

**THE FREETHINKING FREEMASON**  
The Collected Masonic Writings of W:.Tim Bryce, PM,  
MPS

by Tim Bryce  
*"A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"*

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## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to all of the Masonic Lodge officers who face the trials and tribulations of leading and governing a Lodge and to the Craft whose energy is needed to power the Lodge and perpetuate the fraternity.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Tim Bryce**

Mr. Bryce is a writer and management consultant with M. Bryce & Associates (MBA), located in the Tampa Bay area of Florida. He has served MBA for over 30 years and has traveled extensively providing training and consulting services on a variety of management and technical subjects.

Tim graduated from Ohio University in 1976 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications (BSC) from OU's College of Communications, School of Communication Studies (formerly School of Interpersonal Communications).

A prolific writer, Tim has authored numerous papers and books on a variety of management and computer related subjects. He has also made several presentations at management and com-

puter trade related meetings and has given lectures at various universities.

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### **Tim's Masonic Biography:**

Mr. Bryce is a second generation American whose family traces its roots back to Scotland and comes from a long line of Masons. During his tenure as a Freemason, he has attained several proficiency certificates and passed written Masonic examinations.

His Masonic chronology includes:

1997 - Raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason at Dunedin Lodge No. 192 F.& A.M. in Dunedin, Florida, and under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Florida. Developed data base and web site for use by the Lodge.

1999 - Transferred to Sutherland Lodge No. 174 F.& A.M. in Palm Harbor, FL. Over the next few years, he served as Junior Deacon, Senior Deacon, Junior Warden, and Senior Warden. Developed

data base and web site for use by the Lodge. It was also at this time that he organized and managed the Lodge's Scholarship Program.

2000 - Appointed District 20 Chairman of Publicity & Public Relations, Citizenship & Public Education. Held post for six years.

2001 - Initiated into the Lake Tarpon High Twelve Club. Started "*Masonic Update*," the first Masonic related podcast. Joined the SunCoast Masters & Wardens Association, serving Districts 20 & 21 in the Tampa Bay area of Florida. Developed data base and web site for use by the association.

2002 - Appointed Chairman of the Scholarship Committee for the SunCoast Masters & Wardens Association. A position he served for three years. Appointed Florida Bureau Chief for *THE MASONIC GLOBE* magazine. Appointed Editor of *THE FLORIDA MASON* (official publication of the Grand Lodge of Florida). Held post for two years. Appointed Zone 6 Chairman, Publicity & Public Relations. Held post for three years. Initiated a member into the Egypt Shrine, Tampa. Awarded the Masonic "Blue-Forget-Me-Not" Award for Masonic Education.

2003 - Elected and installed Worshipful Master of Sutherland Lodge No. 174 F.& A.M. Joined East Gate Lodge No. 355 F.& A.M., Clearwater. Became a charter member of Bannack Historic

Lodge No. 3-7-77 A.F.& A.M. of Montana.

2004 - Elected and installed Secretary of Sutherland Lodge No. 175 F.& A.M. Held position for two years. Launched "*FREEMASONRY for The Next Generation*" eZine. Published for two years. Became a charter member of the Mullan Pass Historical Lodge No. 1862 A.F.& A.M. of Montana.

2005 - Elected and installed President of the SunCoast Masters & Wardens Association. Elected Knight Zuri by Knights Of Freemasonry Universal. Became a Plural member of Dunedin Lodge No. 192 F.& A.M.

2006 - Joined the Philalethes Society, a Masonic research society. Appointed official Ambassador of the SunCoast Masters & Wardens Association. Rejoined Dunedin Lodge No. 192 F.& A.M. as home Lodge.

2007 - Elected and installed as Secretary of Dunedin Lodge No. 192 F.& A.M.

## THINK

## FOREWORD

As Masons we are admonished to seek further light which I have dutifully sought since 1997. It has been an interesting trip to say the least. I have seen a lot in the last ten short years. I have traveled not only around my own Lodge, but throughout my district, zone, and state learning about the fraternity, and thanks to the Internet I have learned a lot about what is going on in other jurisdictions around the world.

