

CHALLENGES

GRAND VISITATION - MARCH 28, 2008

CEDAR CHAPTER #20, CEDAR CITY, UTAH

We all know how a **silversmith**, a **goldsmith** and a **blacksmith** can create wonderful things of value. About fifteen years ago, for the very first time, I heard the term “wordsmith”. I do know that there are wordsmith’s among us; those of you who choose your words carefully; those of you who can inspire with your words and writings - YOU create something of value with your words.

A silver tea set, carefully made by the most accomplished silversmith could be valued in several ways. Say your Grandmother had a tea set, and in her opinion , the tea didn’t taste as good as it should; and the set needed constant cleaning; - Grandma may well put the tea set away - in storage.

On the other hand - the tea set could be resurrected by a daughter - or a granddaughter - and thought to be so elegant that it becomes a “family treasure”.

If that tea set were taken to a jeweler - or the Antique Road Show - it could command yet another price - another value.

So it would seem, that the tea set had three different values. For the Grandmother, it wasn’t worth much and she was glad to put it up. For the jeweler it was worth a substantial *sum*. But to the Granddaughter, IT WAS BEYOND PRICE, and she wouldn’t part with it for a king’s ransom. PRICE and VALUE - obviously, TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.

What value do we put on the carefully chosen words of our Masonic “wordsmiths”? There is a lasting value in our Masonic literature - in the words of our Eastern Star Ritual, the Blue Lodge Ritual, Job’s Daughter & DeMolay Rituals; the Scottish Rite and York Rite Degree Work.

Although I did do a little bit of public speaking in school, and again in Job’s Daughters, I absolutely hate writing and don’t consider myself a “wordsmith” - but, OH HOW I LOVE TO READ - and I don’t shy away from a challenge.

At age eleven it was a challenge just to survive on Van Wagoners Beach. In my sixties I recognize that challenges keep me motivated.

The number one fear of most Americans is the fear of standing up and making a speech. I’m finding that THIS FEAR is a GREAT motivator. Seriously, challenges help us to grow, to develop, to work at becoming the best we can be.

Reading leads us to a better understanding of life and improving our understanding of words, of issues, of cultures - and ourselves.

As a new initiate in Eastern Star; or an Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, we were each challenged by our coaches to become proficient. As we grow in this Masonic Family , and learn from the opportunities afforded us, we are continually being challenged to receive more light by continuing our Masonic education. I know many a woman who has read the Scottish Rite Journal, or El Kalah’s Mineret from front to back before her husband has even gotten home.

Every day we are challenged to believe in some PRETTY OLD FASHIONED THINGS.

Every day we are challenged to believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, to believe in the Brotherhood of Man, to believe that the teachings in our Ritual are Scriptural, its teachings moral and its purposes beneficent

Every day we are challenged to encourage membership in our “Family” by living our lives by the teachings and ideals expressed in our Rituals and writings.

Every day we are challenged to believe in service to those who are less fortunate.

Every day we are challenged to believe in helping young people get a head start in life.

Life's challenges, reinforced by our values, were accepted daily by fourteen Masonic Presidents - by five Chief Justices of the Supreme Court - by entertainers like John Wayne - by astronauts like John Glenn - by businessmen like Henry Ford and Dave Thomas - and by General Douglas Mac Arthur and many, many Masonic soldiers.

Yes, we will continue to accept challenges – some of you will continue to be “wordsmiths” - some of us will work at being “wordsmiths” - but all of us should accept the challenges afforded to us by our membership in this great fraternity.

I'd like to leave you with this thought:

Two stonecutters were asked what they were doing. The first said, “I'm cutting this stone into blocks.”

The second man replied, “I'm a member of a team building a new hospital.”

It all depends how you look at life.

THANK YOU