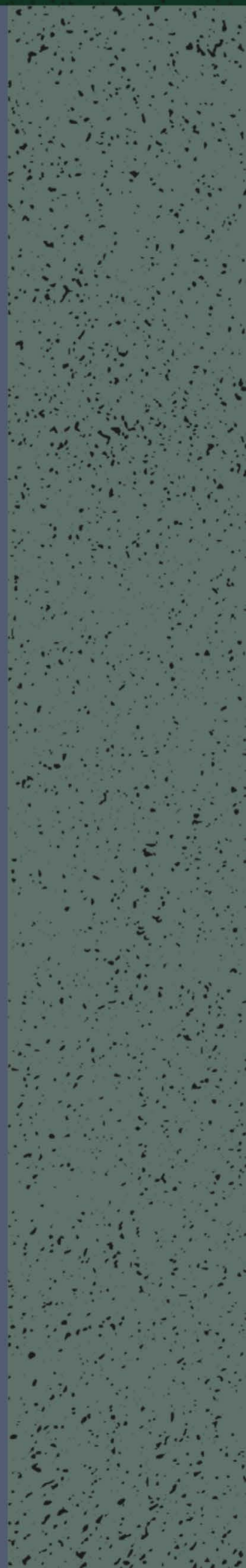


# The Trestle Board



Newsletter Issue No. 03 March, 2022





# MASTER'S CORNER

**Masonic Appeal for the Grand Lodge of the Ukraine**

**Received this from my (New York) Grand lodge, and wanted to post it here.**

**Dear Brethren and Friends,**

**We at the Grand Lodge of New York are trying to do our part towards answering the call of the distressed in providing a source of much needed help to those adversely affected by these unprovoked acts of violence and war against the good citizens of the Ukraine. These unprecedented assaults and aggression are especially traumatic and harrowing to the population of children and the elderly residing in both the cities and countryside of the Ukraine.**

**Your Grand Master, Most Worshipful Richard J. Kessler, and the Grand Lodge of New York, in a strong showing of solidarity with our fellow brethren of the Grand Lodge of the Ukraine, we look to the members of our noble Craft to demonstrate their heartfelt compassion and empathy for our fellow human beings during this their hour of darkness. Together, we will emerge from this tragic and dispirited experience united with a renewed zeal of bringing back peace, harmony and brotherhood throughout the world. The essence of True Masonic Brotherhood will be a beacon of hope for all to see and emulate.**

**In the name of this charitable and humanitarian effort in support of our brothers and their families in the Ukraine, we are grateful to receive your contributions, both large and small, as checks payable to the Masonic Brotherhood Fund earmarked for the Grand Lodge Emergency Relief Fund. Please mail your checks directly to the Masonic Brotherhood Fund, 71 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010-4149. Rest assured that every penny received will be distributed to those in need and absolutely no monies will be deferred to cover expenses and related costs incurred by the Grand Lodge.**

**In anticipation of your most generous support, please accept the warmest fraternal thanks on behalf of the Grand Master, the officers and members of the Grand Lodge for your kind-spirited gift to the Grand Lodge Emergency Relief Fund. The noted humanitarian and physician, Dr. Albert Schweitzer said it best, "There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed." In memory of the many victims who are injured, maimed or have perished during this calamity, and in cohesion with their families and fellow countrymen, we gratefully bear witness to your genuine and unselfish expression of charity.**

**In closing, I would like to share a short but true story that is most apropos today as it was when originally told in 1941. During the height of World War II, the Pro Grand Master of Finland, R.:W.:Brother Marcus Tollet, spoke of a little boy at a local seaport in Finland who looking at the various sailing ships noticed one flying a strange flag on its masthead, asked his father, "What flag is that?" He knew the flags of the Scandinavian countries and of all the countries that border on the Baltic, but this was a different flag; and his father replied, "It is the Freemason's Flag - It is the Stars and Stripes of the American Flag".**

**Thank you once again for your thoughtfulness and generosity for our fellow human beings during these trying times.**

**Fraternally,  
Richard T. Schulz  
Grand Secretary**



**Send all donations to:**

**Grand Lodge of F & AM Of the State of New York  
Masonic Hall - 17th Floor  
71 West 23rd Street  
New York, NY 10010-4149 U.S.A.**



