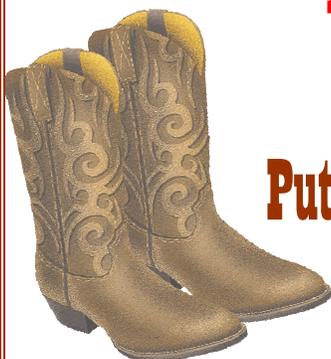
**With all the fixins'!**



**Adults jus \$5.00, Yungins' is FREE!!!**

**Wear yer Cowboy best!**

**R.S.V.P. Sheriff Matt at 414-254-5677 or  
trowel80@hotmail.com b'fer March 17<sup>th</sup>**



**Put on yer Dancin' boots! Y'all be there now.  
Ya Hear!**

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## ON THE LEVEL WITH THE SENIOR WARDEN

### “On the Level?”

On Grand Master Joseph B. Harker’s pin this year, the question is asked “How do we meet?” Of course the conspiracy theorists think it’s in dark alleys or secret hideaways...anywhere we can continue our plans to “take over the world” (That makes me laugh every time I think about it.). But the answer, of course, is clearly placed right there on the pin, and as any Mason knows, it’s “On the level”. Coincidentally, as Senior Warden, I’m asked this very same question quite often in the lodge, but what does it mean... really?

Back in Freemasonry’s earliest beginnings, the Brothers who were organizing things at that time thought it necessary to keep all religious and political opinions, questions and/or conversations out of the lodge. Why? Everyone is entitled to their opinions right? What about our first amendment rights? I have the right to speak freely don’t I? Well...not necessarily.

You have to remember that Freemasonry is a really old fraternity. How old you may ask? I don’t know for certain, but I’ll put it in these terms: the birth of Freemasonry was a few years before the birth of Worshipful Master Fairbanks. I don’t know what else that tells you besides the fact... it’s REALLY OLD!

You also have to remember that Freemasonry came to this country from Europe. Now, back in ‘olden days’, and back in the ‘Old Country’, people didn’t have many of the freedoms we enjoy today. Back then, if you called the King a bum, you probably got your head chopped off or were burned at the stake!

Back to my point, our early Brethren either had the foresight, or learned the hard way, that religious and political topics of discussion in the lodge only brought about division among the men and were destructive to the lodge. The Grand Lodge of Wisconsin also believes that discussions of these topics can be destructive to the Lodge and the camaraderie of the Brethren. As a matter of fact, according to Wisconsin Masonic Code 37.03, Rule 3, the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin will not even recognize a Grand Lodge from another state or jurisdiction unless they also “exclude religious and political questions and discussions from its Lodges”.

I know what you’re asking, “What does this have to do with M.W.G.M. Harker’s pin?” And my reply is, “Patience! I’m getting there.” My point is, Freemasonry has never believed one religion is better than another. Freemasonry has never considered one occupation better than another. And Freemasonry has never sided with one political affiliation over another. When men come to the lodge, we are supposed to “meet upon the level”. Whether we are Jewish or Lutheran; bankers or state employees; Republicans, Independents or Democrats.

Now...there’s a reason why I purposefully wrote “supposed to”. Sometimes we stray on the wrong path or make the wrong decisions or express opinions that may not be shared by everyone in the lodge. Hey...we’re human, we make mistakes, and sometimes we forgot the wonderful principles this fraternity has taught us. Brethren, we have a very strong and cohesive Lodge, but my ears (and no doubt others) have heard conversations that could divide us. Please be considerate. Please remember these principles. And please remember, while in the lodge, that’s in the dining room or in the Excelsior Lodge Room, we converse only on proper topics, whether that’s talking about sports, the weather, complaining about our wives...whatever; but religious and political opinions, questions and/or conversations should be avoided.

Thank you.

