Biographical Sketch of
James N. Reid Jr.
140th Grand Master of Washington – 2002-2003
By: M:.W.: Robert L. Van Zee, Past Grand Master

This Biographical Sketch is hyperlink to our Grand Lodge Library and Museum website

M:.W:. James N. Reid Jr. was born January 10, 1943, in Bremerton, Washington. At the time, Bremerton – the home of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard – was swollen with shipyard workers and naval personnel that kept the Naval Base humming day and night, seven days a week. The Reid family then consisted of three older sisters, Jimmy’s mother and father, and Jimmy. Although the house was small by today’s standards, the Reids none-the-less opened their home to workers in the shipyard. The family was deeply religious and was closely associated with the First Christian Church in Bremerton. Jimmy’s mother was fond of telling her friends that the only time he ran away from home, Jimmy rode his tricycle to the Church – a distance of nearly two miles – where he turned himself into the Church Secretary.

A substantial part of Jimmy’s formative years involved Church activities. Two of his three sisters married ministers, and Jimmy was later to spend a year in Seminary preparing for the ministry. He attended primary school in Bremerton, Coontz Jr. High, and then West High School, where he graduated with honors in 1961. In addition to being an excellent scholar, Brother Reid enjoyed musical studies as a student of both the organ and the piano. All of the Reids were singers. Jimmy was no exception, and at one point he held positions in five choirs: two in the Church, two in the high school, and the Community concert choir.

Brother Reid entered Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon, in the fall of 1961. The following year he transferred to Olympic College in Bremerton, where he rejoined many of his former high school classmates. One of these, Diane Kilker, had been a classmate literally since kindergarten, and by the following year – December 20, 1963, to be precise – Diane and Jimmy were married. Their union produced two children, Philip and Jessie. Dr. Philip Reid is a professor of Chemistry at the University of Washington, and Jessie Hann is a Registered Dietician with the Seventh-day Adventist Hospital in Portland. Jimmy and Diane have three granddaughters.

Brother Reid began his first career choice with the Department of the Navy at PSNS as a Sheetmetal Apprentice in 1964. This was his father’s trade, and he enjoyed the opportunity to work with his father in the shop. By 1968, however, his desire to complete his college work took hold, and Jimmy began the arduous discipline of working at night to support his growing family and attending the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma during the day. By 1970 he had completed his BA degree, and by 1974, his Masters in British Literature. About the same time he was selected for an internship in the Shipyard’s Industrial Relations Office as a Personnelist, a career path which he followed until his retirement in 1997. Brother Reid was to serve the Department of Defense’s Commissary Agency as Chief of Personnel Operations for personnel matters in Washington, Idaho, and Montana. He received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award from the Department of Defense at his retirement.

M:.W:. Reid’s Masonic career began in 1988 as the result of his daughter’s activities in the International Order of Rainbow for Girls. Brother Reid’s close friend from his church, W:. Bro. Chuck Compton, had served as Jessie’s Rainbow Dad during her first term as Worthy Advisor. Two
years later several Brethren, especially W.: Bro. Herb Farman, who worked closely with the Assembly, suggested to Brother Reid that being a member of the Fraternity would facilitate his involvement with Rainbow. He petitioned Steadfast Lodge, No.216, and was initiated, passed, and raised in the early and late spring of 1988. He served as Master of Steadfast for the first time in 1992-93; as Lodge Secretary from 1993 to 1996, and again as Master in 1998-99. In addition to his many honorary memberships, he also enjoys full membership in Port Orchard Lodge, No.98, and Walter F. Meier Lodge of Research, No.281, where he served as editor of the Lodge’s transactions.