Sandoval Lodge No.76 Officers for 2022



WB Richard Cullen  
Secretary



Bro. Tyler McKenzie  
Senior Warden



Bro. David B. Teague  
Senior Warden



Bro. Brian Borawski  
Senior Deacon



Bro. Daniel Chico  
Junior Deacon



Bro. Burx Norrod  
Junior Deacon



Charles Brooks  
Junior Steward



WB. Ed McBride  
Chaplain



WB. Eric Moses  
Tyler





BY SCOTTJAQUITH | PUBLISHED: AUGUST 10, 2016  
The following entry is courtesy of Worshipful Brother Justin Jones and  
his blog *lonestarmason* which can be found online here:  
<https://lonestarmason.wordpress.com/>.



### *Putting Quantity Before Quality: The Open West Gate*

*The West Gate is a term many Masons may be unfamiliar with. I know here in Texas I had never heard of it until I began actively researching and collaborating with other Masons from various jurisdictions online. In the physical sense, the West Gate is the door through which candidates and brethren enter to receive their degrees. In a more conceptual sense, the West Gate is much broader in definition and encompasses the entire process of receiving petitions, investigations, and voting on accepting and advancing new members.*

*The latter definition is, at least in my mind, most applicable to the phrase “Guarding the West Gate” and is what this post will be focusing on.*

### *Quality vs. Quantity*

*When the printing press came into everyday use, books, which were once uncommon and valuable, became common and affordable for most people. The Industrial Revolution had very much the same effect in that it made items which once took time and craftsmanship to produce cheap and easily accessible.*

*This being said, this post is not written to complain about progress. Rather, in both examples given above, society moved from quality items which were once created by craftsmen towards faster production in favor of quantity. You see, you cannot have quality and quantity at the same time. Quality makes an object or an experience something marvelous and quantity makes an object or an experience something mundane. This marvelous vs. mundane argument could apply towards several facets of Freemasonry and probably deserves its own post in the future, but for now let’s apply it towards the West Gate.*

### *Four quarters or one hundred pennies?*

*The application of quality versus quantity applies to Freemasonry very well, in my opinion. Remember that something which is marvelous and/or has high quality must, by its very nature, be scarce. This principle also means that as a product becomes more and more common the quantity will increase but it will become more and more mundane at the same time.*

*Unfortunately, this is what is happening in our fraternity. In many lodges the standards for who they are willing to accept have dropped severely and in some lodges the standards are non-existent outside of the bare minimum which has been set for their jurisdictions (in some jurisdictions even these minimum standards can be waived).*

*There’s a saying “If you don’t stand for something then you’ll fall for anything”. This could also be adapted to say “If a lodge has no standards they will accept anybody”, which is sadly often the case. The requirements a jurisdiction set for men to petition should not be looked at as though it is a pass or fail situation but instead should be regarded as minimum criteria to be considered for admission.*



# **G**uarding the West Gate

BY SCOTTJAQUITH | PUBLISHED: AUGUST 10, 2016

The following entry is courtesy of Worshipful Brother Justin Jones and his blog *lonestarmason* which can be found online here:

<https://lonestarmason.wordpress.com/>.

*...If you ever get the chance to talk with a real old-timer Freemason, ask him what it was like to join the Fraternity back in the day. Several decades ago it was much more difficult to become a Freemason. My own grandfather has told me that when he first joined in the 50's the lodge he petitioned had an unspoken policy that every petitioner was turned down the first time they applied, the idea being that if someone truly wanted to be a member they would re-apply later. Other older brethren have told me they had to ask three times before they could even receive a petition. Certain professions, activities, and reputations could bar you without question. Yes, I know, these methods all seem extreme and possibly even cruel to us today, however they created scarcity which, in turn, made membership more desirable and generally increased the quality of the members as well.*

*This is a sharp contrast to the petitioning process for many lodges today. In fact, even though many lodges are allowing every man without a criminal record to join, most U.S. jurisdictions are losing members faster than they can be replaced. That being said, when membership was hard to obtain men were always petitioning during a time that many of us today regard as the Golden Years of Freemasonry.*

*So the question is this: would you rather have four quarters in your pocket or a hundred pennies? Is a small and intimate lodge with a handful of quality brethren better than a large lodge with only a few active brothers and a hundred members on the roster who never show up and never dedicated themselves to the fraternity?*

