

## From the East



### Retirement Reflections

Wayne De Vlieghe - Master Peoria #31

I'm riding out the final wave of being Master of Peoria Lodge #31 and as I near the shore to retire my Past Master surfboard, there are many reflections of the past year of service to this Lodge that I feel compelled to mention.

Foremost, is my sincere thanks to everyone who participated in being an active member of this great fraternity, those who became officers of this Lodge, and the many men who offered their service, no matter how small or great the contribution. Thank you for the opportunity to work with the best this Lodge has to offer and for helping to guide one of the prominent institutions of Freemasonry in our state.

As a Past Master, I intend to continue to serve this Lodge, albeit in a behind the scenes manner, by offering, when requested, advice, ideas and encouragement to the officers who will bear the burden of responsibility and service henceforth. This Lodge has earned a wonderful reputation over the years and I look straight ahead and see nothing but blue skies.

One does not leave the office of being Master without thinking about those things that will and will not be missed at Lodge. Following is my list:

#### Things I will Miss:

- I'll miss the nervous anticipation of attending Lodge as an active officer, rehearsing my lines as I drive to meetings and thinking about how the life of one privileged individual may change for his own benefit and for Masonry as a whole.

- Thinking of all that's possible and believing that I just might be able to make some of it happen.
- Those days in Lodge when I see some of the brothers really get it - either officers performing their roles with not only accuracy but with conviction and feeling for the very first time or when the younger Entered Apprentice exhibits the new understanding which shines like a beacon from their face.
- Times when a brother makes a comment that attests to how well they've understood the deeper meaning of spiritual Freemasonry and how it puts them on the same page as truly dedicated Master Masons have been throughout the Craft's stellar history.
- When credit is given where credit is due, but even if it is missing the event was still worthy of witness and remembrance.
- I'll miss those days when I get it, when I connect with my brothers, younger and older than myself, when I finally learn appropriate processes, insights, ideas, and motivation to achieve at the helm of something bigger than myself.
- The passion for teaching - the spreading of hot coals to light new fires and rekindle others when the embers burn low or die out.
- Finally, I'll miss closely working with those brothers who use their fine minds, keen intellects, and inquisitive sensibilities to tackle problems and teach and learn the Craft with intellectual robustness.

#### Things I will not miss:

- I will not miss those bright, capable brothers who don't care and refuse to make an effort; those Masons full of potential who happily claim the title of Mason, but deny the blood, sweat, and tears of honest Masonic labor and learn and care and help those in need.
- Brothers who have locked themselves out of meaningful, trusting relationships by employing base and spurious character or divisive political practices that render all encounters with true and lawful brothers adversarial.

- Brothers who blame others for their own inability to accomplish - so full of excuses that there is no room for attendance, caring, learning, growing, and striving to become a better man.
- I will not miss the days when I didn't make it happen, when my efforts were subpar, when I did not make a difference and became passive, like a fog that settles about the lowest confines of the Lodge.
- Days when my own lack of enthusiasm failed to cut through the chill of other's complacency.

Retirements are about endings and beginnings. I will now embark on the rest of my Masonic career and focus on personal learning and traveling to foreign countries to receive Master Mason wages so that I can better support myself and family in the spiritual application of Masonic principles.

The following poem/prayer is being published by request from a member who witnessed the yearly flag retirement ceremony, which has been adopted and practiced during the Pit Roast preparations by this Lodge:

#### The Retirement of Old Glory

By: Wayne De Vlieghe

Great God of all creation,  
we humbly come before you  
to give thanks, praise, and worship  
for the mighty works You do.  
For blessing this great country,  
the beacon light of freedom,  
land of privilege and of justice,  
we are pleased to call our home.

These flags once flown so stately  
now worn symbols of our pride,  
we lower for the last time  
retired like those who've died.

Bless this last observance  
as they're replaced yet again,  
reflecting on noble colors  
while they perish in the flame...

The red that stands for courage  
or the white of all that's pure  
and the blue of vigilant justice,  
let us all forget no more.

Amen

So mote it be