Professionally, I am a management consultant specializing in the design and development of information systems. This has afforded me a rare opportunity to see quite a bit of the world and companies of all sizes and shapes. With this background in mind, one of the things that struck me coldly about the fraternity is its stubborn resistance to change of any kind. We are all certainly proud of our rich Masonic heritage, but I have found the fraternity to be paralyzed simply because it refuses to change with the times. Any attempts to modernize it or make it more contemporary is steadfastly rebuked by the elders of the fraternity. Consequently, our membership is dwindling rapidly, Lodges are closing their doors, and our financial resources have diminished greatly. I believe all of these problems can be corrected if we are allowed to address them in a rational manner. But if we continue to operate

with our heads in the sand, then it is a simple matter of time before our story is told. My writings are hardly revolutionary; they are what any businessman would do to steer his company through troubled waters; but because of our inclination to resist change, they are perceived as somewhat radical. Progress can only be made if we are allowed to challenge the status quo. As for me, I believe in addressing our true problems and finding pragmatic solutions to overcome them. I am most definitely not a proponent of "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic." My writings, as such, are intended to stimulate discussion in order to help the fraternity, certainly not to hurt it.

Over the last two years I have penned over 100 articles addressing various aspects of the fraternity. From this, I selected 85 essays aimed at:

- Guiding Craft Lodge officers in fulfilling their duty.
- Editorials on the direction of the fraternity.
- And some entertaining stories, quotations and poetry to uplift Masonic spirits.

Maybe the best way to think of this body of work is as a handbook or reference manual to guide you in your journey through the fraternity. You might not agree with all of my opinions, but there is some

advice and ideas you will undoubtedly find useful.

My work doesn't address our ancient heritage, which others are more capable of writing. Instead, I am addressing our present and future concerns regarding the fraternity. Under each essay, I list the date when it was first published. The publications mentioned herein include:

- "*Freemason Information*" - Bro. Greg Stewart's fine web site out of California.  
[www.freemasoninformation.com](http://www.freemasoninformation.com)
- "*Lodgeroom International*" - the monthly eZine from the United Kingdom as published by Bro. Bill McElligott and edited by W.:R.Theron Dunn, PM.
- "*On the Level*" - the quarterly eZine from India as produced by W.:Ambarish (Bertie) Singh Roy, PM
- "*The Working Tools*" - the monthly eZine published in New Jersey by Bro. Cory Sigler.
- "*Masonic Poets Society*" - Bros. Owen Lorion's & Jerry Leighton's Internet repository of contemporary Masonic poetry.

My works have also been published by The Philatheles Society, the noted Masonic research society, and in dozens of other Craft Lodge newsletters and web sites. I would like to thank the many

Brothers, not just those listed here, who encouraged me to perpetuate my work. My writings have earned me many critics in the fraternity, but far more friends and Brothers.

Behind my work is a deep belief in the nobility of the order with an eye on our place in society. These are troubling times for the world today. True, we are not engaged in a world war as the last few generations experienced, but we are now a world community still plagued by religious extremists, terrorism, and dictatorships. It's a tinder box that could easily go up at any time. As such, I believe we need True Masonry more than ever, not just to help other Brothers but to help the world community find peace and harmony. This can only happen if we have our house in order first, which is the intent of my writings.

Why "*Keep the Faith*"?

It has become customary for me to close my writings with the expression, "Keep the Faith!" This is not intended to carry any religious overtones. Instead, it is intended to encourage Masons to keep their faith in the fraternity even in the face of adversity.

Why "*A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry*"?

My Internet signature for many years has been "A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry." This was done to

develop a standard signature on e-mails that everyone would remember. Evidently, it worked. I originally got the idea from comedian Jay Leno who liked to describe himself as a "Foot Soldier for Comedy." There is no hidden meaning in either slogan. I have no political aspirations in the fraternity other than to help spread the word that it is a decent and honorable institution to belong to.