M.: W.: Milt Benson gave Jimmy his first Grand Lodge appointment as Grand Historian. He also served M.: W.: George Jurgich as Grand Orator and M.: W.: Tom Ehlers and M.: W.: Carl Smith as Chairman of the Library and Museum Foundation Committee. He served as a Trustee to the Masonic Retirement Center continuously from 1997 through his term as Grand Master. Jimmy is also associated with the Bremerton Valley of the Scottish Rite, having been coroneted 33rd Degree, IGH, in October, 1991. He is a member of the Bremerton York Rite Bodies; the Royal Order of Scotland; Nile Shrine Temple; Tacobat Grotto of Tacoma; the Masonic Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis; the Scottish Rite Research Society; the Fort Lewis Chapter of the National Sojourners; the Meriwether Lewis Camp, Heroes of ’76; the Knight Masons; and Reliance Chapter No.70, OES. Grand Master Reid is the recipient of the Grand Cross of Color, IORG, and the DeMolay Legion of Honor. M.: W.: Reid is a member of the Masonic Renewal Committee of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America. In 2002-2003 he served as Vice Chairman of the Conference of Grand Masters. He is also serving on the Imperial Shrine/Masonic Liaison Committee for the Imperial Council of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America.

Brother Jimmy is a strong advocate of long range planning as a necessary element of the Fraternity’s success in the next several decades. Beginning in the spring of 2000, as Junior Grand Warden, he was instrumental in developing the LRP strategy for the jurisdiction that had begun with M.: W.: Bill R. Wood and then developed by Grand Masters Mecartea and Van Zee. Brother Jimmy attributes this process to the adoption of the Revised Washington Masonic Code, an initiative that surfaced in the LRP. Brother Jimmy will be remembered for his sense of Masonic history, particularly that of this Grand Jurisdiction, his talent as an orator, and for being the first Grand Master to appoint a Grand Piper, in honor of his Scottish heritage. Perhaps the most important quality that elevates effective leadership is its grasp of the power of vision, a sense that without a vision we may have a future, but it will not be of our own design. M.: W.: Reid encouraged us to share his vision and to make it come alive. We are indebted to his stewardship.

**Grand Master’s Message**

*(Given at the One Hundred Forty-Sixth Annual Communication, Tacoma Washington, June 2003)*

_To the officers and members of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington:*

_My Brethren,*

It is my pleasure and honor to welcome you all to the One Hundred Forty-sixth Annual Communication of our Grand Jurisdiction. We are all honored by the attendance of so many distinguished guests. For many of you, your presence represents a significant commitment of time,
energy, and other resources. I personally thank you for this gift to us, and I do look forward to hearing from you during the course of our Grand Communication.

We also extend a special greeting and welcome to the Masters and Wardens of our Lodges. Would you all please stand. Thank you, Brethren, especially, for committing yourselves to what are unquestionably the most important leadership roles in Freemasonry. Brethren, please assist me in welcoming them. And then to the rest of my Brethren who have joined us in this Grand Communication: your thoughts, words, and counsel will be most welcomed over the next few days. I look forward to celebrating this event with you, as much of what we will consider will require both thoughtful consideration and worthy advice.

STATE OF THE CRAFT

My theme for this year has been “Live The Vision.” The idea for this theme actually came from my wife, Diane. She thought it suited my peculiar sense of humor. She often reminded me that neurotics build castles in the air, but it takes a true psychotic to build a castle and then move in. Fortunately, the motto is also a paraphrase of the Grand Lodge motto, “Exitus Acta Probat,” let our actions prove our worth; perhaps said more correctly, our actions will fulfill our destiny. This motto is in some sense part of a sentence that began three years ago with M.: W.: Richard Mecartea who encouraged us “to Shape the Future.” “What future?” we asked. The future that we choose for ourselves, the future of our hopes and of our dreams. A future of purpose, not chance. But it must include a clear, achievable vision, based on a plan that could realize our expectations. M.: W.: Van Zee admonished us to focus on that plan, to lay each successive step and to work systematically to our destiny, a destiny of our own design, relying on pillars of progress supporting our goals. The vision itself came from our Brethren who realized the power of an idea. That vision remains our most important tool for success:

Freemasons in Washington will be recognized as a relevant and respected Fraternity, committed to attracting and retaining all men of high quality who strive for self-improvement and the opportunity to make a positive difference in their communities.

