



# Blackmer Buzz

## Special Events:

- January – NEW MEETING TIME! Dinner Served at 6:00 PM with the lodge opening at 7:00 PM.
- January 3<sup>rd</sup> – Installation of Officers (closed installation).
- January 17<sup>th</sup> – Blackmer Meets.
- February 7<sup>th</sup> – Blackmer Meets.
- February 23<sup>rd</sup> – Blackmer Meets.
- March 6<sup>th</sup> – Blackmer Meets.
- March 20<sup>th</sup> – Blackmer Meets.

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October- December 2011

Volume 8, Issue 3

## Winter Solstice

As I sit down to write my final article for the Blackmer Buzz, my tenure as Master of this fine lodge is drawing near an end. In my first article from the East, I discussed the irony of the fact that I was installed on the day of winter solstice. Now, as the shortest day of the year and the allegorical death of the earth approaches yet again, with it the 161<sup>st</sup> year of Blackmer Lodge will fade into the memories of the members and into the archives of the lodge. But just as our mother earth begins a new cycle of the seasons, Blackmer Lodge No. 127 will begin its 162<sup>nd</sup> year, under new leadership. We have had a very good year. The quality of our Masonic education is excellent! We have had programs by Dan Rice, PGM, Speed Hallman, Mike Daniels, Kevin Combs, Gary Handy, Chris Richardson, Rev. Gene Cobb, Bryant Webster, Shaun Bradshaw, as well as from our home grown talent.

Our Senior Deacon, Riley Beaman, attended Wilkerson College where he learned many valuable lessons that will pay dividends to the lodge in the future. We revised our lodge by-laws. A delegation traveled to Richmond, Virginia to render masonic rites to our Past Master Edmund Christian.

Good progress was made on the lodge restoration project. We completed our School of Instruction and the bi-annual lecture service. Our Charity Fun Shoot was the most successful one to date. Jennifer Nash flew in from Rhode Island to be the guest speaker at Ladies Night. Brother Stimpson McRae was awarded the "Secretary of Distinction" honor. Larry Thompson served as the Grand Tyler for the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Blackmer's on volume of Sacred Law and our jewels were used at the Annual Communication. The lodge has no financial problems and we finish our year in a busy cycle of degree work.

Many people are responsible for making this year a success. There are a few people that I would like to recognize for their contributions. Larry Thompson is largely responsible for the Masonic Education. There was no speaker that I requested which he did not secure. He and Joel Howard are the machines that make the Charity Fun Shoot work. Captain Steve Campbell does a great job with the treasury and he has also been appointed Lodge Historian, a vitally important roll which he will thrive in. Brother Secretary performs a thankless task, and does more

work than most members will ever realize. Brothers Jim Haithcock and Chesley Greene are sound footings for us all. Robert Strider and Gil Haywood served as our Masters of the Work and they have taught this group of greenhorns a ton of degree work, selflessly sharing their time and knowledge and I am especially thankful to them for it. Bill Bruton often whispers good counsel in my ear, something that everyone needs sometimes, whether they know it or not. The officers have performed well and we have enjoyed each other's company.

As we are in the midst of degree work, I am reminded that the raising of a new Master Mason is not the end of his journey, it is merely the beginning. Or, in the words of one of my favorite authors, "it was neither the beginning, nor the end; but it was *a* beginning". So, Blackmer will begin a new season, with a new Master in the chair of wisdom.

It has indeed been my honor to serve as Master this year. Thank you all for everything, and may God continue to bless this Lodge!

- Ben Wallace, Master



**NEW MEETING TIME**

Beginning in January 2012, Blackmer Lodge will have a new meeting time. Our lodge meetings will begin at 7:00 PM.

We will continue to meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month and we will have a home cooked meal that begins at 6:00 PM on each meeting night.

**2012 Dues Change**

Please note that our 2012 membership dues have been amended to \$107.00 to cover our operational costs and Grand Lodge per-capita.

