



Letters from Whatcom Lodge No.

Volume 4 - Issue 2

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February 2003

The Master's Trestle-board

Brethren, so far we're off to a very good start. The winter weather has not been too bad, but even when it was bad, the lodge room has been a warm retreat. I hope you made it to Hoedown Night, but if not, maybe you'll come next year.

At our up-coming stated meeting on Thursday Feb. 20th we have our official visit by the DDGM VWB Don Higgeson. It will also be Past Masters Night and we hope to get some of our old-guard PMs out to Lodge. This night we will vote on a By-law change to start our stated meetings an hour earlier. I'm still open to hearing your good ideas, so send them my way.



Feb. 20th - stated meeting and official visit to Whatcom by the DDGM VWB Don Higgeson. Its Past Masters Night so come on out. A little food will be served at 6:30 P.M. & Lodge opens at 7:30 P.M.

Mar. 6th is our special communication.

Mar. 11th Trip to visit Prince David Lodge in B.C. Meet at W. Maplewood at 5:15 P.M. to carpool.

Mar. 15th Fairhaven Lodge hosts MFLA at 10 AM at W. Maplewood.

Mar. 20th is our stated meeting.

Hear Ye ! Hear Ye !

WB Glenn Hutchings presented a written by-law change proposal to the membership at the stated meeting on Thursday January 16th, 2003. The proposal would change the hours of the stated meeting from 7:30 PM to 6:30 PM. The portion of the by-laws affected is Article Communications - which at present reads: Section 1: The stated communication of Whatcom Lodge shall be on the third Thursday of each month, at the hour of 7:30 P.M. from September 1st to June 30th. The proposed change is: *Section 1: The stated communication of Whatcom Lodge shall be on the third Thursday of each month, at the hour of 6:30 P.M. from September 1st to June 30th.* This proposal will be voted on at the stated meeting on Thursday February 20th, at 7:30 PM.

Hoedown News

Well-sir, if you weren't thar, ya missed a good'un. I saw members from several Lodges, Eastern Star Chapters, two Rainbow Assemblies and other Masonic organizations. The food was mighty tasty and there was plenty of it. John and Vivian Burley operated the chuck-wagon. Barbecue beef sandwiches, chili, baked beans, potato salad, barbecued chicken, and more were on the menu. Each table was decorated with a cowboy hat and a cowboy boot holding a splay of wheat stalks. After a great feed the photo booth was open for business.

There were two photo backgrounds set up for cowboys & cowgirls to get a keepsake photo. Ms. Janice Bethman designed and arranged the sets, with some assistance from Mike and Sheree Johnston. Ms. Bethman painted a scene featuring Mt Baker as one back ground and the other had two horses and a split-rail fence. John Browne took the pictures, shooting one roll of film. After expenses, the photo-booth will have raised about \$65 for the Harold M. Terpenning Educational Scholarship fund. Next up was square dancing and sixteen couples stepped out on the floor.

The square dance caller, Mr. Tim Smith, did a fine job coaching the novices, like me, through our paces. There were some experienced dancers in the crowd: Mike & Sheree Johnston, Al & Sylvia Jensen and John & Gerry Ellen Sleeth were three couples who appeared to me to be right at home on the dance floor. Dancing ability at various levels was there to be seen; even the venerable Bro. Leland Dodson had three great grand kids out on the dance floor. To my knowledge no one suffered any serious ailments, but then I can't speak for how folks felt the next morning.

No party would be complete without prizes. Al Jensen got the award for the best cowboy belt buckle, which featured the Square & Compasses. Ed Jungblom won for the best hat, a large pink foam-rubber ten-gallon hat. The best costumes went to Glenn & Martha Hutchings, wearing a matching pair of home-sown western shirts, in patriotic colors. The last prize was given to Ms. Janice Bethman for her fine table decorations and photo-booth back grounds. About forty folks partook of this event and word was spread about, "we ought to do this more often."

A very big thank you goes out Mike & Sylvia Johnston, Glenn Hutchings, Ed Jungblom, John Burley and Janice Bethman. A very nicely done event and enjoyed by all. Sec. John F. Browne

To contribute to this newsletter please send your letter, comment, historical fact, poem or calendar announcement, by the 2nd Monday of each month, to:

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Book Report

The Elegant Universe

Up until recently physicists looked at subatomic particles as being actual point particles, like very tiny BBs. Superstring theory exchanges these tiny BBs for tiny loops of string. Well, its actually more complicated than that, but loops of string are easier to visualize at first. The word particle is still used because its what people are used to and because these loops of string behave like particles until one gets down to incredibly tiny measurements. How they seem to work is this: "Just as the strings on a violin or piano have resonant frequencies at which they prefer to vibrate—patterns that our ears sense as various musical notes and their higher harmonics—the same holds true for the loops of string theory. But we will see that, rather than producing musical notes, each of the preferred patterns of vibration of a string in string theory appears as a particle whose mass and force charges are determined by the string's oscillatory pattern....If string theory is right, the microscopic fabric of our universe is a richly intertwined multidimensional labyrinth within which the strings of the universe endlessly twist and vibrate, rhythmically beating out the laws of the cosmos. Far from being accidental details, the properties of nature's basic building blocks are deeply entwined with the fabric of space and time." We are living in a universe which is a cosmic symphony of vibrating strings. Figure 1.1, below, gives a good visual example of how the structure works from an apple down to strings. This is but the most basic of descriptions of superstring theory, which in present day may be supplanted by M-theory, but I don't want to get ahead of the story.