Many of you have been captured by the simple impact of that vision. It is making a difference in your Lodges and in Freemasonry. Numbers don’t tell the whole story, if in fact we even had some good numbers to work with. But we are getting closer. Maybe next year, we will have a better data system. In his report to Grand Lodge five years ago, M.: W.: Carl Smith quoted Mark Twain as saying, “If you torture the data long enough, it will tell you anything you want to hear.” Well, I admit a bias toward hearing about indicators that the state of the Craft is improving. And I’m not adverse to offering evidence that the planning model is working. Let’s look at some of the evidence:

1. For one thing, you had to be pretty good to make the top twenty Lodges this year, in any one of three categories, the number of Degrees conferred, the number of Master Masons raised and enrolled, or showing a net gain in membership.
   a. Your Lodge had to perform 15 or more Degrees to rank in the top 21. (The highest was Whidby Island No.15 with 33 Degrees). Of these, 9 have long range plans in place, 17 have a Master or Warden who has attended the Warden’s Seminar, all are using the New Candidate Education Program to some Degree, and 8 have a Master or Warden who has completed the Lodge Officer’s Proficiency Course.
   b. To be a Lodge in the top 20 for net gain, you had to have a growth or two or more. (Sequim Lodge had the highest net gain at 14). Of these Lodges, 7 have long range plans, 13 reported Masters or Wardens who attended the Warden’s Seminar, and 7 reported Masters or Wardens who had completed the Lodge Officers Proficiency. (As a side note,
the number of Degrees a Lodge performs does not always indicate positive growth. Less than half of the top Degree producers were also listed in the top 20 for net gains.)

c. 25 Lodges recorded increased membership of five or more by Degrees. This is a significant number. You can increase Lodge membership by affiliations, but affiliations do not increase the number of actual Masons. (The highest number of new Masons this year was recorded by Whidby Island No.15 at 11.) As before, virtually all are using the New Candidate Education Program, nearly half have long range plans, all but five have sent their Masters or Wardens to the Warden’s Seminar, and nearly half have officers who have completed the Lodge Officers Proficiency program.

2. Those Lodges that have placed in the top 10% in one of these principle categories are also in Districts that are performing well as a group. Those Districts that have a strong Lodge Officer’s Association are much more likely to have Lodges that are “10 percenters.”

3. Active Lodges also retain membership, and as we get smarter, retention will improve. This year we have enjoyed a 26% reduction in losses from NPDs and a 10% reduction in losses from Dimits. Overall, our net loss has slowed appreciably to between 2 and 3%!

4. As we improve our data base and data collection, this picture will sharpen considerably, and I believe, for the better. For now, it’s fair to say that the future is bright and the programs that we have relied on to prepare our Lodge leadership are having a positive and worthwhile effect. We have a right to be optimistic. There are many other factors at play. Many of our rural Lodges are also improving, if not at spectacular levels. But we now know that the plan works, and the vision is within our reach. The state of the Craft has improved, is improving, and will continue to improve so long as we stay the course. The issue is no longer is doubt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Two years ago, M: W: Van Zee authorized the Code Commission to review the Washington Masonic Code to reorganize it, to correct errors in spelling and punctuation, and to improve text that was either unclear or difficult to apply. This task has been completed and the Code Commission, in conjunction with the Jurisprudence Committee, has recommended the adoption of the new Washington Masonic Code. I commend both the Chairman of the Code Commission, M: W: Bill R. Wood, and the Chairman of the Jurisprudence Committee, M: W: Carl Smith, for their efforts in support of the new Code, and I recommend to you its adoption. The passage of Resolution 2003-11 will implement this recommendation.

2. During its review of the Code, the Code Commission identified several recommended changes which were “housekeeping” in nature but which required legislation to correct. These are in two categories: legislation to amend the Constitution, and legislation to amend the By-Laws. My second recommendation is be to amend Section 3.05 Const. You will find this legislation listed under Resolution 2003-12, Clarification Resolution Part A in your Resolutions Pamphlet.

