

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Freemasonry, with some justification, has long claimed to be spread 'universally' across the Earth's broad surface, so that 'the Sun is always at the meridian with respect to Freemasonry', but it was not until the latter half of the 20th century that the claim could be extended beyond the terrestrial globe, one small step having been taken off-planet. Astronaut Edwin Eugene (Buzz) Aldrin Jr, a member of Clear Lake Lodge #1417, under the mainstream Grand Lodge of Texas, was pilot of the lunar module that made the first successful manned flight to the moon, in 1969. He carried with him a 'special deputation' from his Grand Master, authorising him to claim the moon as being under the Masonic territorial jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Texas. Having set foot upon the moon, in the area known as the Sea of Tranquility, Brother Aldrin, upon his return to earth, certified that he had performed this Masonic duty.

Thirty years later, a light-hearted suggestion that a lodge, Tranquility Lodge, be chartered by Texas, to meet in the Grand Temple at Waco until such time as it could meet on the moon, was taken seriously, and at the end of 1999 arrangements were in hand to charter Tranquility Lodge #2000, with an election of officers scheduled for July 2000. It was planned that the original charter should contain a special clause, whereby the lodge cannot do degree work while on Earth, but may exchange the original charter for a standard one at such time as it is located on the Moon. Meanwhile, it will function as a fund-raiser for charity, and membership is expected to be extended worldwide, with inquiries having been received from Europe, the Middle East and Australia. The lodge already has a website, at <<http://www.tranquilitylodge2000.org>>. The website invites submission for plans for the building of the first Masonic lodge on the moon, and calls for other ideas: email to <dick@duckcreeklodge.org>.

Less expensive and far more widespread is the involvement of Grand Lodges, lodges, and individual Masons, in making their mark in cyberspace, utilising virtually every facility associated with the Information Super-highway, from chat rooms to home pages, from email to e-zines, with individual e-libraries of exoteric and esoteric material accumulated and made available either generally or on a personal basis. One of the most useful sources of Masonic information, particularly in relation to the Internet, is the website maintained by Paul Bessel for the US-based Masonic Leadership Center, at <<http://bessel.org>>. Another well regarded source utilised by Masons worldwide is the multilingual (but 80% English) 'Pietre Stones' at <<http://users.iol.it/fjit.bvg/freemas.html>>, maintained by Bruno Virgilio Gazzo <fjit.bvg@iol.it>. But perhaps the most significant in terms of personal development is the proliferation of specialised email 'Lists', where Masons of various flavours, sometimes with a sprinkling of non-Masons, can exchange views and information, to their mutual benefit.

Sometimes these Lists find aficionados of matters other than Masonic, or of subsets of Masonry, who hive off to create a new List. One such arose from a blend of science fiction and humour. First came a discussion on a British-based List, as to whether Masonry was 'regular' or 'irregular' among the various races encountered by the *Enterprise*, in 'Star Trek' (it was generally agreed that the Grand Lodge of the Ferenghi is irregular because they admit only persons actuated by mercenary motives), and then Masons from several continents who meet on a US/Canadian-based List began lampooning the Masonic tendency towards grandiloquent titles. This resulted in the 'Empyrean' List, and revelation of the existence of the Supreme Universal Grand Lodge of Empyrean.

Supreme Universal Grand Lodge of Empyrean

Founded: 4004 BCE. *Descent:* Eden.

HQ: Freemasons' Hall, Enormous Empress Street, Lhasa, Tibet, Earth.

Telephone: +31229-273373. Fax: +31229-248272.

Email: <boaz@worldonline.nl>. Website: *restricted information*.

Annual meeting: 5 May, in *SSS Heisenberg*, the Empyrean fleet flagship.

Lodges: 6,624. Membership: 3,141,592.

Ritual: *Rite Ancien de Bouillon*, Martian Rectified, A&AER Craft degrees, etc.