Matthew Wright  
Senior Warden

## TRAVELING MEN

Our ritual tells us one of the reasons we become Master Masons is so “we might travel into foreign countries...” When I first became a Master Mason, I fell in with a group of ‘travelers’ and soon found how wonderful it is to travel to our Sister Lodges, visit, support and perhaps participate in their degree work. I remember being surprised at the hospitality, brotherly love and downright friendliness of these ‘foreign countries’. Although I was new to the craft and unknown to the Brothers in these lodges, I was welcomed with open arms. If there was any hesitation, shyness or doubt, it was all on my part. My Brothers welcomed me as if I was a long time Brother and an old friend of many years.

I was also quite pleased to find that I am not the only one who feels this way. I’ve interviewed most of our newest members when they were still candidates, and quite a few of them remarked how they were greeted by members of our Lodge in the same way, and felt like “one of the family”. In this spirit, I’d like to take this opportunity to mention some of the events of our Sister Lodges, so we may travel, support them, and spread the cement of brotherly love.

On Friday, March 4, Henry L. Palmer Lodge No. 301 is putting on a MM degree at 7:00. At this point, I haven’t been notified if they need any assistance, but it would be great to have the sidelines full for a newly raised Master Mason.

On Saturday, March 12, there are a couple of events happening. The Widows’ Sons, ‘Tylers of the 9’ Chapter will be having their March meeting at ‘Ponderosa Steakhouse’ in Hartford, at 12:00 noon. All members and anyone interested in becoming a member are welcome. Also on Saturday, Silas H. Shepherd Lodge No. 1843 is having their ‘Spring Meeting’ at George Washington 1776 Lodge from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

On Tuesday, March 15, a School of Instruction will be held at West Allis Lodge for the Master Mason Degree. Damascus will exemplify the Reception of Grand Officers. This will be a good opportunity to hone your ritual and degree skills.

And let’s not forget about our youth groups: Job’s Daughters Bethel No. 6 is having their ‘Honor Masons Night’ and Dessert Auction on Friday, March 11th, right here at Lake Masonic Center. Dinner is at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting is at 7:30. Did I mention there will be a table loaded with delicious desserts? Job’s Daughters Bethel No. 19 will be hosting a Spaghetti Dinner on Wednesday, March 30 at West Allis Masonic Lodge.

So Brethren, join me for some traveling, good food, good times and fellowship with our Brethren from ‘foreign countries’.

Brother Tom Stachowiak  
Junior Deacon



DAMASCUS LODGE No. 290 F. & A.M.

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WE ARE ON THE WEB AT  
[HTTP://WWW.DL290.ORG](http://www.dl290.org)

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*THE REAL SECRET OF FREEMASONRY*

*MAKING GOOD MEN BETTER*

## LODGE TRUSTEES

Patrick J. Militzer, P.M. (2011) 414-469-9804  
Mick Olson, P.M. (2012) 414-397-3076  
Dale A. Graeven, P.M. (2013) 414-764-8187

## SICK AND VISITATION CHAIRPERSON

Mathew Wright 414-254-5677

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## MASTER'S BOARD

Keep those petitions coming in. The Master's Board Chairman and Master's Board Secretary would like to remind you to keep an eye out for new candidates for the Lodge.

Remember to carry a petition with you in your travels because you never know who you will meet.

If you do not have a petition or you need more, please contact any lodge officer and they will make sure you receive a couple.

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## 2011 LODGE OFFICERS

Worshipful Master Michael Fairbanks (Sandra) 2169 W. St. Johns Way, Oak Creek, WI 53154	<a href="mailto:worshipful.master@dl290.org">worshipful.master@dl290.org</a> H 414-304-0260 C 414-397-0330
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Chaplain Brian Bertram Junior Deacon Tom Stachowiak Junior Steward Pete Czechorski Tiler Dale R. Graeven, P.M.	Senior Deacon Nathan Butts Senior Steward Steve Manthey Counselor Mick Olson, P.M. Degree Director Michael B. Meyer, P.M.