



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

THE TRESTLEBOARD

Volume VIII, Issue 11

December 2011



CONGRATULATIONS!!

At our November 8th meeting Bro. Matthew Wright was elected to serve Damascus Lodge as our Worshipful Master for 2012. Bro. Sean Schult was elected Senior Warden and Bro. Tom 'Stach' Stachowiak, Junior Warden. We are pleased to have such fine men leading us next year.

Also elected were: Bro. Dale A. Graeven, Treasurer; Bro. Mike Meyer, Secretary; and Bro. Pat Militzer as Trustee.

Congratulations to all of the new officers! We're looking forward to a great year!!

HEY, YOU DING-A-LING!

Damascus Lodge is looking for a few ding-a-lings as we continue our tradition of Bell Ringing for the Salvation Army at the Whitnall Pick N' Save. Check your calendar for Saturday, December 10th. We have time slots available from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Please contact Brother Nate Butts, 414-727-9772 to sign up.

We may be outside this year, so dress appropriately. Please join us in supporting this most worthy cause.

INSTALLATION

The Installation of Damascus Lodge Officers for 2012 will be held on Saturday, December 17, 2011 at 3:00 pm. This is an open installation, family and guests are welcome. There will be a light meal served following the installation. Please come and support next year's Officers and get them started off on the right foot.

TOYS-FOR-TOTS DRIVE

Continuing a very worthwhile Damascus Lodge tradition, please bring an unwrapped toy or a cash donation for the Marine Corps' Toys-for-Tots drive to our December 13th meeting. Considering the present economy, this may be a year of great demand. Please remember those less fortunate than ourselves during this Holiday Season. The joy of Christmas is in the giving! We hope to see you on December 13th!!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

-  *Awards Night*
-  *Master's Message*
-  *Upcoming Events*
-  *Lodge Elections*
-  *Bell Ringing*
-  *Senior Warden's Plum*

 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 12/10 - Bell Ringing- 9am-4pm Whitnall Pick and Save.
- 12/11 - Christmas Carol - 4:30pm at the PAC
- 12/13 - Stated Meeting - 6pm Dinner, 7pm Lodge
- 12/17 - Lodge Installation of Officers, 3pm
- 12/25 - Merry Christmas !!!
- 12/27 - Lodge

 THE CHAPLAIN'S PEW

“The Thankful Mason”


What a year!! As I write this during the Packer game, which I assume they will win, am thinking of the things in my life am thankful for. It is the holiday season, and being as such a lot of people are inclined to ponder the positives, and negatives, that have occurred to them during the previous year.



What are your thoughts this season? What are you thankful for? And what, if anything, would you change for the New Year. Turkey, ham, (of course a Damascus Guy thinks of food first!), football, family, friends, and employment are just a few that may come to mind, and rightfully so. But as a Mason I am thinking also of the many positive aspects of Masonry that have impacted my life.

The Never-ending impact of brotherly love, the fellowship, the activities and outings, the new friends made, and old friends cemented into my life, are just some of the items that I am thankful for. We have had ups and downs for our members; fires, illnesses, job loss, loss of loved ones, family firsts, weddings, birthdays, new jobs, new members, and many personal milestones to just name a few of the events in our daily lives this past year. Through all of which, as a Family, Damascus Lodge members have supported each other, one way or another.

At a recent EA conferral, the new EA described the Lodge as a family and I totally agree. Anytime, anywhere, our members take their obligation to heart and are ready to step up to assist each other. I am proud to have Damascus as a family! As a note to the dedication of our members, my sincere congratulations go to Masonic Service Award Winners Tom, Mick and Eric; you have made our Lodge proud and have exemplified the Masonic cause. And in return, we are blessed to have you in our fraternity!

So as to wrap up a short article, from Sheryl, Megan and me, a heartfelt ‘Thank you’ to my Damascus Brothers and may the seasons joyfulness stay with you through out the new year.

-Brother Bert

*“To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant,
to enact gratitude is generous and noble,
but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven.”*

Johannes A. Gartner

THE MASTER'S MESSAGE

“You now behold me as Master of this Lodge”



Upon being installed as Worshipful Master of Damascus, I could not help but reflect upon our degrees in which the Master says “You now behold me as Master of this Lodge”. It seems as though I was installed only yesterday and here it is December already. The past year has flown by like an Indy race car passing a 1972 Volkswagen Beetle on a four lane highway.