*Keep the Faith!*

- Tim Bryce, PM, MPS  
Palm Harbor, FL, USA  
*"A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"*

December 2007

## INTRODUCTION

### THE PROBLEM WITH WR. TIM BRYCE

by W.:Theron Dunn, PM  
Editor,

"*The Lodgeroom International*"  
February 2007

I first became aware of the writings of Worshipful Tim Bryce a couple of years ago when he was producing his "*Freemasonry for the Next Generation*" eZine and his "*Masonic Update*" podcast. Unfortunately about the same time, both of these valuable resources came to an abrupt halt. In December 2005, by order of the Grand Master of Florida, at the time M.:W.:John Kavanaugh.

Most Worshipful Kavanaugh took offense at Wr. Bryce's articles, particularly his "*Masonic Manifesto*" which outlined several ideas for improving the fraternity. M.:W.:Kavanaugh's censorship of Worshipful Bryce baffled many of us and resulted in an outcry to rescind the order. This outpouring of support for Wr. Bryce was ignored by Grand Master Kavanaugh.

As a result of the order, Wr. Bryce sought and found several other venues which allowed him to continue to publish his Masonic articles, all of which seek to improve the fraternity, not to destroy it. The Lodgeroom International Magazine, recognizing the value in Wr. Bryce's efforts, has published

many of his articles for the benefit of Freemasonry.

Everything seemed to settle in to a Status Quo until Wr. Bryce took a stand on the recognition of Prince Hall. Then, in December 2006, Wr. Bryce received another letter from the current Grand Master, Most Worshipful Robert Trump. Like the previous instruction, M.:W.:Trump instructed Wr. Bryce to cease and desist his weekly e-mail bulletins regarding his work.

M.:W.:Trump's letter alluded to claims having been made to other grand jurisdictions that accused Wr. Bryce of being an Internet spammer. Consequently, the Grand Master used this as a basis to order him to cease and desist such broadcasts. Each e-mail that Wr. Bryce had sent included a means of removing the recipient from further communications, and everyone that had requested to be removed, had been.

On the surface, it appears Wr. Bryce is the center of a controversy in Florida. On the Internet, he has been called on more than one occasion "egotistical," a "self-promoter," "pompous," etc. His defenders, on the other hand, welcome his writings and laud him with praise and support. One has to wonder what this is all about and why he receives all of this attention. Having followed these events over the last year, and having corresponded and talked with

Wr. Bryce, perhaps I can shed some light as to what is going on.

The key to understanding our Brother from Florida is his background.

First, Wr. Bryce comes from a long line of Freemasons. His father and grandfather were raised Master Masons under the Grand Lodge of New York, and the family traces their roots back to Scotland. He has been a Master Mason for ten years, and in that time has been very active in his lodge and Freemasonry in general. He has gone through the chairs of his Lodge and served as Worshipful Master and as Secretary.

Wr. Bryce served as President of his local Masters & Wardens Association, and as Zone and District Chairman for Public Relations for the Grand Lodge of Florida. Wr. Bryce has also further served the Grand Lodge of Florida as editor of the "*Florida Mason*," the Grand Lodge's official publication. Wr. Bryce is a member of the Philalethes Society, the well known and respected Masonic research group.

His efforts did not go unnoticed. As a result of his diligent efforts on behalf of the fraternity, Wr. Bryce was awarded membership in the Masonic Brotherhood of the Blue Forget Me Not (an honorary society for Masonic Education), and he was made a Knight Zuri by the Knights of Freemasonry

Universal.

Professionally, Wr. Bryce works as a management consultant specializing in methodologies for systems development. For the last 30 years he has traveled the globe consulting with companies of all sizes and shapes to cleanup their systems development practices. There are plenty of tools and experts for cleaning up computer programs, but if you want to bring order out of the chaos in a major information system project, Bryce is your man.

