The Master’s Message

Warm Fraternal Greetings Brethren,

Can you believe it, April is already upon us! Guess that means those April showers for those May flowers. Well, as long as they’re not snow showers.

February was a good month for Friendship and Brotherly Love at St. John’s Lodge and beyond. Having the Brethren witness with their own eyes the history of our Lodge at the February Stated was inspiring and an early highlight of my year as Master of St. Johns #1. We are making strides in a positive direction and I thank you all in advance for your continued help and support.

Additionally, I was fortunate enough to travel with our immediate Past Master Rob Johnson to North Attleboro MA to witness one of Rob’s dear friends be raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, with the first half of the degree delivered by the officers of Ezekiel Bates Lodge and the second half by the “Silent Majority Degree Team” along with the history and the Canadian Charge; all did a fantastic job. What a great evening! Many of us also traveled to St. James #102 for this year’s Four Square Program—consisting of the celebration of our Brother George Washington. Another excellent evening of fellowship with other Lodges near to us. If you haven’t had the opportunity to experience the Four Square Program, try to make time next year it’s well worth it for many reasons.

On a personal note, special thanks to Worshipful Rob Johnson and all the Brethren that attended the Special Communication on February 20th. As many of you know, I was unable to attend as I had a partial knee replacement earlier that day. It was very comforting to receive a call from the Lodge during the meeting to wish me well and to later in the week receive the card in the mail. These gestures mean a great deal and helps cement us as brothers and the positive thoughts and support are helping with my recovery.

Carried over from last month; the Most Worshipful Grand Master, John E. Lobdell will be holding a Town Hall Meeting in our District on April 28, 2019 at 6:30pm. Light refreshments will be served, this meeting will be held at St. James Lodge #102 in Hampton. This is our opportunity to address the Grand Master and his line officers in an unofficial manner. Please mark your calendars and let’s have a big showing from St. John’s #1!

Lastly, April 13th 2019 is the date of our annual Out of Hibernation 5k Road Race. There is a great deal of work to make this race happen. Runners are starting to sign up as well as some sponsors!

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Jeptha—Judge of Israel

Jeptha leads the Israelites in battle against the Ammonites but he swears an oath; “Whoever emerges and comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be God’s, and I shall sacrifice him/her as a burnt offering.”

Upon his return, Jeptha is met by his only daughter but is bound by his vow and says, “I have given my word to God and I cannot go back on it.” Jeptha carries out his vow and sacrifices his daughter.

Later, Jeptha went to war against the Ephrampites, who refused to acknowledge him. Jeptha called together the men of Gilead and fought against the Ephrampites. Jeptha captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim. Whenever a survivor from Ephraim attempted to cross over, the men of Gilead asked, “Are you an Ephrampite? If he replied, “No”, they said, “Alright, say “Shibboleth”. If he said, “Sibboleth”, because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephrampites were killed at that time.

Although his weakness was his rash, thoughtless behavior, Jeptha is listed in the Book of Hebrews as one of the heroes of faith (Heb 11:32). Jeptha led Israel for six years. When he died, he was buried in the city of Gilead. The story of Jeptha can be found in the Book of Judges, chapters 11 and 12:1-7
appreciated. Friday evening, April 12, 2019, the auditorium will be open for pre-registration and last minute details, please contact me for additional information. Lydia’s House of Hope will be the charity benefiting from our efforts, so let’s make this race be as successful as possible.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

Worshipful Gregg W. Annis

13th Annual
Out of Hibernation Road Race
Saturday, April 13th
There are a lot of jobs to do between now and race day

Sponsors—We need brothers to help solicit sponsors for the race, particularly from other lodges in the area.

Registrations—We also need brothers to help with registrations the night before the race (Friday, April 13th from 5:00—8:00) and again Saturday morning before the race, starting at 7:00AM.

Race Day—Lastly, we need brothers to help with the race, guiding runners, manning water tables, setting up food and drinks for the runners, etc.

Ward/Day Education Foundation

Applications for the 2019 Ward/Day Education Foundation are now being accepted. The deadline is April 17, 2019.

