

Chips from the rough Ashlar....

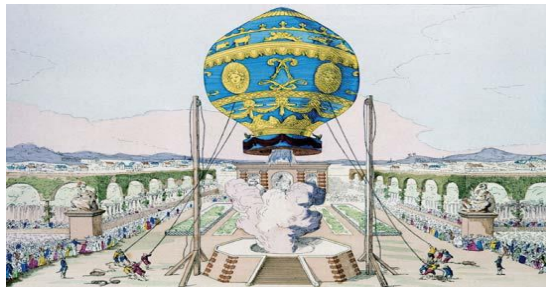
Brethren, over the past 20 months I have been sharing my 'Living Stones' with you, hoping to share some insight into the side of Masonry that is not ritualistic in nature...that's someone else's job Mine is to touch on the esoteric side of our gentle craft...sharing why we do what we do, perhaps laying an important message on your heart, or the real story behind our symbols and icons. There are so many topics to research that I have already penned many of my Living Stones for next year. Tonight I want to share with you a few odd and curious facts that I'll call...Chips from the Rough Ashlar.



General John Morgan

In July of 1863, Confederate raiders rode into Versailles, IN, captured the local militia and then absconded with the county treasury. The next morning, Confederate General John Morgan learned that several of his men had also made off with the jewels of the local Masonic Lodge. The general was so outraged that he ordered the men to return the jewels immediately, apologize to the Masons, and then severely reprimanded six of his soldiers for their actions against the Lodge. Morgan was from Davis Lodge #22, Lexington, KY.

The letters of the English word GOD are the first letters of Hebrew words for beauty, strength, and wisdom. G in Gomez, O in Oz, D in Dabar.



Masonic Lodge in a balloon

On August 23, 1879, Lodge #239 of France held a meeting in a large gondola suspended from a hot air balloon flying over Paris, at which time they initiated a new brother.

In Launceston, Tasmania in 1844, St John's Lodge took part in the ceremony of the laying of a foundation stone of a local Jewish Synagogue. The 96th Regimental band attended with the permission of the colonel and played "Masonic Airs". The return was made to the lodge room with the band playing "Berne's Farewell" and the "Entered Apprentice".



Old North Church, Boston

Robert Newman, Sexton of "Old North Church" in Boston, was the man who hung the lantern to signal that 'The British are coming'. Paul Revere then rode through the countryside warning the colonists of the impending danger. Both were members of the same Lodge in Boston. Brother Revere served as Worshipful Master of 2 Lodges a total of 9 times, was a Royal Arch Companion, a Knight Templar, and served 3 years as Grand Master in Massachusetts.

Many world leaders, politicians, presidents and members of royal families have claimed ties to the Craft. For example...In Africa - King Hassan II of Morocco was one, today president Idris Deby of Chad, Denis Sassou of the Congo, Mamadou Tanja of Niger, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, and Omar Bongo of Gabon are all Freemasons.



Prince Edward, Grand Master, UGLE

In England - the Grand Master is usually a member of the Royal Family. Currently it's Prince Edward, Duke of Kent. His Majesty King Carl Gustaf of Sweden is the High Protector of the Swedish Order of Freemasons. In the USA, many of our founding fathers as well as 14 presidents were Master Masons, along with one who was an Entered Apprentice, but never took further degrees.



Dr. Edward Jenner

Dr. Edward Jenner discovered the vaccination process against smallpox in 1789. He was Worshipful Master of Faith and Friendship Lodge #270 in Berkeley, England at the time.



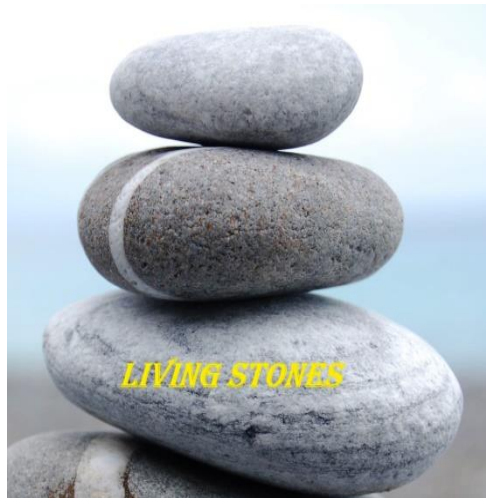
Brother Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin

When Astronaut, and Brother, Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin set foot on the Moon, he carried with him an official declaration from his Grand Master claiming that the Moon was henceforth under the jurisdiction of the Great State of Texas. Should a Masonic Lodge ever be opened on that celestial body it will be opened using Texas ritual.

Ok, you've received some nice little tidbits about Masonry tonight. As I wrote this presentation it struck me that sometimes in our haste to progress through the degrees of Masonry...in our nearsighted focus on achieving proficiency in the degrees and moving on to the next...we pass by the lessons and moral values in our degrees. Perhaps we learn the 'test' but not the real 'subject matter'. Perhaps we become separated from the lessons and moral values of our pursuit.

But, the measuring stick of our progression in Masonry is not marked by our advancement through the degrees alone. Our true progression is also marked by how well we understand and live the richness of Masonic 'light'. And that's dependent upon the effort we spend in reflection, in allowing ourselves to ripen with it into mature age. This kind of reflection allows us to rediscover and truly hear the wise words given to each of us in our journey from West to East.

So, let us take it on as our obligation to Masonry, and to ourselves, to travel again through what we have passed by, to retrace our steps from West to East and from East to West again. That's the true meaning when we are asked if we 'have traveled', and if so, 'whence we came'. We travel not only toward the East in search of light, but back to the West again, *with* the light. As we travel we should grow in Masonry. As our judgement ripens we are to reflect on our first steps toward 'Masonic Light': Faith, Hope, Charity, with Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, and Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.



Living Stones - Masonic Thoughts for Today's Mason
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