



# GFN CYBER MASON

[www.masonic-network.com](http://www.masonic-network.com)

---

**The Newsletter of the Global Fraternal Network -- VIRTUAL INTERNET LODGE**

**Volume 2, Number 9 September 2007**

---

## **Editorial**

Last months editorial provoked some comment. See article from Germany. You may agree or not but we should remember that the cost of the site is borne by our founders.

If any brother would submit their Lodge Web Site to be included as a link in this News Letter please forward Lodge Name, No. And URL.

## **Appointment**

It is an honour and a great pleasure to introduce to you the newest Staff Member of the Global Fraternal Network.

Brother Paul Schoffstall from Idaho, USA, has been selected to serve as Board Director of the Scottish/York Rites Trestle Board.

I just wanted to post an introductory little note. I have just been appointed to assume the position vacated by Br. Corby Christensen's move to Washington. I am the new Rep for Idaho. I am Past Master of 2 different lodges in the Boise area. It was 10 years in between serving. I have been a Mason for 22 years this November and just turned 40 this last June. Any suggestions that any of you can give me to help promote the GFN and get members from my state to join would be appreciated.

Paul Schoffstall Rep for Idaho

## **Asian Pacific**



## **Forum**

Every day 11.00 am BST

Brothers in the Asian Pacific area please make sure that if you have any worthy articles for the News Letter that you forward them onto me this includes what is happening in your Lodges and up and coming events in your area .We look forward to hearing from you

Dennis Mc Dowell aka Genisis Asian Pacific sub editor



**USA Forum**  
**Every day at 9.00pm.**

Here is a link to Lodge Alba that explains them much better than I ever could. WBro Paul and I had an absolutely indescribably good time. Too bad these pictures don't include sounds and smells. They fed us T-bone and New York steaks, Alaskan King Crab legs, fresh Sockeye Salmon, and side dishes. We had wide selections of dinner wines and single malt scotch whiskeys for toasting.

[www.albalodge315.org](http://www.albalodge315.org) <<http://www.albalodge315.org/>>

S&F

Corby Christensen



**UK Forum Every Sunday at 9.00pm UK Time**

**The UK Get Together** for 2007

Response so far has been poor. We had a meeting online a few weeks back and decided on the venue of Whitley Bay either in Sep or November. Five opted for September. Four for November. In view of small numbers it was felt the attendance would be an embarrassment to both the host Lodge and to the GFN. If you feel you can swell the numbers please contact the Editor



**Greece**

**Re Ritual**

In Greece we work with a unique ritual that is a mixture of French and English.

It is considered as "owntype" The Grand Lodge of Greece "officially consecrated by 1811 was under the Roll of Grand Orient of France and of Geneva. After the liberation of Greece from Ottoman Turks in 1821 the ritual changed to the one we use now. First of all is in Greek Language and for example we don't have deacons, and we have a "tester" something like the senior deacon that he with the 2 wardens and the ceremony master are opening the lodge. And some other minor details. We also have some lodges working in emulation ritual in Greek and the English Speaking Lodge working in ASSR ritual. Also one day we had a visit from a brother from GLNF working in an American Lodge in Paris with "Californian" ritual. (Never heard of that ritual before)

So that's my info about Rituals...

Panos R. Rigas  
GL of AF&AM of Greece

Junior Warden  
of Pleias Lodge #78 E.O.Athens  
Chief of the Guards  
R.A. Chapter Lefkippos  
First Bearer  
Knight Templar "Holy Mother Priory"  
Representative of the Global Fraternal Network in Greece



**Germany**

### **Re Apathy**

I have to say a few things about the absence of German brethren from the GFN. I'm not sure, if this can be projected to other countries as well. Maybe not all of it, but some points may be more universal than others.

First of all, the look of the GFN community is not that of a modern website. The technology and programming is surely very complex, but the sites still look like a private homepage from the early 90ies. As well there are some features missing, like a search engine, an easy to handle membership roster, an archive and a modern chat room.

Maybe you take a look at one of our German forums.

<http://forum.freimaurer.org/>

This is the official forum of the United Grand Lodges of Germany, especially for getting in contact and answering questions from interested men. The forum started in February 2007 and we have 288 threads with 3394 postings and 208 active users.