Bryce's professional career involves considerable training and writing pertaining to management and computer related topics. His book, "*The IRM Revolution: Blueprint for the 21st Century*" (co-written with his father) made it to the Top 10 list for management related books in Japan. He has also developed a long list of articles over the years making him a past master of the short essay. Between his persona and his ability to generate articles, one begins to understand his style of writing which some describe as "brutally frank." To some, this is refreshing; to some critics, he has been described as too bold and too outspoken for his own good.

My experience with Wr. Bryce has shown me that it is his professional background and enthusiasm for the fraternity that drives him. Wr. Bryce has developed a reputation as a no-nonsense type,

a man who may not be politically correct, but knows how to get the job done.

So why has Wr. Bryce drawn the wrath of at least two Grand Masters in the Grand Lodge of Florida? I think it's because he is not afraid to speak his mind and challenge the status quo. He is a good Mason, one who is not afraid to follow his obligation to the fraternity, to point out problems, and to offer solutions. His writings make us stop, think, and examine. More though, he does not simply point out problems, he offers thoughtful and insightful solutions.

He has told me that it is not important that people agree with him, but rather he wants them to stop, engage their minds, and seek further light. He openly admits that he doesn't have all of the answers. On the other hand, he considers it critical that we be allowed to discuss them as Masons within the rightful constraints of our obligations. One thing he has said numerous times, "If there is anything constant in life, it is change." He once told me that he doesn't believe in criticizing something unless you can offer an alternative, which he regularly does.

Between Wr. Bryce's professional and Masonic background, he brings a lot to the table. People can accuse him of many things, but in my experience, he cannot be accused of not being fair, honest and

courteous. In a word, a Masonic example.

Which brings us to the nub of the problem. Wr. Bryce has developed a reputation as a "straight shooter," and has become what many weak managers fear, an "unofficial leader." We have all seen it happen, where one member of the group, with more experience or insight leads the group because the "official" leadership is unsure, weak, or so out of touch the group has lost the will to follow.

It is the opinion of this Mason that Wr. Bryce, through his diligent and untiring efforts on behalf of Freemasonry has become this unofficial leader. I cannot speak to the management of the Grand Lodge of Florida, not being a member of that jurisdiction, nor can I speak to the management goals and imperatives of the two grand masters of Florida who tried to silence Wr. Bryce. However, one thing is clear: For every order a Grand Master of Florida issues to censor Wr. Bryce, the greater his notoriety grows.

Which begs the question: Why does Florida want to suppress his writings?

As noted above, within the boundaries of my obligation, it is hard to say. Wr. Bryce claims he has made enemies over the years who represent the "old-guard" and resist any attempt to change or modernize our fraternity. Change has

a tendency to scare people, and Freemasonry is based on tradition, which is supposed to be unchanging, even when the "tradition" in question isn't really Masonic in nature.

Wr. Bryce, through his dissertations, seems to be frightening the Grand Lodge of Florida. His dissertation on the Masonic Necessity of all Mainstream Grand Lodges extending fraternal recognition to Prince Hall Masonry has touched off a discussion that is long past due in Florida. In return, the Grand Lodge of Florida is reacting to this threat by attempting to put an end to it... by silencing Wr. Bryce, using the rules of the fraternity he is bound by his obligations to obey.

The problem with all of this is Freemasonry, by its very tenets, stands for freedom of speech and freedom of thought. Keeping my obligations firmly in the front of my mind as I write this and examine the situation:

How can the Grand Lodge of Florida, in any way that can be considered within the framework of our tenets, justify the attempt to silence a brother for holding personal opinions and communicating them? Where would Henry Coil, Albert Mackey, Albert Pike, and Carl Claudy be if THEIR Grand Masters had silenced them? Or tied to.

I will leave you with one last

thought: There is a legend about a certain Jewish Carpenter who was arrested for speaking against the existing temporal powers, convicted and executed. In his execution, a religion was born... The Grand Lodge of Florida might be well advised to consider a simple truth: a martyr's teachings carry more power than an unmolested teacher.