You, the Brethren of 290 entrusted me with the leadership of your Lodge; a position with multiple duties, multiple responsibilities, and many, many opportunities to learn and grow.

Coming in as a new Entered Apprentice in October of 2007, never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would one day sit in the East and be so honored and so privileged to be called “Worshipful Master”. Upon being raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, I began to think it might be possible that I could one day be Master of my Lodge with the expectation of a minimum of 10 years to progress. Here it is, my Masonic age at three years and nine months and my year as Master of Damascus is complete.

As you know, I have a favorite speech to give after we initiate a new Entered Apprentice in which I encourage the new Entered Apprentice to be in regular attendance, study Masonry to the level of the degree he is currently at, and most of all, most importantly to seek out counsel of our Damascus Brothers who have long years of Masonic Service.

When my Masonic journey began to progress from Entered Apprentice, I turned to my long time Masonic Brethren for advice and guidance hoping that my ear was attentive enough to hear what they were saying and that my heart would absorb, understand, and then act upon their advice. When I was elected to the East, I not only turned to you for advice and guidance, I leaned on you and used you to help guide me through.

Because of your willingness to guide me through my mistakes as well as the successes, I have grown personally, professionally, and most importantly I have grown as a Mason. I have become a better man, with the desire to continue my Masonic journey on the quest to continue to improve while helping others to do the same.

My Line Officers were always willing and ready to jump in to help and take on assignments and tasks. You, the Brethren of Damascus were always there, armed with advice, ready to guide me and then volunteer to carry out tasks and duties as assigned. Your families were ready to jump in and help with the execution of Lodge events and to aid in any possible way.

Without you, without your dedication and loyalty, without your friendship and brotherly love our Lodge would not have had a successful year, nor would my year as your Worshipful Master have been easy. Without your advice and guidance we would not have been able to make the hard as well as the easy decisions.

I thank each and every one of you; I thank your families for all of their hard work, their understanding and sacrifices so that we could be Masons. I am so very proud to have sat in the East and been called your Brother. I am humbled, honored, and privileged that you entrusted me to the Office of Worshipful Master.

Our Lodge has accomplished quite a bit this year. We have shown Friendship, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Charity; four of our most excellent tenets, and I am confident that we will continue to expand upon all of our most excellent tenets in the coming years.

I am certain that when Bro. Matt Wright is installed as our next Worshipful Master and he can say “You now behold me as Master of this Lodge”, that we will all be there to support him as you have supported me.

My Brothers – Be there AND be square.

Bro. Michael Fairbanks - Worshipful Master

THE SENIOR WARDEN'S PLUM

Sometimes I wonder if you guys ever ask amongst yourselves, “Hey, why is Bro. Matt always harping on us in his trestle board articles? Why can't he tell us some boring story like WM Fairbanks (I'm only teasing WM)? Or some charming story about little old ladies like Brother Bert? Why does he always have to teach us some kind of lesson?” Of course, none of those questions have ever been presented to me, but if that ever were to happen I would simply say this, “Part of my job as Senior Warden is to ‘pay the craft their wages, if any be due’ and this is how I pay you Brothers! Aren't you just the luckiest guys on earth to be given such wealth?!? Huh???” And of course I would have that cheese-eatin' grin plastered all over my face. But like I said Brothers, those kinds of questions have never been presented to me and I've been wondering if they are happening along the sidelines.

