



ASHLAR TIDINGS

Decemberr—January 6002 A.L.

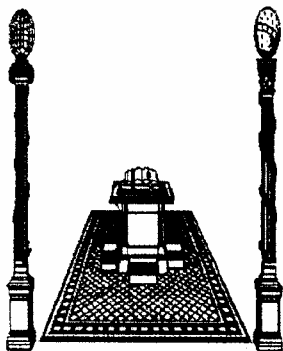


Friends & Family Night

This Month, on February 26th, Ashlar Lodge will host it's First Annual Vigilante Dinner. This program will be our Americanism program for the year. The Vigilante Dinner is designed to serve a twofold purpose in our community. First and foremost it is intended to honor the local law enforcement community. Second, it is designed to increase the opportunities for the general public to interact with the masonic community. Our Guest Speakers for the evening will be Bro. Karl Ohs, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Montana and Dr. Keith Edgerton, Professor of Montana History at MSU-B. Dr. Edgerton will speak to us about the transition from the vigilante justice system to the traditional prison system that is in use today. We encourage each mason to bring their family along with a friend or two to enjoy the evening with. Please RSVP for this event by Friday February 22nd to 406-259-6557.



Lodge Officers



It is with a heavy heart that we announce that Bro. Jeff Sherr will be resigning from the position of Senior Deacon. Although he will miss the lodge, his work schedule currently does not allow him to adequately participate in the lodge and so he feels that Ashlar would be best served by his stepping down at this time.

Since Brother Jeff Sherr has had to step down from his position as the Senior Steward, we would like to announce the appointment of Charles Fowler to the position of Senior Deacon. Jim Basket will become our new Junior Deacon, Bill Rubich—Senior Steward, Bill Murphy will be our new Junior Steward, and Brother Craig Norwood, our newest Master Mason, will take on the job of Tyler

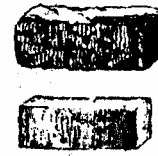
A Short Bit of History

Brother Herman H. Mund organized Billings' first bank; Stebbins, Post & Mund Co. The bank was a private bank established in Coulson in 1882. The bank moved to Billings in 1883. This institution was chartered as a national bank in 1885 and the name was changed to First National Bank. Brother Preston B. Moss, Sr. was president of this bank for eighteen years prior to its closing in 1910.

In 1889, Brother Albert L. Babcock was elected the first state senator from Yellowstone County to the state legislature. Brother Edgar N. Harwood was elected one of the three associate judges to the State Supreme Court, serving from 1889-1895



The Master's Message



By Worshipful Master Randy Parker

The month of January has almost passed, and we're now looking February square in the face. During the month of January, we had a very successful Friends and Family Night on January 18, with FBI Senior Supervisory Resident Agent Daniel T. Vierthaler. Dan spoke of the FBI's role in homeland security. Dan also described Lt. Governor Karl Ohs as a good friend that proved invaluable to Dan and his FBI agents as well as local law enforcement when he successfully convinced the "Freemen" to peacefully surrender to the FBI in 1996 at their compound in Jordan. Day-after day, then State Rep. Ohs rode his horse into the Freemen's compound to negotiate with them. As Dan said, they trusted Brother Ohs. Jordan could have turned into a bloody confrontation like the 1993 incident in Waco had it not been for Brother Karl Ohs!

Lt. Gov. Brother Karl Ohs will be the guest speaker at the First Annual Vigilante Masonic Dinner on Tuesday, February 26 at the Al Bedoo Shrine Temple at 6:30 at 1125 Broadwater.. (Please note this dinner was moved from Wednesday, Feb. 20 to Tuesday, Feb. 26, due to a conflict in Lt. Gov. Ohs' schedule.)

This dinner is being held to honor the Masons who formed the Vigilantes in 1863 to rid Bannack and Virginia City of the Plummer Gang as well as the local law enforcement community. It will be open to the public, and we **strongly** encourage you to bring a prospective Mason and his wife or girl friend. You belong to a fraternity that helped create the greatest nation in the world, has led other movements for democracy around the world and has been a strong voice for reason, democracy, civil liberties, and tolerance. Now more than ever, Freemasonry is needed. If you know a good man, discuss Freemasonry with him and bring him to this dinner. Masons will pay \$6.00 to eat, guests will eat free, and goodwill donations will be accepted. Please make your reservations by noon on Monday, February 25 by calling the Billings Masonic Center at 259-6557 between 9-3 or the Al Bedoo Shrine Temple at 259-4384. Information packets on Freemasonry will be handed out to all guests.

On January 28, the Billings Freemasons (Ashlar Lodge #29, Billings Lodge #113, Pryor Mountain Lodge #151, and Rimrock Lodge #149), the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, and Al Bedoo helped host the Olympic Torch relay, which came through Billings, concluding with a big reception at Metra Park, that featured Crow dancers, a ski jumper, ice skaters, and a jumbo tron screen that listed the major sponsors of the event, including the Billings Freemasons. This event cost the four Blue Lodges, the Rites, and the Shrine \$90 apiece to sponsor. I think the exposure was well worth it! Both Brother Nathan Vincent and myself attended along with representatives from the other Billings lodges and the Shrine.