3. In the same vein, I recommend passage of those Resolutions intended to amend the By-Laws of Washington Masonic Code as a package, as described under Resolution 2003-13, Clarification Resolution Part B, in your Resolutions Pamphlet.

4. During the 145th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge removed the forms being used in our Jurisdiction from the Code itself, to permit the Grand Secretary greater latitude in developing forms that are more responsive to our needs and that anticipate electronic data capture as a standard in our Jurisdiction. Many of the forms thus removed from the Code contained elements of Masonic law; these elements should be retained. I therefore recommend
that Sect. 22.07 B.L. be amended to restore those elements of Masonic Law affecting Title Holding Corporations to the Code. This amendment is reflected in Resolution 2003-14.

5. The removal of the forms last year also deleted certain requirements for the disposition of the investigating committee’s report to the Lodge. I recommend that these requirements be restored to the Code, as proposed by amendment of Sec. 20.01 B.L. WMC described in Resolution 2003-15.

6. In like manner, the forms for petition for both Plural Membership and for Affiliation came under review. The Code Commission found that while petitioners for Plural Membership were required by that form to submit letters of good standing from all Lodges of membership, the Petition for Affiliation had no such requirement, being an older form. I recommend therefore that Sec. 18.04 B.L. be amended to assure that all petitioners for Affiliation provide either dimits or statements of good standing from all Lodges of which they are members. This recommendation would be implemented by Resolution 2003-16.

7. I recommend that the registration fee for Grand Lodge be raised from $10 to $20 per delegate. The Grand Secretary has been aware for some time that the administrative costs associated with the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge far exceeded the nominal registration fee now required. Resolution 2003-17 would help alleviate that deficit.

8. When I was growing up, I tried to convince my Dad that he should buy the best possible locking system to protect my new bike. I loved that bike so much that I thought spending two or three times its value on a lock made sense. Dad, on the other hand, was more practical. He said, “We’ll get you a lock, Jimmy, but remember that locks are for honest men.” During M.: W.: Bill R. Wood’s Grand Lodge Communication, the Jurisdiction approved the development and distribution of electronic versions of the Master’s Lectures of each of the three Degrees. In less than four years, the technology envisioned for that project has been overtaken by advances in format that are both more cost effective to produce and require much less expensive equipment to show. Most of us now have DVD equipment, and while producing either CD or DVD versions of the lectures require similar technologies, our ability to prevent copying of either version is no longer practical. We can make copying more difficult, but we cannot prevent it without exorbitant expense. I therefore recommend the adoption of language in the Code that assures a reasonable effort at preventing copying, efforts that are cost effective in terms of the project and rely on available and inexpensive technology to use. Resolution 2003-18 amending Sect. 8.04 B.L. has this intent.

9. Both the Code Commission and the Jurisprudence Committee have suggested that more time is needed to fully review and prepare legislation submitted for consideration at our Annual Communications. They have suggested that Sec. 12.07 B.L. WMC be amended to move the deadline date for proposed legislation from January 1st to December 1st. I agree, and recommend adoption of the legislation as proposed under Resolution 2003-19.

10. Recent events in several areas of the Jurisdiction have surfaced what appear to be inconsistencies in the use of Grand Lodge guidelines affecting Masonic Temple Associations legal documents. Many Lodges have not kept pace with changes in the Code, have allowed their articles of incorporation to lapse, or perhaps have no corporation at all. Others are relying are corporate documents that should be reviewed in light of Code requirements and current legal practice. As a matter of due diligence, our legal counsel, Davis, Wright, Tremaine, has recommended the Grand Lodge establish a commission to provide counsel over the next several years to our Lodges and to other Masonic Temple Associations to assure that articles
of incorporation and by-laws accomplish what the Craft intends and address liability concerns. I agree with this suggestion, and offer it as a recommendation to my successors.