Special consideration is being given to our 50-year members but we do not have a directive at this time.

Please make your checks payable to Blackmer Lodge No. 127 and mail them to the Secretary at PO Box 265, Mt. Gilead, NC 27306. Thanks!

**Blackmer Roof Fund**

We are now entering into our second year of fund-raising for our roof replacement fund and we could use your help.

If you would like to make a donation or an ongoing pledge to help offset the cost of replacing our lodge roof, we would love to hear from you!

Donations can be mailed to the Secretary at PO Box 265, Mount Gilead, NC 27306.

**Lodge Historian Dispatch Case**

Perhaps you've seen and read the article in the most recent North Carolina Mason featuring our Lodge's memorial service for P.M. Edmund Christian (1859). Not forgetting those who came before us is a cornerstone in Freemasonry. W.M. Ben Wallace headed up this event and is to be commended. Twenty-one folks associated with Blackmer Lodge (members, wives and children) stood upon the hallowed ground of Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond on that bright sunny spring day to pay tribute to one of our own lost upon a field in a faraway time and place. (Special thanks to Blackmer's "friend in history" Capt. Jennifer Nash for bringing PM Christian to the front and our attention.)

**"A Grave Matter"**

No man's grave should be lost or forgotten, for somewhere along the way we each make a difference. Through research and a bit of scouting, three (3) of Blackmer's 19<sup>th</sup> century Brothers' final resting spots have been located here in ole Montgomery County. Before the onset of the winter of 2011, volunteers are being recruited to form a "fatigue party" to clear away and clean up the graves of Calvin Wooley, Edmund Lilly\* and Edmund Deberry. All three are not far apart, and with a group of dedicated, well-equipped and zealous men, they should be reclaimed from nature in short order. All volunteers are requested to contact the Master or Lodge Historian at their earliest convenience so we can complete this worthy effort before cold weather arrives.

\*This grave is upon the ground owned by Bro. Wayne Smith, who is most supportive of this effort.

Steven Campbell  
Lodge Historian

**From the Ground Up *a building and grounds report***

It looks as if the growing season of 2011 is drawing to a close... With that in mind, many thanks are in order for Brother Jim Sharpe having our lawn mown and trimmed all summer long.

"Attack, attack, attack." As is usually the case after a soaking rain, the fierce, industrious and ever-building fire ants are evident in our region. The Lodge grounds are no exception. From time to time it is noted that thoughtful Brothers make a note and spread fire ant killer out. Many thanks for their much appreciated efforts to "stem the tide".

Ah, the Roof Pledge Fund. We are now nearing the end of our second year of this worthy (and necessary) effort. The members who committed to donating \$100 each for three years are to be commended. At this stage we've now accrued \$3,000+. Any amount from any member is greatly appreciated as we mark time until we need to replace our aging roof.

If any Brother has any ideas, insights or suggestions please feel free to contact me at any time.

Steven Campbell  
910-439-4994

**Membership Changes**

Since our last newsletter, degree of Master Mason on November 29, 2011. we have two new Master November 15, 2011 and Congratulations to these Masons in Blackmer Lodge. Brother Benji DeBerry was brothers for their hard work!

Brother Steve Hutchinson was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on



## The Cable-Tow *Reprinted from "Short Talk Bulletin" Vol. IV, No. 3. March, 1926*

The Cable-Tow, we are told, is purely Masonic in its meaning and use. It is so defined in the dictionary, but not always accurately, which shows that we ought not depend upon the ordinary dictionary for the truth about Masonic terms. Masonry has its own vocabulary and uses it in its own ways. Nor can our words always be defined for the benefit of the profane.