But I can write this. My Grand Lodge isn't trying to censor me.

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#### **WHY DO YOU CARE?**

by W.: Tim Bryce, PM, MPS  
March 30, 2007 - "On the Level"

I am often asked why I persist in writing my columns and speaking out in terms of how the fraternity can be improved. Some of my closest friends and Brothers have questioned my sanity; "Tim, why do you want to keep banging your head against the wall? Why don't you just walk away from it?" And I guess that is the point; too many Brothers have become frustrated with the fraternity and have walked away from it. Good men and Masons who would normally be active, have become disillusioned and dropped out. Why? Because they see the fraternity fraught with politics and resign themselves that "you cannot beat city hall." They joined for the basic tenets of Freemasonry (friendship, morality, and brotherly

love), not for gamesmanship. And I guess the reason I haven't walked away from it is because I still believe in the nobility of the institution and want to see it return to its former glory. In other words, I care.

Freemasonry has been in my family for many generations, but this did not have a bearing on why I joined it and actively participated in it. I believe in Freemasonry, at least how it is intended to be, not how it is currently implemented. I stay with it because, plain and simply, I care about it. I see the value in it and believe it is something worth fighting for.

"Why do you care?" is a good question and I tried it on some Brothers who I believe have Freemasonry planted deep in their hearts. Frankly, they were taken aback by the question and had to do some introspection which they personally found interesting.

My answer is essentially no different than others; I care because I believe in the fellowship and precepts by which this fraternity is based. It complements, not conflicts, with my lifestyle and, as such, I have readily adapted to it. True Masonry is an expression of character as it represents such things as integrity, ethics, morality, loyalty, and honor. It is most definitely not concerned with religion or politics (which somehow creeps its way into our government).

I also enjoy the work; not just our degrees and social gatherings, but our charity and community work as well. It gives me a feeling of adding value to both my community and myself. And finally, I care because I seethe at incompetence and injustice. I am always looking for new and improved ways to streamline things and make life a little simpler and better. In other words, I do not shirk responsibility, particularly when I know I can make a contribution, and am not meek at voicing my opinion on a subject; two attributes I believe a True Mason has in his heart.

Caring about Freemasonry is a personal issue. There may be many other reasons. I've told you mine, now how about you: "*Why do you care?*"

*Keep the Faith!*

**THINK**



## CHAPTER 1

### CRAFT LODGE ADMINISTRATION

This collection of essays is aimed at providing assistance in the operations of a Craft Lodge and will be of prime interest to Lodge officers or anyone considering moving through the chairs.

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## SO YOU WANT TO BE A LODGE OFFICER, EH?

April 18, 2006 - "Freemason Information"

*"There is more to running a Masonic Lodge than just remembering your catechism."*

- Bryce's Law

So you have been asked to sit as a Steward or some other appointed office in the Lodge. Before you say yes, there are a few things you should know. First, there is really no such thing as a trivial office in a Masonic Lodge. But there is more to it than dressing up in a tuxedo and marching around in the Lodge room, there are certain duties and responsibilities associated with each chair which you will be expected to perform. In other words, there is more to being a Masonic officer than pomp and circumstance, you will be expected to work. If you are agreeing to become an officer simply as an excuse to buy a tux or to have some sort of Masonic title, than you are getting into it for the wrong reasons. Lodges need working officers, not facade.

More importantly, understand that becoming a Lodge officer requires considerable commitment. It means attending additional meetings, classes, workshops, and more memorization work. Further, once you are in the chairs (aka "in line") it will be expected that you stay in the rotation until you have become Worshipful Master, and this can take as long

as seven years depending on where you enter the line. Although I am not necessarily a fan of our custom of rotating through the chairs, I do concede each chair teaches us a different set of responsibilities and skills. (As far as I am concerned, the Senior Deacon is the best seat in the house). If you are willing to accept the commitment and have something to offer the Lodge, great. If not, forget it.

