Letters from Whatcom Lodge No.

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The Master's Trestle-board

Its here - so, Welcome to the New Year brethren! If you missed it, we had a very fine installation of officers on Thursday December 19th. For many of the those gathered it was their first tiled installation in Washington State, many having only seen one in Canada. We still have a couple of brothers to install WB John Burley as SD and WB Jim Wallace as Marshal.

I think we have some exciting activities coming up this year and one of the first will be our Hoedown Night. This event will take place on Sat. evening February 8th beginning at 5:45 PM. The hoedown is open to all Masonic Family members and we hope folks will bring a friend or two. Brothers and sisters, this is a good opportunity to show potential members, for any of our Masonic groups, the kind of fun & warmth enjoyed by those of us in Masonry.

At the Master's Dinner in early December, Bro. Ellis Massey made a great suggestion which I think has merit. A lodge he knows about down South began a program called the Rusty Trowel. The idea being that some masons, who had not been to lodge for some time, didn't come for fear of not remembering the ritual, passes etc. I declare that no "rusty trowel" will be turned away from

Hoedown Night

Mark Saturday Feb. 8th on your calendar for an evening of Western food and square dancing. Whatcom Lodge is hosting a Hoedown that night and it is open to District Ten Masonic Family members and any friends or interested persons. We plan to clang the chow-iron at 5:45 PM with square dancing to follow. There will be prizes for: best western hat, belt buckle and over-all outfit. We also plan to set up a photo-booth where you and your sweetheart can get a photo of you in your western gear - for a small fee to cover film and processing.

Calendar of Events

Jan. 16th is our stated meeting. One item up for discussion will be changing our By-laws to allow an earlier opening time, perhaps 6:30 PM. Come and voice your opinion, pro or con.

Jan. 16th Whatcom Lodge hosts MFLA at 10 AM at W. Maplewood.

Feb. 8th a Saturday, is our special communication - Hoedown Night, see the news brief to the left.

Feb. 20th - stated meeting and official visit to Whatcom by the DDGM VWB Don Higgerson.

From your Secretary-

I don't know about you but I'm really excited about this coming year for Whatcom Lodge. WM Buck Strickland will be ably assisted by SW Glenn Hutchings and JW Mike Johnston. WB Larry West is our Treasurer, WB John Burley SD and Br. Frank Myers is the JD. We have our newest brother, Mike Davis as Chaplain, WB Alvie Goodwin as SS, WB Jim Wallace as Marshal and Br. Ted McQuiston is the Tyler. Oh...and this newsletter bard is your Secretary. But, what makes a truly great lodge is the membership, you - the brethren, and we hope to see you in lodge at least once this year.

As we begin a new year I'm wondering, how are we doing in meeting your needs? I have heard from a few non-active members who praise this newsletter as a fine addition to lodge activity, but, we'd like to know what more of our brothers think. Please feel free to send me a letter letting us know how you are getting on. We value our member's input and in particular any ideas you might have to assist us in the following matter.

Whatcom Lodge like most lodges these days is having a problem attracting new members. Our DD VWB Don Higgerson has asked that each lodge contribute one member to serve on a district-wide Public Relations Committee whose purpose will be to find ways to make the Masonic Family better known to the larger community. It is hoped that a better informed county-wide commu-

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

Masonry teaches that in our time as Fellowcraft we should apply ourselves to education. In this spirit of 2nd degree inquiring minds we shall investigate the most basic thing - matter. The tool of science cannot tell us WHY the Universe came into being and it won't be able to for the foreseeable future. But science, in particular mathematics, physics and astronomy, describes pretty well HOW the Universe came into being. A really good book which explains the fundamental elements of HOW is:

The Elegant Universe by Brian Greene.

Chapter One opens with, for some a revelation, the information that the two pillars of physics have been for fifty years, sitting under a dark cloud. One pillar is Albert Einstein's general relativity theory and the other pillar is the quantum mechanics theory. What is not widely known, outside of the world of physicists and mathematicians, is that these two theories are mutually incompatible. Professor Greene asks the question: "Can it really be that the universe at its most fundamental level is divided, requiring one set of laws when things are large and a different, incompatible set when things are small?" The relative newcomer, Super string Theory, answers that question with a big NO. In fact super string theory not only joins general relativity and quantum mechanics together but also shows that both are required in order for super string theory to make sense. But before getting directly into super string theory Prof. Greene gives a little historic background.