## **Final Remarks**

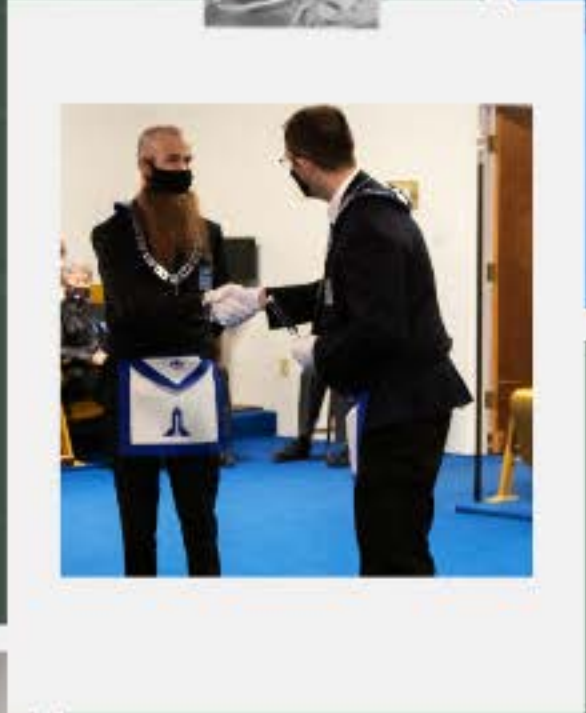
*I'm not an elitist and I don't want to be regarded as such. I am, however, in favor of making it actually mean something to be a Freemason again. When membership was scarcest people knew that you were a quality person to be affiliated with the fraternity; now this isn't always the case. In fact, if we're being honest with ourselves we can probably think of at least one Freemason who has no business being in the Fraternity.*

*The purpose of this post was to encourage reflection towards the petition process your own lodge is practicing. What are your standards? How thorough is your investigation process? How many times is the petitioner expected to come meet and eat with the brethren before he is given a petition? What are your degree fees? Are you truly only accepting men who are Masonic material or is any and every man with a petition and degree fee in hand being accepted?*

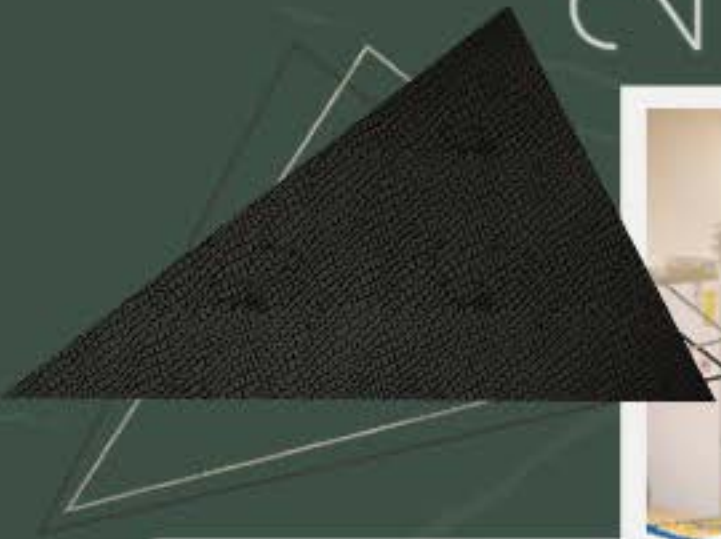
*We have a huge responsibility as stewards of our fraternity. Every unworthy man who slips through a wide-open West Gate into the Craft has the potential to eventually vote, assume an office, and even get involved at the Grand Lodge level. One such man is toxic enough, what if we allow hundreds to slip through?*

*The future of the fraternity is in our hands, brethren. Do we want it to be marvelous or mundane?*





2022 INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS





## **By the Level - a Symbol Interpretation By Burx Norrod**

“... and by the level - a king is reminded that although a crown may adorn the head, and his hand the scepter, yet the blood in his veins is derived from the same Almighty parent, and is no better than that of the humblest citizen ... and teaches us all that we're traveling on the broad level of time to that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveler returns.” Upon hearing these words on what this Masonic symbol meant - I've since adopted it as something I've come to live my everyday life with as I don't think there's a better symbol that serves to summarize our beautiful Craft for this main reason:

It shows that as Freemasons, we don't (or shouldn't) discriminate against each other based upon our religious, political, racial, or social-economic statuses. As an example, Brother (and President Harry Truman) explained that when he was in the Lodge - he was to be called 'Brother' ... but outside of the Lodge - he was 'Mr. President'. He even took it so far as to make sure any non-Mason Secret Service agents didn't attend the Lodge meetings, as he was in the company of his Brothers. He submitted to the Master of his Lodge - who was a gardener ... regardless of the fact he ran the country.