There is an invisible part of the forum for the Admins and Mods, where they can communicate very quickly and comfortably. You can get a mail notation, if someone has answered to a thread you have written in.

The Webmaster of the OGLoG runs a similar forum only for brothers, which is even more bristling with traffic. There you can even add pictures to your postings and we have controlled areas for the different degrees,

even AASR, YR and so on, where degree-specific terms can be discussed.

The second point is the language barrier. Most German brethren, even those with international business contacts don't want to write English in their spare time. It is not as relaxing as writing in your mother tongue.

The international contact may be interesting for our brothers too, but I come to this point later. As we have very good and pleasing forums in Germany, the GFN is no alternative to many German brethren.

The term of coming into the GFN seems to be disturbing for German brethren. Some of the questions about the ritual cannot be answered by a German brother who never has seen an UK or US ritual.

The ritual and layout of the lodge are quite different. I suppose, that many brethren look at the questions and just go, never to return. The Webmaster of the UGLoG has logged on, but never received an answer or got his password. I suppose, he answered some questions wrong and was sorted out as an eavesdropper.

I guess that American eavesdropper have better knowledge about those questions as European brethren (for example).

In Germany, the grand lodges have a very bureaucratic view about what their brethren can do on the "international stage". I was once ordered to lay down my "not allowed international activity" as I became a member (!) not even an officer in the International Guild of Masonic Webmasters.

This view is changing for a few years now, but therefore we have no grown tradition of international Masonic activity among the brotherhood. To activate this, it needs several years.

My last point are the differences in ritual and masonry as a whole. In this part, I apologize for hard words. Please take it as my lack of language skill. It is not easy to say it "the right way".

In the US, masonry seems to be much more part of society than here in Germany. For German brethren discussions about "what side up I should wear a Masonic ring" or "is it good to have a Masonic bumper sticker" would be very disturbing. This is more than shallow, it is boring. Here not even a new made EA would ask those questions to an international community. They would ask a brother in the lodge maybe.

Topics about donations, social activities, golf meetings and so on would have a very low ranking in a German forum.

I started topics about ritualism and symbolism in the GFN from time to time. Usually the reply is very low, even lower than for other threads. The answers are most of the time the quoted part of the ritual. It seems that it is unusual to get his own thoughts into written words.

Once a brother (in the East Gate) stated, that he came from a wonderful

lodge evening with a great ritual. I asked, what he took home from the ritual, what touches him, what strengthened his light, his way to the East? He really didn't understand what I wanted from him. I asked him, why the ritual was so good in his eyes. He answered: "Because it was performed without errors."

That's it? A good performance, nice companionship and a BBQ? Maybe we here in Germany are the "little philosophers of masonry", but I can assure you. If a new German brother would read threads like that or get a conversation like this, they would not come back again.

I don't think it can be easily solved. Just starting a few philosophical, symbolical or ritual threads will not change it. Ritual differences are often very great, especially the use of symbols. Many of the secondary symbols used in the US and UK, like anchor, ship (ark), ladder, chisel, beehive, and others, are almost unknown here in Germany. To start a discussion needs much interaction between the starter of the discussion and the answering brethren.

Another point is the "installation" of regional Reps for the GFN. The Reps even go down to county level? Why? We have much more chiefs than Indians here and for what? Have they strengthened the GFN?

If only the Reps would be active in the forums, we would have nothing to worry about. But many of them I only know from the roster. Never have read anything from them. A Rep who is not active in the community?

What is that title for? To get the best piece from a local GNF barbeque? The only thing that is growing at the moment is the number of Reps. The Reps should represent a minimum number of brethren in the same locality. If there are not for example 10 GFN brethren in a county, the brethren there should be represented by the state or country rep. And the Rep should OPENLY in the GFN forums show activity.

In my opinion it is not enough to log in once in a while to keep the account running. For a Rep this is not enough. He should add to discussions, to show his brethren, how the GFN is alive.

Name and address supplied  
-----

### **GFN Comments on a Letter from a German Brother.**

In this September issue we are fortunate to have a very interesting contribution from a worthy Brother in Germany. This German Brother is an active and participating Member of the GFN and he, like every Member, has all the rights to express his opinions and views.