Even in Masonic lore the word cable-tow varies in form and use. In an early pamphlet by Pritard, issued in 1730, and meant to be an exposure of Masonry, the cable-tow is called a "Cable-Rope," and in another edition a "Tow-Line." The same word "Tow-Line" is used in a pamphlet called "A Defense of Masonry," written, it is believed, by Anderson as a reply to Pritchard about the same time. In neither pamphlet is the word used in exactly the form and sense in which it is used today; and in a note Pritchard, wishing to make everything Masonic absurd, explains it as meaning "The Roof of the Mouth!" In English lodges, the Cable-Tow, like the hoodwink, is used only in the first degree, and has no symbolical meaning at all, apparently. In American lodges it is used in all three degrees, and has almost too many meanings. Some of our American teachers - Pike among them - see no meaning in the cable-tow beyond its obvious use in leading an initiate into the lodge, and the possible use of withdrawing him from it should he be unwilling or unworthy to advance.

To some of us this non-symbolical idea and use of the cable-tow is very strange, in view of what Masonry is in general, and particularly in its ceremonies of initiation. For Masonry is a chamber of imagery. The whole Lodge is a symbol. Every object, every act is symbolical. The whole fits together into a system of symbolism by which Masonry veils, and yet reveals, the truth it seeks to teach to such as have eyes to see and are ready to receive it.

As far back as we can go in the history of initiation, we find the cable-tow, or something like it, used very much as it is used in a Masonic Lodge today. No matter what the origin and form of the word as we employ it may be - whether from the Hebrew "Khabel," or the Dutch "cabel," both meaning a rope - the fact is the same. In India, in Egypt and in most of the ancient Mysteries, a cord or cable was used in the same way and for the same purpose.

In the meaning, so far as we can make it out, seems to have been some kind of pledge - a vow in which a man pledged his life. Even outside initiatory rites we find it employed, as, for example, in a striking scene recorded in the Bible (I Kings 20:31, 32), the description of which is almost Masonic. The King of Syria, Ben-hada, had been defeated in battle by the King of Israel and his servants are making a plea for his life. They approach the King of Israel "with ropes upon their heads," and speak of his "Brother, Ben-hadad." Why did they wear ropes, or nouses, on their heads?

Evidently to symbolize a pledge of some sort, given in a Lodge or otherwise, between the two Kings, of which they wished to remind the King of Israel. The King of Israel asked: "Is he yet alive? He is my brother." Then we read that the servants of the Syrian King watched to see if the King of Israel made any sign, and, catching his sign, they brought the captive King of Syria before him. Not only was the life of the King of Syria spared, but a new pledge was made between the two men.

The cable-tow, then, is the outward and visible symbol of a vow in which a man has pledged his life, or has pledged himself to save another life at the risk of his own. Its length and strength are measured by the ability of the man to fulfill his obligation and his sense of the moral sanctity of his obligation - a test, that is, both of his capacity and of his character.

If a lodge is a symbol of the world, and initiation is our birth into the world of Masonry, the cable-tow is not unlike the cord which unites a child to its mother at birth; and so it is usually interpreted. Just as the physical cord, when cut, is replaced by a tie of love and obligation between mother and child, so, in one of the most impressive moments of initiation, the cable-tow is removed, because the brother, by his oath at the Altar of Obligation, is bound by a tie stronger than any physical cable. What before was an outward physical restraint has become an inward moral constraint. That is to say, force is replaced by love - outer authority by inner obligation - and that is the secret of security and the only basis of brotherhood.

The cable-tow is the sign of the pledge of the life of a man. As in his oath he agrees to forfeit his life if his vow is violated, so, positively, he pledges his life to the service of the Craft. He agrees to go to the aid of a Brother, using all his power in his behalf, "if within the length of his cable-tow," which means, if within the reach of his power. How strange that any one should fail to see symbolical meaning in the cable-tow. It is, indeed, the great symbol of the mystic tie which Masonry spins and weaves between men, making them Brothers and helpers one of another.

