



Pennsylvania Crusader

Since 1948

GRAND COMMANDERY OF PENNSYLVANIA
pagrandcommandery.org

S.K. Harry J. Smith, Grand Commander
smithhjktpa@gmail.com

Editor: SK Mark G. Mattern, PGC email: grandrecgcktpa@gmail.com



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My Fellow Fraters,

Growing up in southwestern Pennsylvania, I had somewhat of a sheltered life when it came to music. I started exploring and expanding my musical tastes in high school and college. My first 45 was Steely Dan's "Rikki Don't Lose That Number" and my first LP was the Eagles' "Hotel California". I followed that up with KISS—Destroyer. The look on my mother's face when I brought that album home was of sheer terror, thinking I'd joined a cult (I didn't do that any better when I painted my face up with her ceramic paints like Ace Frehley!).

In college, at the-time California State College, my musical library began to expand as I met up with fellow classmates from across the state and country. I got into more of Steely Dan, Yes, The Rolling Stones, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin to name a few. My musical tastes weren't limited to rock—I liked David Sanborn, Jeff Beck, Chuck Corea, Spyro Gyra, and other jazz musicians. The music I listened to reflected my moods—certain songs made me feel happy; others made me somber and reflective, and others well, made you feel and act ornery!

Fast forward ahead to the last two years. The musicians that reflected my moods and expended my musical knowledge began to pass away. Charlie Watts, drummer for the Rolling Stones; Christine McVie of Fleetwood Mac; Jeff Back, Jazz/Rock Guitarist virtuoso and a couple of weeks ago the Troubadour of the 60's—Mr. David Crosby—passed away. David Crosby's work, whether with The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, Crosby, Stills & Nash (and sometimes Neil Young) transcended decades. The melodies and word written were deep and meaningful. I began to reflect on my own mortality as my generational influences were dying off one by one. Doing some soul searching I asked myself; Will I look up and look down, reaching my hand into the water? Will I pull someone from the sea? Paraphrasing David Crosby's song "Radio", will we stop, listen and assist someone (or some animal) less fortunate? We took on the mantle of Christ's Soldiers at the foot of the Altar, pledging to Feed the Hungry, Clothe the Naked and Bind Up the Wounds of the Afflicted. Are we doing what we obligated ourselves to do, or are we hopeful that someone else will do it? Are we "Being All We Can Be", or turning a deaf ear to the cries of a hopeless individual, and abused animal hoping if we ignore it, it'll go away?

Cherish each morning, Sir Knights! When you open your eyes in the morning, sit up and say, "Yes! I have another chance to make a difference!" God has given me another day!
What will you do with your next chance from God? Make the most of the time you have on this world, My Fellow Fraters, for we know not the hour or day when we will be called home.
When we all work together, great things are possible.

Courteously,
Sir Knight Harry Jude Smith, Grand Commander

Grand Prelate's Address

The Right Eminent Grand Commander gives me access to his message each month that I might try to incorporate the same theme. I was mesmerized by his message this month. If you are on Facebook, one of the questions that keeps being posed is "What song or songs do you want played at your funeral?" I have picked mine and notified my family as to what they should be but Brother Harry reminded me why we pick the music in the first place. As I got to reflecting, I realized that the reason it is so important is that it reminds us of the sacred vow we first take in Freemasonry, "In whom do you put your trust?" We all should remember the answer, I hope. The other lesson we learn in Lodge is that all of us are equals to each other.

We are all human beings? If you ask that question of the average person, he or she might stumble around a bit and then say something like: "Well, man is the only creature who thinks rationally"; "Man has a higher intelligence than any other beast upon the earth"; "Man has the ability to build and plan and make things", or "Man has the ability to discover the secrets of the universe about him." The simple fact is that there is not one of these answers that is definitive because there is not one of these answers that is not duplicated in one or many more of the other living creatures upon earth. Literally, there is only one thing that makes us human beings - that we are created in the Imago Dei, the image of God. That means simply that we have the ability to communicate with God. We are on the same wavelength, as it were, with Him. The Greeks, who always had a word for it, named man Anthropos. The root meaning of that Greek word is "the up-looker." In other words, the distinguishing and only exclusive characteristic of man is that he worships. Wherever anthropologists or archaeologists have found the remains of ancient man, they have found evidence that he worshipped. The thing that makes us human is the fact that we are possessed of an inborn sense of responsibility to what Rudolph Otto has called "The Other." Thus, the impulse that sets us apart from all other living creatures upon earth is our inevitable and universal impulse to worship "The Other!" You and I have proclaimed that we are worshippers.

Music is one of the means of worship as it takes the focus off us and places it where it should be. Whatever the type, whoever the artist or how ever played it reminds us as our REGC reminds us that is not about us. We are obligated to "Look Up".

In worship, we begin where we must begin - with God. Worship is primarily an act of God. It has its source in him, in his redeeming work in historical acts that he has accomplished for his purposes, and, secondarily and only secondarily, it is man's act in response to the actions of God. And so, our Christian worship is always centered in Christ, because Christ is God's chief revelation of himself to us. In Christ, he has accomplished our redemption. Through Christ, he reconciles us to himself, so that we even have a right to stand in his presence and worship. We come, not as a crowd of individuals each seeking to answer his own needs, we come as a community bound together in a common faith and a common love, a common need for the love and grace of God.

By the way, the last piece of music I hope to have played on my way to eternity, is "What a Wonderful World." I hope it is played because You and I have made it so!

Sir Knight and Reverend Preston A Van Dursen, Grand Prelate