We are commenting on it in an effort to "soften" the impact his criticism may have on some readers. Of course, the shoulders of the average GFN Member are quite large and broad and we can stand and tolerate a whole lot of criticism without getting riled up.

At the same time, our German Brother has enough sensitivity to apologize in advance for any harsh words he may have uttered and he requests that the reader should contribute those possibly unkind words to his lack of language skill.

Nevertheless.....

His letter is basically divided into three parts:

- A. To explain or defend the alleged absence of German Brethren from the GFN.
- B. The differences between American and German Freemasonry.
- C. His evaluation and opinion of the GFN and its administrative and organizational structure.

**(A) The main reasons why German Freemasons are absent from the GFN:**

1. The GFN is not attractive. It is too old and primitive. Difficult to maneuver. The German Masonic Sites are newer and far superior in many ways.
2. The language barrier. Not every German Brother likes to communicate in a, for him, foreign language. In this case, English.
3. The GFN screening method for new applicants is too difficult.
4. In Germany, the Brethren are limited in their participation in International Freemasonry. One's Grand Lodge may actually forbid a member to take part in a foreign activity (Like the GFN).
5. Finally, the difference in Masonic interests. The Germans see different values in Masonry than, for example, the American Freemasons do.

**COMMENT:**

First, the German Masonic Site the Brother refers to looks indeed excellent and ultra modern. Unfortunately, we could not find out much more because the Site is only in German with no options for other languages, like English. However, we certainly do not dispute our German Brother's claim that the Site must be very good.

The "old" GFN, the FIRST EVER CYBERSPACE Masonic Site (!!), started in 1994 under a different name, found that it became inundated by waves of anti-Masonic comments. To circumvent that constant abuse, among other reasons, an individual password system was developed to access the Site. This system was **by necessity** complex.

Also, please remember that in some countries Freemasonry and Freemasons are viewed with deep suspicion. Brethren would jeopardize their jobs and more if discovered to be Freemasons. The GFN had to go to great length to make sure that unauthorized persons could not have access to its membership lists. The GFN actually created special lists for Brethren from certain countries. To this day only the Founders have access to those lists. Adding one's name and data to the GFN Membership Roster is therefore voluntary.

The German Brother is right that our Site needs modernizing. His choice of words to describe our Site could have been more gentle and kind but we do not dispute his opinion. We are in fact in the process of making the Site a little more user friendly and are negotiating with trusted programmers about timing and finances.

The GFN has always tried to meet the assumed linguistic needs of its members. It used to have a multi-lingual Board where non-English speaking Brethren, like Germans, French and others, could meet and communicate with one another in their own language and also introduce any subjects they wanted to pursue. This Board did attract many Brethren but only temporarily. There is a standing offer to open a new Board for any subject if at least 10 Brethren show an interest.

**(B) The differences between German and American Freemasonry:**

The German Brother points out quite a number of differences in the area of Masonic interests. He concludes that American Masonic values, as seen on the GFN, are shallow and boring. Without actually stating it in so many words, he clearly implies that German Masonic values and interests are superior. Quite rash judgments, of course, from, we assume, an enthusiastic young man.

Without going deeply into this subject, our comment: In general, American Freemasonry is social while Europeans have an almost strict but definitely distinct philosophical approach to Freemasonry. In America, Masons enjoy their Masonic activities and have fun doing this. We have our rings, car emblems, BBQ's, picnics, ladies nights, table lodges, charitable causes, aprons, jewels, our egos get involved without getting too serious. Most American Masons, almost 3 million strong, try to be good men. The average American Mason has fun enjoying his Freemasonry. Few

agonize about it.

There are, of course, many Lodges in America that specifically approach Freemasonry philosophically and conduct in depth studies and conferences. These activities are pursued in Lodge.

To our Brother author, we suggest a closer communication with international Brethren and to so widen his horizon about Freemasonry in other parts of the world and become more tolerant of others. Also, do make use of the GFN Travel Board and arrange to visit Brethren in other countries like so many GFN Members presently do.

**(C) FINALLY, our Brother's evaluation and opinion of the GFN and its administrative structure.**

He criticizes the administrative and organizational structure of the GFN. For his information, the GFN follows a well-known nucleus-based military strategic structure aimed at penetrating unmapped areas to establish self-contained units in advance of larger structures. We are satisfied with what has been achieved.