But, let us remember that a cable-tow has two ends. If it binds a Mason to the Fraternity, by the same fact it binds the Fraternity to each man in it. The one obligation needs to be emphasized as much as the other. Happily, in our day we are beginning to see the other side of the obligation - that the Fraternity is under vows to its members to guide, instruct and train them for the effective service of the Craft and of humanity. Control, obedience, direction or guidance - these are the three meanings of the cable-tow, as it is interpreted by the best insight of the Craft.

Of course, by Control we do not mean that Masonry commands us in the same sense that it uses force. Not at all. Masonry rules men as beauty rules an artist, as love rules a lover. It does not drive; it draws. It controls us, shapes us through its human touch and its moral nobility. By the same method, by the same power it wins obedience and gives guidance and direction to our lives. At the Altar we take vows to follow and obey its high principles and ideals; and Masonic vows are not empty obligations - they are vows in which a man pledges his life and his sacred honor.

The old writers define the length of a cable-tow, which they sometimes call a "cables length," variously. Some say it is seven hundred and twenty feet, or twice the measure of a circle. Others say that the length of the cable-tow is three miles. But such figures are merely symbolical, since in one man it may be three miles and in another it may easily be three thousand miles - or to the end of the earth. For each Mason the cable-tow reaches as far as his moral principles go and his material conditions will allow. Of that distance each must be his own judge, and indeed each does pass judgment upon himself accordingly, by his own acts in aid of others.

## Blackmer Lodge No. 127



PO Box 265  
Mount Gilead  
North Carolina, 27306

MASTER'S PHONE:  
(910) 572-7678

*If you would like to contribute to a future edition of the "Blackmer Buzz" please contact the Editor at: [larry@thompsonenv.com](mailto:larry@thompsonenv.com) or by phone at: 704-301-4881*

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays  
6:00 PM Dinner  
7:00 PM Meeting

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

[www.blackmerlodge.org](http://www.blackmerlodge.org)

## Within a Length of a Cable-Tow

Hear yea, hear yea. In an effort to get the word out about lodge meetings and events, our telephone tree system has been revitalized. Having evolved from the mailing of postcards in the 1920s and 1930s, modern technology enables us to phone members in advance of our regular stated and emergent communications.

Blackmer Lodge members' zeal is to be commended in that we continue to meet at least twice each month (while many Lodges have reduced meeting to once a month, sorrowfully). To ensure that each member is being contacted you are requested to provide your home and/or mobile telephone number to the

Secretary or the Treasurer. Granted, no system is perfect, however, proper notification of meetings and events is something that every member should be provided. If you are having any glitches in receiving the word, please let us know.

Thank you!

## From The "Treasurer's Chest"

As is custom, the largest percentage of the Lodge income derives from our Members' dues. Blackmer is fortunate in that our wives and widows have proven quite generous in making much appreciated donations as well. Without doubt our fraternity is a non-profit organization. Yet it does cost money to "keep our

doors open and the flame of Freemasonry alit" in ole Montgomery County. Thus I would wager that few, if any, Brothers would think that 29.4 cents a day is too much for all of the good we do. To enable us to meet the prescribed Grand Lodge per capita per member and to "pay our way", dues for 2012 will be amended as

approved in our new By-Laws to \$107.00 (special consideration is being given to our 50-year members). If this for any reason would result in hardship for any Brother, please do not hesitate to speak to the Master or any Lodge officer.

- Steven A. Campbell

## About Our Fraternity...

"The mission of Freemasonry in North Carolina is to raise the moral, social, intellectual, and spiritual conscience of society by teaching the ancient and enduring philosophical *tenets*

of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, which are expressed outwardly through service to God, family, country, and self under the Fatherhood of God within the Brotherhood of Man." -

*NC Lodge Manual. Freemasonry is the largest and oldest fraternal order in the world. If you would like more information on the fraternity, please contact us!*

Mount Gilead, NC 27306

PO Box 265

Blackmer Lodge No. 127 A. F. & A. M.