After having introduced strings in Chapter One, Prof. Greene moves into Chapter Two, Space, Time and the Eye of the Beholder. We are about to learn about special relativity, Einstein's the-

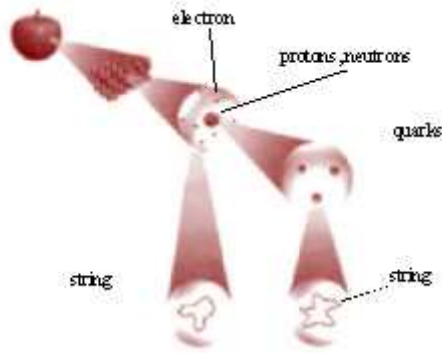


Fig. 1.1 Matter, the apple, is made up of atoms, which are made up of electrons and quarks (which makes up neutrons or protons). According to string theory, all such small particles are made of tiny loops of string.

ory (1905) which completely changed the modern concept of space and time. The reason it caused a stir is because what had been familiar was now undone. A paradox was established when James Clerk Maxwell, a Scottish physicist, unified (in mid-1800s) electricity and magnetism in the framework of the *electromagnetic field*. Maxwell's mathematical framework showed that electromagnetic disturbances travel

at a fixed never-changing speed and that speed turned out to be the speed of light. Ignorance stayed bliss until sixteen year old Albert Einstein decided to try chasing after a beam of light. The reasoning rooted in the Newtonian laws of motion indicated that as we catch up to light it will appear stationary. But, all information from Maxwell and others work showed that light is never not-in-motion, hummm.

I found this chapter kind of fun as Prof. Greene uses different examples to demonstrate his points on the speed of light, motion and time. It turns out that time does in fact slow down the closer one gets to the speed of light. One might think Oh yea! Now I can live longer. But the reality is that as time slows down so does your perception of its passage and so you've not gained for going faster. The key to understanding light speed, space and time is the *principle of relativity*. "The principle of relativity rests on a simple fact: Whenever we discuss speed or velocity (an object's speed and its direction of motion), we must specify precisely who or what is doing the measuring." The point of observation is what matters, yet, regardless of that point of observation the laws of physics "must be absolutely identical for all observers undergoing constant-velocity motion." This lays the foundation of the laws of physics being universal. But some pretty strange things still happen within these laws. I mentioned that as we speed up toward light-speed time actually slows down. Another seemingly impossible thing happens when we speed up, objects become shorter. Even more difficult to grasp is the concept of spacetime, where all things at rest, relative to each other, age at the same rate but an object in motion, relative those objects will age at a slower rate. The rate at which the motion-object slows its aging is inverse to speed as it approaches light-speed. But, "Here's the leap: Einstein proclaimed that all objects in the universe are always traveling through *spacetime* at one fixed speed—that of light." If we think of this concept as a base of operation then its easier to grasp. So, when one's light-speed motion through time is diverted to light-speed motion through space, time slows down. Light, as was noted earlier, is constantly traveling at light-speed. So, here is the shock: "Thus light does not get old; a photon that emerged from the big bang is the same age today as it was then. There is no passage of time at light speed."!!!

Albert Einstein was a busy lad back in the early 1900s. Once it became law, that nothing could outrun light, an incompatibility with Newton's universal theory of gravity cropped up. Einstein came to the rescue with his theory of general relativity. Prof. Greene gives this basic description of Newton's theory of gravity. "Newton's universal theory of gravity asserts that the strength of attraction between two objects is larger for larger-mass objects and smaller for smaller-mass objects; it also asserts that the strength of attraction is larger for smaller separations between the objects and smaller for larger separations." Under this arrangement it would seem that if the relationships were to suddenly change, like the sun exploding, there would be an immediately felt drop in the sun's gravitational pull. But special relativity tells us that nothing moves faster than the speed of



Friends
are the
Flowers
in the
Garden
of
Life

light. So, given the distance from the sun to earth, it would take 8.3 minutes for folks on earth to feel a loss of the sun's gravity. There was a flaw in Newton's theory. Actually, Newton accurately described gravities' behavior, he just did not know how to get to the level of how-it-worked. Einstein moved toward a description of how gravity worked when he came across the idea that accelerated motion and gravity were related. "Einstein called the indistinguishability between accelerated motion and gravity the *equivalence principle*." Einstein realized that he could use the space-time relationship to understand how gravity worked.

OK - I know some of you are hooked on this now, but I don't want you to miss out on the good diagrams which go with the next bit of text and there just isn't room in this issue.

However - I'll be back, Bro. John