Rather than looking down on his active Brethren, we would have preferred him using less unfortunate descriptions and being more appreciative of those GFN Members that have accepted positions of responsibility "even down to the county level" and to thank them for their participation.

Of course, he is correct when he writes (and we paraphrase): "If only the Reps would be active (in the forums), we would have nothing to worry about. He (the Rep) should add to discussions to show his Brethren that the GFN is alive". The GFN Representative's main role is being the center or nucleus of his jurisdiction and to act accordingly.

We would like to point out that all Staff Members are voluntary participants of the GFN. Some have been appointed to attend to certain tasks. Others were simply recognized for their years of devotion to Freemasonry and nothing more is expected of them. Each and every Staff Member knows what they are supposed to do and what is expected of them. If they fall short they must surely have a legitimate excuse connected their cable tow. We simply appreciate that they are there at all and knowing that we can count on them when necessary or needed to advance the cause of our beloved Freemasonry.

What we have written above are not excuses or defenses because we have nothing to feel guilty about or to defend. We are very proud of the GFN, its Staff and loyal Members that have made the GFN what it is today. We have given explanations and made comments on specific criticisms. We hope that they all together will supply material for others to follow up on.

We want to thank our German Brother for his input and contribution. Although it may invite some negative responses, we must all appreciate him and recognize that this Brother contributed his own personal views in his genuine effort to improve and enliven the Global Fraternal Network.

We want to remind all Brethren of a famous Masonic prayer that includes these words: "Be very kind and extremely gentle when you are called upon to correct someone, especially a Brother Mason".

Fraternally,

Rene  
(Jean Rene van Geuns)  
RAN  
(Richard A. Newman)  
GFN Co-Founders

## **Situations Vacant**

A number of vacancy's exist for UK County Reps

Some Euro Reps required

Interested? In the first instance contact the editor

## **Masonic Buildings.**

Let me have Pictures of your Lodge Buildings. Please. Keep them coming.

Ed.



Chartered on December 22, 2001, **Sandy Valley Lodge #57** is Nevada's newest Masonic Lodge ... and a unique one at that!

How many of you know of Masonic Lodges that meet in an airplane hangar? Here's the outside of the Lodge building (actually a private residence in Sandy Valley, Nevada, belonging to one of its members who graciously makes space available for the Lodge) ...



**The lodge building in Meissen, Germany**

## **Lodge Links**

Arcadia Lodge No 278 California <<http://www.calodges.org/no278/>>

21st Masonic District of Ohio, <http://masonicoh21.net/>

**New. Alba** lodge No 315 USA <<http://www.albalodge315.org/>>

Statesville Lodge No27 USA. <http://www.statesville27.ncmason.org/>

Triangle Lodge No 708 Georgia USA [www.trianglelodge.org](http://www.trianglelodge.org)

Crayford Lodge No 6336 England <http://www.crayfordlodge.org.uk>

Lodge Windsor No 770 UGLof NSW <http://www.geocities.com/athens/rhodes/8325/>

**New.** Lodge Duyfken which is in the District of Carpentaria, in Queensland, Australia.

<http://www.tNewinyurl.com/omr8a>

#### Quote

"If you don't read the newspaper  
you are uninformed, if you do  
read the newspaper you are  
misinformed."

Mark Twain

---

#### Editorial team

Editor: Brian W Crayford: [bwbutler@btinternet.com](mailto:bwbutler@btinternet.com)

Asian Pacific Regional Editor: Dennis McDowell: [Dennis\\_19502000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Dennis_19502000@yahoo.co.uk)

USA Regional Editor: Corby Christenson: [rangercorby@yahoo.com](mailto:rangercorby@yahoo.com)

Assistant editor: Furokh Santoke: [fsantoke@hotmail.com](mailto:fsantoke@hotmail.com)

Distribution: Ellis Mills: [eteldest@yahoo.com](mailto:eteldest@yahoo.com)

Leo Scott: [leoscott1@peoplepc.com](mailto:leoscott1@peoplepc.com)

Correspondents: All GFN Reps

Master Masons are welcome to request free copies. Please send full name, name and number of lodge, and email.

Copies available by e-mail.

Back issues are archived at: [http://www.geocities.com/gfn\\_news](http://www.geocities.com/gfn_news)

**FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.**