Publications: *Constitutions, Galactic Year Book, Summary Proceedings.*

Periodical: *The Almagest.*

History

According to the late Reverend Doctor George Oliver, on what he said was good authority, Freemasonry antedates the creation of the world. The Supreme Universal Grand Lodge of Empyrean (SUGLE) does not dispute this statement, but modestly refrains from claiming any greater antiquity for itself than the time of Adam, its first Most Blessed Supreme Universal Grand Master of Empyrean.

SUGLE claims jurisdiction over all of Empyrean where no other Grand Lodge has established a prior presence, which necessarily includes all worldly and other-worldly areas. It remains to be seen how SUGLE reacts to implementation of the claim of the Grand Lodge of Texas to jurisdiction of the Moon.

Beyond Earth, SUGLE generally charters only one lodge per planet and prohibits dual and plural membership, to discourage the disconcerting practice of terrestrial lodges which, when three or more are gathered together, have an irresistible urge to form an indigenous Grand Lodge. The result is very large lodges. To avoid discontent, SUGLE dispenses a wide range of grand titles, ranging from a Deputy Grand Master for each planet, to a Universal Grand Pursuivant for the Promotion of Intergalactic and Interspecies Charitable Golf Tournaments for the Follically Challenged.

On Earth, dual and plural membership are permitted, and joining members are accepted from among Master Masons of all jurisdictions holding to Anderson's *Constitutions*. Membership of the email List is obtained by direct submission to Errol Feldman <boaz@worldonline.nl>, the Most Blessed the Supreme Universal Grand Master of Empyrean (MBSUGME), or by recommendation from any of the Alsupreme Intergalactic Plenipotentiaries (AIPs). Government of the SUGLE is autocratic, and the MBSUGME is accepted by the AIPs as the Autocrat *primus inter pares*, and sole dispenser of the password to the website.

Notes for visitors

Visitors to terrestrial lodges are permitted to wear their own regalia and a dark suit or, in most cases, their national dress; the exception is Australians, whose national dress of singlet, shorts and thongs is not considered sufficiently formal.

Most lodges meet monthly, in the evening, on the night of the full moon; SUGLE has one daylight lodge, which meets in the morning, calls off for refreshment at noon, and then resumes labour. There are also a research lodge with a peripatetic warrant, which meets quarterly on each main continent in turn, and several 'species' lodges which cater for extraterrestrial visitors.

Meeting details of all SUGLE lodges, terrestrial and celestial, are published in the annual *Galactic Year Book* obtainable, at a price slightly less than the national debt of an emergent country, from the Supreme Headquarters in Lhasa. This book should be referred to in particular by any potential visitor to any of SUGLE's *celestial* lodges, for dress requirements and explanation of local meeting dates and times.

List of lodges

Terrestrial lodges of particular interest are listed below.

Primus Lodge #1	Meets monthly on the evening of the full moon, at 7 pm at Shangri-La, Tibet. Installation: June. Works the <i>Rite Ancien de Bouillon</i> in Walloon.
Al Fargani Lodge #857	For musically-inclined astronomers, meets at Pythagoras Masonic Hall, Heligoland, at 8 pm on the summer and winter solstices, and on 1 April for Installation. Works Emulation in Welsh.
Meridian Lodge #1200	Meets at SHQ, Lhasa, monthly on the first Tuesday at 11 am. Installation: December. Works the Ancient and Accepted Empyrean Rite Craft degrees alternately in Urdu and Tagalog.
Heinlein Memorial Lodge #2001	Meets 11 times per Martian year (approximately every 62 days) at the Burroughs Street Temple, Ulan Bator, Outer Mongolia, at 7.30 pm, and works the Martian Rectified Rite in Aramaic.
Thomas Didymus Lodge of Research	Meets quarterly at various times and locations; publishes its research papers in magazine form and on CD-ROM, in Canadian and Erse. For further information, contact Nelson King <nking@freemasonry.org>.