

Escurial Lodge No. 7  F. & A.M., 1864  
"The Masons on the Mountain"  
Box 997, Virginia City, Nevada 89440

Meeting First Saturday of every month  
Masonic breakfast 9:00AM                      Lodge Meeting 10:00 AM

Escurial Lodge No. 7  
Box 997  
Virginia City, NV 89440

**2012 Officers of Escurial Lodge**

**Worshipful Master**      Jim Phelps, PM  
**Senior Warden**        Percy Handley, PM  
**Junior Warden**        Dennis Knowlton  
**Treasurer**              Dick Young, PM  
**Secretary**              David Miller, PM  
**Senior Deacon**        Bryan McCurdy, PM  
**Junior Deacon**        Dennis Conly, PM  
**Tyler**                      Alan Hobeck  
**Chaplain**                John Hall, PM

**Cognizance Committee**  
Dick Young, PM  
Bryan McCurdy, PM  
John Hall, PM

**Property Trustees**  
Bryan McCurdy, PM  
James Clark  
Dennis Conly, PM

**DGL**                      Bryan McCurdy, PM

**Delinquency Committee**  
David Miller, PM  
Jim Phelps, PM  
Percy Handley, PM  
Dennis Knowlton

**Upcoming Events**

May 5    (Sat) regular meeting  
May 26   (Sat) Carson #1 150 th Anniv

**Recent Lodge Events**

Escurial Lodge is grateful to Storey County for providing the equipment and labor at no charge for paving the lodge parking lot. The total cost to the lodge, after donations of \$3500, was approximately \$5600,. Total value of the project is approximately \$14,000. Thanks to Argenta Chapter, OES and the Jacka family for donating \$3000. The snow removal is now easier, mud is no longer a problem, and the floor of the lodge stays much cleaner. The lot is shared with our friends at the fire department across the street, when Lodge or Star are not meeting. The problematic wooden sidewalk in front of the Lodge was also replaced with asphalt during the process.

### **Grand Master's Official Visit**

Escurial 7 hosted Most Worshipful Hans J. Scheurer, Grand Master of Masons in Nevada and his corps of officers on April 7. Forty two Master Masons were present, along with members of the Carson City Chapter of Rainbow Girls, and a number of wives. Argenta Chapter, OES provided a great lunch after the meeting. The GM commented on the rich Masonic history of Escurial Lodge and observed that it is one of four remaining of the original eight that formed the Grand Lodge of Nevada at Virginia City in 1864. Escurial is also unique in that it is the only one in which the three lesser lights actually do illuminate the three greater lights.

### **Lodge Scholarship Program**

As of the middle of April, the Lodge succeeded in raising \$500, to be matched by Grand Lodge, to provide a scholarship to a graduate from Virginia City HS. This was accomplished entirely by raising outside funds, without having to draw from the lodge treasury.

### **Passings**

During this past year, Escurial Brothers Ron Weeks and John Zalac, both residents of Virginia City, and Brothers William Branstetter, and Gordon Barkley passed on to that distant country from which no traveler returns.

### **Lodge Membership**

Escurial Lodge is 148 years old this year. Over 700 Master Masons have signed the bylaws registry and become members of this historic lodge on the Comstock. At the present time, Escurial has 52 (MM) members. Of these, 38 are Nevada residents. Between 7 and 15 regularly attend and participate in lodge. Twenty five, or about half, are life members.

### **Lodge Finances**

This year, the officers and trustees of Escurial 7 embarked on a program to stop bleeding money and start operating in the black. It is especially important that we make the Frank Fisher Lodge building self sustaining, and preserve it for future generations of Masons. The Lodge, like the Eastern Star, will be renting the building from the Trustees. Outside parties will also be able to rent the building for special events. Several groups have already done so, providing revenue to the lodge, and raising our profile in the community. The Trustees will be responsible for investing funds under their care, to maintain the building and property. The present officers serve without expecting compensation, which reduces the average annual operating loss by about half.

Dick Young (Treasurer) summarizes from the Officers Manual of Lodge Organization and Operations:

"A successful and financially stable lodge must operate on the same basic good practices that are reflected by any successful business enterprise. The financial structure should ensure that the lodge operates well within its current income, and that reserves are established to meet contingencies. If the budget indicates that expenses will exceed income from dues and interest from Life Membership investments, it may be necessary to present a choice to the members--either a cut in budgeted expenses, or an increase in annual dues."

"As we can plainly see, prior to 2011, we have never operated or even tried to operate this lodge as required in the Operations Manual, which came out, and was put in force by Grand Lodge in 1978."

### **Finance Committee**

Over the past several months, the Finance Committee, composed of the Trustees, elected officers, and interested members of the lodge, have met to hear presentations by various money managers on options for putting the remaining limited lodge funds to work to sustain the building. A lack of responsible money management of the original bequest from Past Master Frank Fisher has allowed the original funds to be depleted by about 60%. These funds have been spent for other purposes than for primarily sustaining the lodge building. Preserving the lodge hall and 148 years of Masonic history for future generations of Masons will be the objective of the present finance committee.

### **Argenta Chapter, OES**

Escurial is happy to have re-established a cordial and productive working relationship with Argenta Chapter. The Chapter has been most supportive of the lodge activities and our efforts to operate in a fiscally responsible manner. We are extremely grateful to them for assisting us with the scholarship program and for their generous donation toward the cost of paving the parking lot and improving the property. They have also been very generous with their time in providing meals for special lodge events. We look forward to continuing a warm and productive relationship with our sisters.

On behalf of those members of Escurial Lodge who care about the financial solvency of the lodge and future of the Frank Fisher Masonic Temple, grateful thanks to Worshipful Jim Phelps for having the determination, patience and fortitude to make the difficult decisions necessary to address these financial issues.

Freemasonry is a lifelong search for enlightenment. We are all rough stones, with our own unique flaws and imperfections. Some of us will learn the skill to use the tools of Freemasonry to reduce our flaws and imperfections. Others may imagine themselves to be already finished, and see the tools as superfluous relics, to be disposed of at the next neighborhood garage sale.