



# Letters from Whatcom Lodge No. 151



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November 2002

## The Master's Trestle-board

Well the vote is in and we have a new set of officers for 2003. I wish to thank WB Glenn Hutchings for his years of dedicated service as our Secretary and Br. Frank Myers for his years of service as our Treasurer, I have no doubt they will serve the Lodge well as our SW & JD respectively. There is a new position, PR representative, which will be ably handled by VWB Ed Jungblom who is also our member on the MEC. (Masonic Education Council)

My best to 2003 officers.  
WM Buck Strickland

## Election of Officers

We held our annual election of the next year's officers at our October 17<sup>th</sup> stated meeting.

Elected & Appointed Officers  
for the year 2003

WM Buck Strickland  
SW Glenn Hutchings  
JW Mike Johnston  
T<sub>REA</sub> Larry West  
S<sub>EC</sub> John Browne  
C<sub>HAP</sub> Mike Davis  
M<sub>AR</sub>  
SD John Burley  
JD Frank Myers  
SS Alvia Goodwin  
JS  
O<sub>RG</sub>  
T<sub>YLER</sub> Ted McQuiston

Small service is true service while it lasts;  
Of humblest friends, bright creature!  
Scorn not one: The daisy,  
But the shadow that it casts,  
Protects the lingering dewdrop  
From the sun.

—William Wordsworth

## The Wisdom of Rome

The month of November is: THE MONTH TO ACCEPT. "November has arrived. There is a chill in the air, and the hours of sunlight are noticeably shorter. Those colder gray days of winter are on their way. Perhaps the first frost has appeared or even a light dusting of snow. The green growing season is definitely over and gone for one more year." You can feel the end of the year coming as the last of the leaves fall from the trees. It is time to finish storing up the animal's fodder, fire wood and food for the family, before winter's grip is tightened. November sets one's mind to reflecting on our own growth and to the acceptance of the cycle of life.

There is a passage of Roman wisdom, written by Ovid, which bears a resemblance to our three symbolic stages of life in freemasonry (youth, adult & old age). It goes like this:

*What? Don't you see that the year follows in four phases, imitating our own lifetime? In early spring, it is youthful and full of new life just like a little baby; in spring all things green and growing are also young and fragile, bursting with life yet without strength, to fill the farmers with hopes of an abundant crop.*

*Then everything is in bloom and the fertile fields burst with brightly colored flowers; yet still the foliage lacks strength and endurance. After spring has passed, the year has grown more sturdy, and passes into summer. It becomes like a strong young man, full of life. There is no harder time than this, none more full of rich warm life. Then autumn comes with its first flush of youth gone; ripe and mellow midway between youth an age, with a sprinkling of gray hair at the temples. And then comes aged winter, with faltering step and shivering, the hair all gone or frosted white.*

In the Book of the Sacred Law we have a passage which notes "to every thing there is a season." 'Tis the season to be thankful. The Fall harvest is in and we finish our preparations to endure the cold Winter months ahead. In the U.S. a custom of fall harvest celebration does go back to the Pilgrims but it was not nationally recognized for many years. It is fitting that President Abraham Lincoln established, during the turmoil of the Civil



## A history of Thanksgiving

The giving of thanks is just about as old as civilization itself. In the Far East the ancient Chinese held a celebration of Thanksgiving, known as *Chung Ch'ui*, with the moon that fell on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month. The Chinese believed this to be the birthday of the moon and they made "moon-cakes" which, like the moon, were round and yellow. These would be baked and then stamped with a figure of a rabbit, the shape they saw on the face of the moon. This festival lasted 3 days and featured a feast, often of roast pig, fruits and of course moon-cakes.

The Egyptians are another ancient folk who held a harvest festival, in honor of *Min*, who was their God of vegetation and fertility. As the Egyptian farmers harvested their corn they wept in pretend sadness. This was done to deceive the spirit, who dwelled in the corn, into believing they were grief-stricken. They did not want this spirit to become angry with them for cutting down the corn where-in the spirit lived. In Egypt the harvest is done in spring-time so the festival is held then. The central feature of their festival was a parade in which the Pharaoh marched. After the parade the people feasted.