I use this in my daily life to not only ensure I'm humbly reminded that we're all humans who bleed red, but at the same time, gives me confidence when I'm working with clients in my usual vocation as a Mortgage Broker. I often come across those who have multiple Doctorate Degrees ... or otherwise the smartest of the smart in their own professions ... or multi-multi millionaires who can put down a cool MILLION on a home purchase ... and those in high political or other leadership positions in various organizations on a national or international level.

I more especially visualize the Level when chatting remotely or in person with these folks. It reminds me that they are also human ... and that we are all children of that same Almighty parent - and gives the confidence I need to carry on without blinking an eye. I feel this has been extremely instrumental in my own successes in business, and know this mindset can carry on to all aspects of life where a little boost in self confidence is sometimes needed.

I'm no operative Mason ... I'd be out of job quicker than a dropped hot plate if I were to actually attempt to erect a physical building of sorts. Thankfully - we have Speculative Masonry. This reminds me of what the first definition I heard of Freemasonry as being a “peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegories and illustrated by symbols.”

What is YOUR favorite Masonic symbol - and how are YOU using it in your own daily life?



Degrees in the month of  
February

John Cummings  
Entered Apprentice Degree -  
Mesa Lodge No. 68



John Keel  
Fellow Craft Degree -  
Sandoval Lodge No. 76



Brother Brian Bailey  
Master Mason Degree -  
Sacramento Lodge No. 24



# **Kabbalah in Freemasonry**

## **By Burx Norrod**

A 'natural mystic' wouldn't be the word to describe myself - although over the years the mysticism that surrounds Freemasonry has induced me to want to learn more and more about the spiritual mindset that has often confused Freemasonry with being a religion of sorts, one that has been condemned by religious fundamentalists - to include the Roman Catholic's Humanum Genus which spoke to excommunicate those Roman Catholics who were Freemasons ... or at the very least, making them to understand they are in "grave sin", and cannot partake in the Holy Communion, which is the literal eating of the body and drinking of the blood of Jesus through the magickal practice of Transubstantiation, something that happens at every Roman Catholic Mass.

As a newly minted Entered Apprentice back in 2012, I was digging into the history of our Craft through reading numerous books - and scouring the internet for its many articles and googling topics of interest, which I found there to be TONS of explanations on due to each authors own interpretation or biases on a subject matter. The word 'Free' in Freemasonry became to me one that provided the 'Free' will to think, to know, and to better understand oneself ... not one that derived from the operative 'Freestone Masons'. This 'freeing of the mind' helped me to see things in a much different Light. I became fascinated with King Solomon's Temple, as I saw this as THE allegory of what a Mason is, using the working tools to build ourselves with this Spiritual Building, that Temple not made with hands.

Joining the Scottish Rite - and going through it's Reunion in the Spring of 2013 was yet another eye-opener, something I looked forward to as I watched youtube videos done by former SGC Henry Clausen, a mystic that led the Scottish Rite from 1969 - 1985. One of the topics that I remembered from the very first Degree I got to learn was 'Kabbalah' ... which stood out to me because only its surface was scratched - yet told that this should be studied. I realized that in Freemasonry and the Scottish Rite, only tidbits of info are given to the candidate - as he is then encouraged to take the time to learn it's meanings on his own time. It all seemed like a test of sorts.

There are quite a few resources on learning what the Kabbalah is - the word that means 'to receive' ... or 'an unwritten or oral tradition'. It's a school of thought that predates Juda symbolism to understand the manifestations of God, creation, and the nature of the soul. This stuff can get quite deep - reason why tradition would have it, a man would have to be at least 40 years old before he could learn what this was!

A Mason should care about this due to the fact that the Kabbalah is a part of our rituals and symbols, it gives deeper meaning to our Craft - providing that further light in Masonry. It provides moral, philosophical, and spiritual guidance for life. It uses an allegorical Tree of Life to show 10 emanations, and it's 22 connectors to paint that picture of understanding. These equal to 32 ...