As part of hosting this event, the Billings Freemasons had a big ad in the special "Olympic Torch Section" of the *Billings Gazette* on Saturday, January 26 featuring our new website, www.montanafreemasons.org. The site, developed by Ashlar Secretary, Brother Nathan Vincent, features a brief history of Freemasonry, upcoming events for Ashlar, the meeting schedules for the other three Billings Lodges, and links to all 50 state grand lodges as well as numerous foreign grand lodges. As of this letter, the Grand Lodge Site has received over 100 more additional visits.

In the future, we plan to add a counter to our site, my mug shot, a collective picture of Ashlar's officers, historical profiles of famous international, national, state, and local Masons, a description of the petitioning process, and a petition that can be downloaded by a prospective Masons, filled out, and mailed back to us. Freemasonry must have a strong presence on the Internet if we are to attract more good men to the fraternity as well as keep the ones we already have. Brother Nathan is to be commended for the outstanding job he did in designing our site, and the site will only get better with time!

Please call the Center at 259-6557 if you need a ride to a meeting or call me at 698-0800 (cell) or 248-7851 (work). The Vigilante Masonic Dinner will be our Friends and Family Night for February.

Finally, our condolences go out to the family of our Brother Jim Thompson, who passed away this past weekend. Jim really knew his Masonic Degree work, and helped Ashlar and the other Billings lodges put on many Third Degrees as well as leading the Oriental Band. You will be missed, Brother Jim!

Our condolences also go out to the family of Brother Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's, who had a big heart and helped thousands of orphans across the US find a family by promoting adoption. Brother Dave was a role model for Freemasons everywhere!



Office Hours



Please note that our Secretary, Nathan Vincent will be traveling on business during the month of February. Because of this, the Ashlar office will not have regular office hours during this period. If anyone needs assistance during this time, Bill Vincent will be helping out as needed. He will be available to assist when possible. His work number is 406-247-7329 and his home number is 406-373-5621. Feel free to call him if necessary.

Thomas McGirl Scholarship Fund

Ashlar Lodge's primary charity is the Thomas McGirl Scholarship Fund. This fund was established by our Brother Thomas McGirl on October 8, 1928 in the amount of \$10,000. Brother McGirl specified that this fund was to be jointly administered by Ashlar Lodge, the Royal Arch chapter, and Aldemar Commandery. The interest is used to assist worthy students to complete their college education. This year, the fund is making available 4 \$750 scholarships. Three will be awarded to students from the 3 Billings high schools. The fourth is to be awarded a student from the Beartooth District.

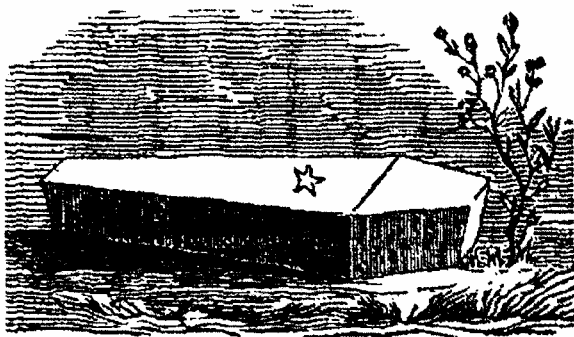


If any lodge member knows of any student who would benefit from this scholarship, please encourage them to apply. For more information or to have questions relating to the fund answered, please contact our Secretary, Bro. Nathan Vincent - nathonvincent@attbi.com

Beartooth District Hiram Competition

Ashlar Lodge will be participating in the Beartooth District Annual Hiram Competition. The competition will take place at the Billings Scottish Rite Temple on April 27, 2002. The competition, which is scheduled to begin at 10 am, is designed to encourage the lodges to increase their proficiency with their degree work. This years event will focus on the degree of the Entered Apprentice.

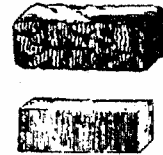
The team will consist of the Worshipful Master Randy Parker, Senior Warden Jason Biggins, Junior Warden David Loos, Senior Deacon Charles Fowler, Junior Deacon Jim Baskett, Senior Steward Bill Rubich, Junior Steward Bill Murphy, Chaplain Roy Dalrymple, Tyler Craig Norwood, and Instructor Morris Irion. The team will be scored on the floor work, presentation, knowledge of the ritual, and being well dressed. We would like to encourage each member of the team to be well prepared and well versed in their part of the ritual.



Ashlar Lodge #29
Billings Masonic Center
P.O. Box 21036
Billings Montana 59104



FEBRUARY/MARCH EVENTS



8th - Friday: Ashlar's Stated Meeting Dinner at 6:30 PM. Lodge following. Special Message on Masons in the Military by Francis Rose.
15th - Friday: Lodge of Instruction Topic: Practice for the Hiram Awards Soup & Sandwiches 6:30 PM. Lodge Following.
22nd - Friday: Lodge of Instruction Topic: Work on the 1st Degree Soup & Sandwiches 6:30 PM. Lodge Following.
26th - Tuesday: Vigilante Dinner Guest Speakers: Karl Ohs & Keith Edgerton Held in honor of the Local Law Enforcement Community. Starts at 6:30 in Shrine Dining Hall.
March 8th - Friday: Ashlar's Stated Meeting - Dinner at 6:30 PM. Lodge Following.
March 15th— Friends & Family Night: Dinner at 6:30
Please note—an RSVP is appreciated for all dinners to allow for adequate food.
Call the Center at 259-6557.