APPRECIATION

Brethren, you have truly made extraordinary progress this past year. I attribute this primarily to my predecessors, now Past Grand Masters who have watched many of their programs blossom into the Pillars of a new Masonic culture. We have redefined leadership’s most essential trait as the ability to empower others. It has often been said that an effective manager can measure his success by the quality of those he has prepared to replace him. If that is so, then I am extraordinarily successful. I commend to you, and to your future, the Deputy Grand Master, Senior Grand Warden, Junior Grand Warden, and Grand Secretary. These Brethren have each sought to better the Craft and themselves in preparation. If there are those who are reluctant to move to the sidelines, do not count me among them. I submit that although our numbers have fallen slightly, the number of Brethren who have risen to leadership has expanded three or four fold. I thank all of you have served with me this year: the officers, the Committeemen, the Deputies of the Grand Master, and, yes, the Masters and Wardens who listened and said, “You’re nuts, Jimmy, but we’ll give it a try.” I expected no less, and you did not disappoint. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for loving this great Fraternity even more than I can or ever will.

Brethren, I would also commend to you especially the Grand Secretary, R. W. David Owen. The Brethren of this Jurisdiction may never know just how fortunate I have been to have had this worthy Brother at my side. This Jurisdiction has had its difficulties this year. Issues that began last Spring, first in Vancouver and then Wenatchee, have yet to resolve themselves. David has been the Masonic Warrior through it all, as he will continue to be. If I had any doubts that God works His will in the placing the right people in the right place at the right time, David has removed them all. Thank you, my Brother.

Our Jurisdiction suffered a grievous loss this past year with the passing of M. W. Tom Ehlers. I have asked his good friend, M. W. Bob Van Zee to offer his eulogy later in our Communication. It is sufficient to say at this point that I had hoped that Tom would retain his health long enough to serve my ends. My motives were both unworthy of Tom and of the terrible price he was paying in our service. Further, I had not anticipated to true quality of his successor, M. W. Carl Smith. As Chairman of the Jurisprudence Committee, Brother Carl has already distinguished himself in his support of the objectives of the Long Range Plan and in his splendid advice for patience to a sometimes very demanding Grand Master. No matter the depth of the hole I would dig for myself, I could always find a hand reaching to me from the light above, offering the best that he had, to find in me the best that I had. Brethren, you are well-served by such men as these. Seek them out. Rely on their counsel. Thank you, Carl and your Committee for your work.

To the Code Commission, and to its Chair M. W. Bill R. Wood: Most of us were pretty sure that we would not be able to afford the office expenses associated with preparing our new Code. I, for one, was convinced that Brother Bill’s reimbursement requests for Crayons would by themselves break the bank. Not so. The Commission took every advantage of modern technology, fought a few battles with their Grand Masters (both of us!), and produced a Code that has quieted even the most skeptical. I am reluctant to single out individual accomplishments for this Commission. It has excelled as a team. At the same time, everyone on the Commission without exception identifies M. W. Matt Martin as the member who “made it happen.” Brother Matt’s attention to detail, his focus on excellence, and his unflagging enthusiasm for the task has made the difference from start to finish. I look forward to the day that this project is called “the Martin Code” in honor of its most diligent architect. M. W. Wood has also been my man “on the ground” in North Central Washington, encouraging my patience and restraint. Like Brother Carl, Bill has indeed proved his
stature as much as a Past Grand Master as he did as a presiding officer. M.: W.: Wood, you are indeed “il meglio fabro,” the better Craftsman, and I thank you.

Finally, Brethren, I wish to publicly thank my family, especially Diane, “The Mouse in His Pocket.” I have always believed that many of the best Masons in our Jurisdiction will never wear an apron, never kneel at our altar, never receive the honors of our Craft. And yet, they are at the best of times and the worst of times the heart and soul of Freemasonry. My son Philip and my daughter Jessie and their families have all rallied around the family tartan without hesitation, often in blissful ignorance of my office or its meaning. No matter; Grandma assured them it was important to me and to my Brethren, and that was enough for all. I can not find words to thank her, Brethren. There are no words to do justice to such a task. Thank her for me, and remind her how much I love my “better 80%.”

