

Chief Adept's Summer Message 2017

Fratres of the Rose and Cross wheresoever dispersed,

Once again, the stars have aligned such that I can devote myself, without distraction, to thoughts of deeper significance that I can share with you from my niche in Connecticut. Our College has managed through another year, with the usual ups and downs, and on reflection, not much different than the year before. I hope this doesn't mean stagnation, and I have offered the Fratres some new things to tackle OUTSIDE THE BOX and nudge us off center. And so, I title this blog:

Outside the Box

Over the winter, while I struggled with the usual Masonic-laden "what if's" and coulda-shoulda-woulda's and why this was so, or had to be, or even came to be, and guess what? Yes, I could not find any easy or obvious answers either. Sound familiar? The challenges facing our Fraternity do not limit themselves to Lodge, as we all know. A solution for one body, may hold keys for another, but any long sought after magic pill remains elusive.

Among all the post-election fallout, terms like "Societal Evolution" and "The Experiment Called America" and so on, have become forefront by those to justify their causes, but without acknowledging how these came to be and the integral role our Fraternity played in enabling these concepts to take hold for over two centuries. As a visual reminder, we will be out there in parades to celebrate our 4th of July, hearken to our early history, formation of our laws, and freedoms granted under our Constitution.

While we have all thought about this to some degree during our Masonic careers, it did not become obvious to me in a big way until just recently as I engrossed myself in preparations for my Chapter's 200th Anniversary, to be formally celebrated this October 1st. (And we are not alone, as there are on the horizon many more Masonic organizations coming up on their Bi-Centennials.)

So, as Secretary and keeper of all the records, I quickly found myself mired in research into our history, fueled by a curiosity that spilled over into my searches for my family Colonial origins. This journey, now that it is well underway, is not even close to being complete, but has given me insight into the early days of our Fraternity, all new to me and fascinating for historical content alone.

Culling through what amounts to the records of 5 Chapters, the oldest, Pythgauras No. 17 spanning 200 years, all documented in script quill pen in heavy leather-bound books, I felt like an abbot pouring over scripture in a chilled basement by candlelight. It has humbled me: first, I have new appreciation for musty attics, a typewriter and my eye doctor; but more importantly, given a new window into how our Brethren participated in shaping this "Experiment Called America". When you juxtapose our community, state and national history against the birth of Lodges and Chapters, and early meetings of our Colonial Brethren, it is fascinating to see both hand in hand. As America changed, so did

we: through Civil War to an unparalleled industrial expansion, World Wars and depressions and now a technology moving so fast no one can keep up. Every new page turn revealed something about a Companion who would be famous and help shape our country: one example, Samuel Colt, a Mason and exalted in our Chapter, went on to revolutionize the firearm industry. Then, as we complain about the snow keeping us inside with all our modern contrivances, think about the efforts our Brethren had to undergo to just get to a meeting, snow and all, and another testimony to their dedication.

The basic ingredients of the ritual and administration was much the same as today, but little things would also tell a story. In the 1800's Pythagoras petitioned the State of CT for what we would consider today to be a 501c(3) and own property...novel idea, what? New technology was scary to them; the Morgan Affair was bad (here in CT we were right in the thick of it), the Lodge and Chapters sheltered us from the anti-Masonic political parties outside, for a time until we went home. Their lives were stable (2 ways actually, in our hearts and in the barn); we had purpose, we had each other, we had good families and an unshrinkable sense of morals, the list is long, and capped by a firm belief in a Supreme AOTU.

This fabric of our Masonic heritage remains in us today, And if we can combine it with this new brand of bold nationalism squarely before us, we can take advantage of this opportunity to become more relevant again. But to do this, as did our Founding Fathers in the face of adversity, we have to be prepared to THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. We can still preserve our records in the attic, keep our ritual and core beliefs and private discussions private, and still leave the cowans and eavesdroppers outside, but we CAN try new things and should not be afraid. And if you want modern proof OUTSIDE THE BOX works, just go to Kentucky, just once. As the Mecca for SRICF, it is like our history, it can make a difference for today and tomorrow.

In Closing.....

Only our Triune God has given us the knowledge to understand and strength to complete the unforeseen mission He has provided for our lifetime. In Him alone, we place an unqualified trust that our Keystone will be approved by our Grand Overseer in that far distant land from whose borne no traveler returns, whence we will all be reunited on the level of Eternity together.

Be well my Fratres...the Lord Bless and Keep You safe in his hands until we meet again...and Bless these United States of America !

Amen. Amen



Fr. William L. Miller, IX
Chief Adept, CT College
"Ad Astra per Aspera"

The Connecticut College usually meets four mornings a year at the York Masons Hall, 784 Main Street in East Hartford, CT, concluding with a lunch. Fratres of the Rose and Cross are welcome to visit. Feel free to contact me or our Secretary to confirm dates and directions.

Meetings for 2017-2018

October 14, 2017

November 18, 2017

February & April 2018

The 200th Anniversary Gala Celebration of Pythagoras Chapter No. 17, RAM will be held October 1, 2017 in CT. Any Frater with an interest in attending or obtaining a 200th History, feel free to inquire. william.l.miller@snet.net.