Too often I see smaller lodges, who are desperate to fill chairs, raise new Brothers and immediately appoint them as officers (sometimes on the same night). The newbies are, of course, flattered and accept the position without question. Only later do they realize the commitment expected of them and balk at advancing through the line. Yes, we need to get our newly raised Brothers active in the Lodge, but this should not include putting them in the officers line right away. Instead, they should be allowed to sit on the sidelines, observe what is going on, then allow them to make a conscious decision to go into the line. By going in with both eyes wide open, they are more likely to accept the commitment required to properly serve as a Lodge officer.

I am most definitely not poo-pooing becoming a Lodge officer. Masonry teaches us a lot of lessons in life, becoming a Lodge officer kicks it up a notch and teaches us

some basic management and people skills which are invaluable in both our personal and professional development. I just believe people should know what they are getting into, and are getting into it for the right reasons. For example, there are those shallow individuals who are only interested in having a Masonic title, and accomplish nothing for the Lodge. It chafes me when I see a "puppet" Worshipful Master who is led by his officers as opposed to the other way around. If they are only interested in chasing a Past Master's apron, I say let's give them the apron and get them the heck out of the way.

*Keep the Faith!*

### **THINK**

### **HOW ARE WE PREPARING OUR LEADERS?**

February 22, 2006 - "*Freemason Information*"

Among the hidden benefits of becoming a Mason is that it builds character. It also helps develop our speaking and presentation skills as we learn catechisms and ritual. Aside from this, there is little to teach Lodge officers how to be leaders. Normally, when someone is elected or appointed to a chair there is considerable on-the-job training where they will inevitably make mistakes. By the time someone becomes Master of a Lodge they should know how to perform such tasks as preparing a budget, how to establish objectives, plan and schedule activities, managing finances and investments, and set the Craft to work with proper instruction for their labor. Our rituals teach us some valuable lessons regarding life, but not how to be a better a leader.

It is a false assumption that just because someone sits in a chair in a Masonic Lodge, they are suddenly possessed with the required knowledge and skills to lead and manage. A person's professional background may be such that they have never had any formal training or experience in this regard. Although they may valiantly try to lead, inevitably, they are ineffective and the Lodge flounders.

I believe one of the best vehicles for preparing someone to become an effective Worshipful Master is

to serve as a Little League umpire, which I did for a number of years. We take baseball pretty seriously down here in Florida. It's not just a matter of volunteering your time. There are several clinics to attend and books to study. Whereas coaches manage their individual teams, umpires manage the game. From this experience, I learned several things:

- Pre-game preparations (checking the condition of the field and equipment, and briefing the coaches).
- The need for fair play,
- That nothing happens until the umpire makes the call. (You should take your time so that you make the right call.)
- Make your calls loud and clear.
- Recognize when you have made a mistake and rectify it.
- Maintaining order and discipline on the field.
- Handling hecklers (my personal favorite).
- Sportsmanship.
- And how to properly dress as an umpire.

For those of you who have served as an umpire or a referee in other sports, you know exactly what I am talking about. As a sports official, you assume certain responsibilities that many other people depend on. As such, it shouldn't be taken lightly and you should learn as much as possible to do your job effectively.

Being a Worshipful Master is es-

entially no different. True, you have to know Masonic ritual, but you must also know how to manage the Lodge, and this involves developing planning and people skills. Very few Grand Lodges offer programs to develop such skills, if any. I understand the Grand Lodge of California has a program whereby officers must be certified in order to graduate to another chair. This makes a lot of sense to me. It gives the person a glimpse of what lies ahead of him instead of learning it under fire.

As our membership declines and our expenses continue to rise, we need to properly cultivate Lodge leaders to prepare them for the years ahead. Ideally, it would be nice to see Grand Lodges develop more sophisticated programs to develop the skills needed to steer our Lodges through the troubled waters ahead.

*Keep the Faith!*

**THINK**