

# GREETINGS-TO THE "OLD HOME LODGE"

by

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I take this opportunity through our grand organ, which apparently is about the only thing left in publication, to address a few remarks to the Lodge, to let you know how some of us who have left your midst are faring, and what our feelings are toward our home Lodge. I can speak fairly accurately for the members of our Lodge who are here in the Washington, D.C. area, as well as those who have traveled through here recently on their way to foreign countries.

Okinawa Lodge No. 118 prides itself with being a friendly lodge. I am happy to say we are not alone in this. In every lodge that I have visited since leaving Okinawa, in the Southern Part of the United States, District of Columbia, and in Maryland where I now reside, my treatment as a visitor has been most sincerely cordial. Perhaps I received a little more attention than some others because I am from a foreign jurisdiction. Every one of the visited lodges is extremely interested in our Philippine Jurisdiction, and in Okinawa particularly. Masonry has an intriguing history of growth on Okinawa, and when I casually mentioned this in a lodge in Texas last summer, I was invited to come back and

give an hour lecture to the assemblage of Past Masters of the lodge, concerning Masonry on Okinawa. The same thing happened to Brother John Harshman up in Minnesota last Fall prior to his leaving for Germany.

The Brethren back here are genuinely interested in all facets of Masonry as we practice it. I think the two points they are most interested in are (1) how selective are we in choosing candidates to assure that we are getting nothing but the best, and (2) how do we maintain discipline? I was proud to be able to report that our Committee system which is the same used nearly everywhere has been quite successful in selection. It was also pleasant to report that we require a minimum of discipline. Other than the usual formalities of dropping memberships for non-payment of dues, I witnessed none.

It probably will not be argued too vigorously that the Home Lodge owes a duty to its "out of town" members in keeping them informed of what is going on, changes in the lodge, who the present officers are, etc., just as much as the departed members owe allegiance and duty to the Home Lodge, being bound by

its laws and regulations. This is not a one-way street. Based on my observations while I was Treasurer there, at least half and maybe two-thirds of the 500 Master Masons carried on the rolls are not on the Island. ("Out of town" so to speak).

What is the Lodge doing to keep this group informed? Obviously the Secretary does not have time to write a personal letter to each member, so it seems that a general-type communication is in order. That could be the *Trestleboard*, the *Grand Lodge Cable Tow*, or a Newsletter. Unfortunately, none of us off-Island have ever received a *Trestleboard*, because as I understand it, no one will write any articles for it so that it may be published. This is a shame really, for there are many good thoughts among the Brethren there, and many unclassified subjects about Masonry that are easily discussed. The *Grand Lodge Cable Tow* is an excellent guide. One does not have to be a Randolph Hearst to write articles for these news media. Leading professors of business writing state that a simple, direct style that gets a point across is the most desirable type of writing. In fact, this is writing.

The *Grand Lodge Cable Tow* is a fine publication with much worthwhile news in it. It is no longer mailed to us because of postal expenses incurred by our lodge. I personally think enough of it that I am paying for my own subscription. Conversely, I can hardly be convinced that this expense is an excruciating one at bulk rate. Leonard Wood

Lodge in the Philippines does it, and so does practically every other lodge in that jurisdiction as far as I can find out. This receiving of communications is about the only value received from the Home Lodge, for dues paid, other than having a place to call "Home." The York Rite Bodies on Okinawa are able to furnish *The Ladder*, a quarterly publication of the York Rite, while at the same time it supports three bodies for only a small amount of dues in excess of what the Blue Lodge charges. And just for good measure, to its more than 100 members, the Secretary often adds a personal note.

A Newsletter would not be an insurmountable task occasionally. One of the Past Matrons of Shuri Chapter No. 1, O. E. S. on Okinawa, recognizing the problem of lack of communication, published a Newsletter not long ago about the happenings on Okinawa, and quoted several letters from members scattered around the world. This was not an elaborate publication, just a few 8½ x 13 sheets mimeographed and stapled together, mailed out through the Chapter. It was very well received. The Blue Lodge is the basic organization upon which all other Masonic activities are satellited. By that analogy it should be leading, guiding, and directing the others — especially in member-*rapport*.

Closing with a paraphrase of the Writer Paul, a simple direct-style writer, "I exhort you Brethren to communicate with me for I have been with you and worked with you, and we are as one Body."