If you recall, I mentioned the same sort of thing in my little schpeel during the last stated meeting; that I have heard sideline conversations were occurring inside the lodge. Because of this, I have been deeply saddened. I'm saddened because – and I can only speak from experience brothers – those types of conversations only creates division among us. Whether the brethren are upset about the by-laws or it appears someone is not doing his duties, it's these types of conversations that need to either happen one on one with whomever you are upset with, or hashed out in a lodge meeting in front of everyone, instead of being murmured on the sidelines. That's how it has been happening for hundreds of years brothers and that's why Masonry is so great. We as Masons must consider ourselves fortunate that we have a place where we can gather, meet and talk about our problems like educated men. . . .as long as it doesn't concern politics or religion. Even if the end result is “Well then, we'll just have agree to disagree. . . .”, at least the problem has been worked on in an educated manner. Now I realize that I don't hear everything and I realize that I certainly don't see everything. For all I know, conversations may have occurred face-to-face, man-to-man, brother-to-brother and I hope that's true! Because the last thing we need is any sort of separation in our ranks. We're Damascus darn it!! Other lodges look up to us simply because of our unity Brothers. That's why they always sarcastically ask “Jeez, are all the Damascus guys here tonight?” And we not only play together well brother, but we work together well also. Our degree work is strong!! It's not only strong, but we make it look GOOD!! Think about that for a moment. There are lodges in our district that have degree practice EVERY WEEK and they are still struggling. We come together a few weeks – or even a few days – before the degree and make it look like we've been working together for years! Who can explain why that happens? I can't. The only thing I can offer is speculation. I can only speculate it's our pride in our lodge. I can only speculate it's the love we have for Masonry and each other. I can only speculate it's because we are the best darn looking guys that Milwaukee Masonry has to offer and that's why all the other lodges look up to us. Bro. Stach may tell you that last part is a well known fact, but I can only speculate.

My point Brothers is we are the definition of “A Band of Brothers”. We are so close. . . .that there should be no need for ANY kind of sideline conversations. If Brother Tinney is upset with me, he tells me. If I look like crud, you can bet Brother Stach is right there to tell me how bad I look. That's not because they don't like me – it's the exact opposite – it's because they love me like a brother. They either want to make sure we stay “on the level” or they want to make sure I'm “squared away”, because they depend on me to do the same for them. And to that I say “I'm the luckiest Brother in the world and I belong to the best damn lodge in the world!”

Matthew Wright
Senior Warden

AWARDS NIGHT

Thank you, Brethren!

This year Damascus Lodge was pleased to recognize those Brothers who have distinguished themselves by going above and beyond what is normally expected of a Mason, thus sticking out to the Line Officers and members of the Lodge as an outstanding Mason.

The outstanding Masons for Damascus Lodge this year are:

Jason Williams and Paul Peacock as our “Rookies of the Year”. Having been raised Master Masons in the past year they attended nearly every meeting, nearly every function and event, traveled as part of the Gavel Operational Assault Team (or G.O.A.T.) and promoted Damascus Lodge on every possible level. They are in fact and deed outstanding. Their zeal and fervency for Freemasonry, the Craft, and Damascus Lodge is a breath of fresh Masonic air as they spread the cement of brotherly love.

Brother Steve Manthey the Knife and Fork Certificate. On Lodge days, the kitchen has been alive with the aromas and activity of good old fashioned home cooking. For the past two years, Damascus Lodge has been the recipient of the outstanding and delicious food provided by Brother Steve Manthey and his wife Amanda.

Brother Tom Stachowiak, the “Traveling Man” Award. We asked Bro. Stach if he would be the G.O.A.T. coordinator and develop a team to capture and drop off the traveling gavel. He accepted and then tackled the job zealously and aggressively.

In addition to Brother Stach’s traveling man award, Bro. Jason Williams suggested that we might want to have a plaque made whereby we can add a new nameplate annually for the person who does the most traveling and/or does the coordination of the G.O.A.T. team. This year, it is my pleasure to have Bro. Stach’s name added as the first name placed on the plaque.

Brothers Charles “Mick” Olson, Eric Cobb, and Tom Stachowiak received the Grand Lodge Masonic Service Award for their outstanding fervency, zeal, and love for their brothers. For going out their way to aid worthy distressed Brethren, at great burden to themselves, while making every effort to ensure the success of the Lodge.

Please extend a warm congratulations to these Brothers when you next see them.





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

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THE REAL SECRET OF FREEMASONRY

MAKING GOOD MEN BETTER

LODGE TRUSTEES

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Dale A. Graeven, P.M. (2013) 414-764-8187

SICK AND VISITATION CHAIRPERSON

Mathew Wright 414-254-5677

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.

2011 LODGE OFFICERS

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