The Hebrews have celebrated an autumn harvest festival for over 3000 years. It is *Sukkoth* and is known by two names: *Hag ha Succot* or The Feast of the Tabernacles and *Hag ha Asif*, The feast of Ingathering. The Sukkoth celebrations last 8 days and begin by the building of huts called succots, in remembrance of their 40 years of life with Moses in the wilderness. The huts are constructed of branches covered by foliage. Fruits and vegetables are hung inside the huts. Jewish families eat their evening meal in the huts on the first 2 days of celebration.

The Greek Goddess of grain was named *Demeter* and an autumn pre-harvest festival was held, called Thesmophoria, at which she was honored. On the first day of the festival women would build small huts and furnish them with couches made of plants. People fasted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day. Then on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day a feast was held and gifts were offered to Demeter in hopes that she would bless them with a plentiful harvest.

The Romans also held a harvest festival, on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The festival was called *Cerelia* for it was in honor of their Goddess *Ceres*, Goddess of grains and from whose name we get our word cereal. The Roman celebration included music, parades, sports and a thanksgiving feast.

The Pilgrims came to America in 1620. They

persons. There were actually two groups in this party: the "Pilgrims" (44) who referred to themselves as the "Saints" and the others (66) who the Pilgrims called the "strangers." It was the famous "*Mayflower Compact*" which united them into one body, thereafter called the Pilgrims. The journey from England to America took 65 days and on November 10<sup>th</sup> land was sighted, Cape Cod. The Pilgrims did not settle at Cape Cod but rather at Plymouth, which was first discovered by Captain John Smith in 1614. Plymouth's fine harbor was a significant reason for its selection.

The Pilgrims suffered greatly during the first winter, less than 50 of the original 110 were able to survive. But just as things looked bleak fortune turned their way. On March 16<sup>th</sup> 1621 a Native American approached the settlement and calmed their fears when in English he bid them "welcome." The Indian's name was *Samoset* and he was from the Abnaki people. Samoset informed the Pilgrims he had learned English from the Captains of fishing vessels which frequented the coast, Samoset spent the night and left the following morning. He returned several days later with another Native American named *Squanto*, who spoke even better English. Squanto told the Pilgrims he learned English in England, having voyaged there in an English ship.

The survival of the Pilgrims was due, in a very large part, to Squanto. He taught them which native plants were edible or had medicinal value and which were poisonous. Squanto showed the Pilgrims how to plant and fertilize corn, using fish. He also taught them how to integrate other crops along with the corn for mutual benefit. The following October harvest was a great success. Proper shelters had



Wherever you are it is your own friends who make your world.



**Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>** is our stated meeting. Come to the *Open House* from 4:30 -6:30 for food and then stay for Br. Mike Davis' Third Degree. The degree's first section will begin at 6:45 PM and close when that section is done. We'll re-open lodge at for business at 7:30 PM and conclude the degree's drama and lecture.

**Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>** is our special—The Master's Dinner—for lodge members and their wives or sweethearts. Whatcom brothers be sure to return your RSVP.

**Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>** stated meeting and we will have a tiled installation of officers. Stay tuned for more information.

been erected, meat cured with salt and by smoke and then stored for winter use. The Pilgrim Governor, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving, which actually lasted 3 days. The local tribe's Chief, *Massasoit*, was invited and he brought Squanto and 90 braves to the festivities. Games were played, races run and skill at archery and musketry was demonstrated. It is believed that this festival was held in mid-October but 3 years later November 29<sup>th</sup> became the date, and is the probable true beginning of our present Thanksgiving Day.

Thanksgiving became an annual custom as the years rolled by, and, in the late 1770's the Continental Congress suggested a national day of thanksgiving. The State of New York adopted an annual Thanksgiving Day custom in 1817 and later other states followed. It was not until our country was engaged in the Civil War that a truly nation-wide Thanksgiving Day was enacted. It was the result of a 40 year effort on the part of a magazine editor, *Sarah Josepha Hale*, who had written many articles and letters to governors and president's in support of such a celebration. In 1863 President *Abraham Lincoln* acted, he made the proclamation establishing a national Day of Thanksgiving.

SS John F. Browne

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

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