The application can be found on the lodge website, www.portsmouthfreemasons.org

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Stated Communication
Wednesday, April 3, 2019
(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)
Dinner—Spaghetti with meatballs ($10)
Reservation link—http://evite.me/Zn73kCWxk1
Officer dress—White tie, gloves and tails

Out of Hibernation 5K
Registration and bib pickup
Friday, April 12, 2019
5:00PM—8:00PM

Race Day Registration
And other activities
Starting at 7:00AM
Ends about 11:00AM

Your dinner can be free!
Each meeting, we will draw the name of a brother for a free dinner. In order to qualify, you MUST have made a reservation for that night’s dinner.

Contact Information:

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Worshipful Master
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Secretary
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St. John’s Lodge

Historical Sketch

True L. Norris

True Livingston Norris was born in Manchester, NH on May 4, 1848, the eldest of three children of Colonel Arthur Fitzroy Livingston Norris and his wife Olive Willard (Wallace). He attended public school in Manchester and was preparing to enter Harvard when, at age sixteen, he decided to enlist in the Union Army instead. He served as a private in Company K of the Fifth Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War and eventually received a field commission to the rank of Colonel.

Following the war, Colonel Norris studied law in his father’s law office in Boston and on May 8, 1868 was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. After several years of practice, he was admitted to the New Hampshire Bar in April 1878. He practiced law in Boston, Washington, DC and Concord, NH, and for a time served on the staff of the Comptroller of the Treasury in Washington. In 1882, the lure of journalism drew him to the newspaper industry.

From his office in Concord, Colonel Norris represented the New York Herald, Boston Globe and Manchester Union as a reporter and journalist. In a biography of him in the History of Rockingham County, New Hampshire, his correspondence and writing ability was described as “among the most brilliant of newspaper productions.” He covered years that were exciting in politics and crowded with important events, and his writings, “displayed a versatility, a piquant originality, and a correctness and minuteness of description that called attention to his work as among the best of its kind.”

In 1887, Colonel Norris moved to Portsmouth where he became managing editor of the daily newspaper, The Portsmouth Times, and its weekly edition, The States and Union. He operated both newspapers with unparalleled skill and in 1893, purchased the company. With him in charge, The Portsmouth Times became even more influential and one of the most widely circulated newspapers in the state.

In 1892, Colonel Norris was elected to a two year term from District 1 to the Governor’s Council under Governor John Butler Smith, a position he held for only one year when he resigned to accept an appointment by President Cleveland as Collector of Customs for the District of New Hampshire, a position he held for the next four years. In 1896, he was chosen to represent New Hampshire as a delegate to the Democratic National Committee.

Colonel Norris was an active community minded fellow and represented Rockingham County on “The Good Roads League”, an association of influential men in New Hampshire interested in having better highways in the state. He was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and Storer Post, No. 1, Grand Army of the Republic. He was first married to Sarah E. Holden on February 3, 1869 in Stoneham, MA; that marriage ended in divorce. He next married Lillian G. Hurst of Eliot, ME on May 20, 1890 - he was 42 years old and she was 19. They lived in the three-story Italianate style home at 439 Middle Street (at the corner of Highland Street) in Portsmouth, a beautiful 19th century home located just six houses down from our Masonic Temple and where the office of Coughlin, Rainboth, Murphy & Lown, PA is today.

Colonel Norris died on December 4, 1920 at his home on Middle Street after a brief two week illness; he was only 72 years old. He is buried in the Hurst family plot in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery on State Road in Eliot, with his wife Lillian who died in 1956. At the entrance to this beautiful cemetery is a large granite column with the name of the cemetery on it; beneath the cemetery’s name are these words engraved into the granite, “in memory of True L. Norris and Lillian G. Morris.”

True Livingston Norris was a good man, a good husband and a patriot, and certainly one of the most upstanding, influential and respected citizens of his day. And yes; Brother True was a member of the Masonic Fraternity. He was Raised a Master Mason in St. John’s Lodge, No. 1 in Portsmouth on October 7, 1891.

Alan M. Robinson, PM
Historian