There were three significant conflicts which science had to resolve before getting us to our present state of understanding. The first conflict was recognized as far back as the end of the 1800s and had to do with the properties of the motion of light. "Briefly put, according to Isaac Newton's laws of motion, if you could run fast enough you can catch up with a departing beam of light, whereas according to James Clark Maxwell's laws of electromagnetism, you can't." This conflict was laid to rest by Albert Einstein's theory of special relativity; he sided with Maxwell and also forever changed the old concept of space and time being fixed. But the special relativity theory set up the second conflict. "One conclusion of Einstein's work is that no object—in fact, no influence or disturbance of any sort—can travel faster than the speed of light." But this was seen to be in conflict with: "Newton's experimentally successful and intuitively pleasing universal theory of gravitation [which] involves influences that are transmitted over vast distances of space instantaneously." In 1915 Einstein fixed this problem with his general relativity theory which further refined the concepts of space and time. Prof. Greene says: "Not only are space and time influenced by one's state of motion, but they can warp and curve in response to the presence of matter or energy. Such distortions to the fabric of space and time, as we shall see, transmit the force of gravity from one place to another." An even more important outcome of the general relativity theory is covered by Greens' next statement: "Space and time, therefore, can on longer be thought of as an inert backdrop on which the events of the universe play themselves out; rather, through special and then general relativity, they are intimate players in the events themselves."

It just seems, doesn't it, that when you solve one problem another takes its' place? In fact, the solution to one problem creates yet a new problem. Our third conflict arrives. "Over the course of the three decades beginning in 1900, physicists developed quantum mechanics in response to a number of glaring problems that arose when nineteenth-century conceptions of physics were applied to the microscopic world." Our third conflict is the incompatibility between general relativity and quantum mechanics. "As we will see in Chapter 5, the gently curving geometrical form of space emerging from general relativity is at loggerheads with the frantic, roiling, microscopic behavior of the universe implied by quantum mechanics." Quantum mechanics applies to our microscopic building blocks. "The ancient Greeks surmised that the stuff of the universe was made up of tiny "uncuttable" ingredients that they called *atoms*. More than 2,000 years later we still believe it to be true, although the identity of the most fundamental units has gone through numerous revisions." The pudding thickens.

During the first decades of the twentieth century we learned that atoms actually were not the smallest units but rather they were composed of parts. The names of those parts are protons, neutrons and electrons. This was confirmed by the 1930s in the collective works of J.J. Thomson, Ernst Rutherford, Niels Bhor, and James Chadwick. But in 1968 it was learned that even these parts had parts too, *quarks* "a whimsical name taken from a passage in James Joyce's Finnegan's Wake by the theoretical physicist Murray Gell-Mann, who previously had surmised their existence." Since 1968 the various types of quarks discovered had some pretty cute and funny names: *up*, *down*, *charm*, *strange*, *bottom* and *top*. The current list of basic building-block particles totals sixteen: twelve fundamental particles and four force particles. These particles are presented in tables 1.1 & 1.2 down below.

All this is nice you ask, but what about string theory? OK, here goes.....well not so fast, we're out of space on this newsletter - but never fear there is more to come.

Continued next month - John Browne

Family 1		Family 2		Family 3	
Particle	***Mass***	***Particle***	***Mass***	***Particle***	***Mass***
Electron	.00054	Muon	.11	Tau	1.9
Electron-neutrino	$<10^{-4}$	Muon-neutrino	<.0003	Tau-neutrino	<.033
Up-quark	.0047	Charm Quark	1.6	Top-quark	189
Down-quark	.0074	Strange Quark	.16	Bottom-quark	5.2

Table 1.1 above. The three families of fundamental particles and their masses (in multiples of the proton mass) The values of the neutrino masses have so far eluded experimental determination.

Force	***Force Particle***	***Mass***
Strong	Gluon	0
Electromagnetic	Photon	0
Weak	Weak gauge bosons	86, 97
Gravity	Graviton	0

Table 1.2 at left. The four forces of nature, together with their associated force particles and their masses in multiples of the proton mass. (The weak force particles come in varieties with the two possible masses listed. Theoretical studies show that the graviton should be massless.)