And now I return to the quarries from whence I came, to set before me the essential tasks of a Mason: to learn, to subdue my passions, and to improve myself in a world that does not always appreciate redemption, mine or its own. There is a time for all of us to work out the dreams we have for ourselves through simple labor, to live the vision that would capture my attention, as it has for the past several years. That time of labor has now come to me. My Dad gardened. He was planning for the next spring when he was taken by cancer several years ago. The French writer and Freemason, Voltaire, understood that wisdom and captured its spirit in his novel Candide. Candide, under the influence of his friend and mentor Pangloss had confronted the horrors of the 18th Century with energy and conviction. Candide fought injustice, persecution, bigotry, sexism, religious intolerance – all the enemies of an enlightened age. At the end, however, he resisted involvement in yet another campaign to right the wrongs of the world. He simply asserted that although the struggle for truth and justice is important, “il faut cultivate nos jardins,” we need to tend to our own gardens. Dad would understand that. Indeed our future is in the quarries, the gardens, of our Fraternity. I thank you for the honor of serving as your Grand Master, for indeed it has been an honor that exceeds my highest expectations. And now, “if faut cultiver mon jardin.” I’ve got this great plan for the next four or five years. I’m reshaping the whole yard. I’ve laid out the steps. It’s all coming into focus, and I am ready to live that vision. Don’t hesitate to join me. Don’t hesitate at all. For you see, I am convinced that Freemasons in Washington will be recognized as a relevant and respected Fraternity. . . .

Respectfully submitted,

James N. Reid, Jr.
Grand Master
Postscript / personal remarks from M.W.B James N. Reid Jr., August x, 2012: * *

This Biographical Sketch is hyperlink to our Grand Lodge Library and Museum website for the year 2002-2003:

http://mwglofwa.phanfare.com/Past-Grand-Masters/5340332

* See M.W. James N. Reid’s video interview, available at our Grand Lodge web site: http://www.freemason-wa.org/
☆ A digital voice recording of the full interview is available. Contact: V.W. Bud Cook, email: shaneiii1@msn.com

M.W. James N. Reid Jr.
140th Grand Master of Washington
2002 - 2003
Grand Lodge Officers
For the year June 14, 2002 to June 12, 2003

Grand Master .................... M:.W:. James N. Reid, Jr. (98-216)
Deputy Grand Master ............ R:.W:. John D. McNab (98)
Senior Grand Warden ......... R:.W:. Satoru Tashiro (258)
Junior Grand Warden .......... R:.W:. Alvin W. Jorgensen (60-313)
Grand Secretary ................. R:.W:. David P. Owen (18)
Grand Chaplain ................. R:.W:. John D. Keliher (290)
Grand Lecturer .................. V:.W:. Michael L. Sanders (4-32-273)
Grand Orator .................... W:. Joseph W. MacIntyre (288-311)
Grand Historian .................. W:. Kurt G. Kimberling (34)
Grand Marshall ................. V:.W:. Brian N. Gross (98)
Senior Grand Deacon .......... W:. Keven M. Davis (83)
Junior Grand Deacon .......... W:. Karl D. Hill (134)
Grand Standard Bearer ......... W:. Kenneth V. Lane Jr. (9)
Grand Sword Bearer ............. W:. John C. Booth (191)
Grand Bible Bearer ............. W:. Gordon W. Sumner (11-216)
Senior Grand Steward .......... W:. Jerry M. Fugich (68)
Junior Grand Steward .......... W:. Michael R. Pursey (206)
Grand Organist .................. V:.W:. John R. Sleeth (56-36)
Grand Tyler ....................... V:.W:. Marshall C. Miller (167)
Assistant Grand Secretary .... V:.W:. Karl S. Reith (235)