

The Clatskanie Chief

Rainier Masonic Lodge rededicated for 150th anniversary

Jul 31, 2015 Cody Mann



Rainier Masonic Lodge No. 24 was originally chartered in 1858. Photo by Tomey Greer.

Rainier Masonic Lodge No. 24 Ancient Free & Accepted Masons recently commemorated their 150th anniversary with a ceremony that included a new plaque dedication. The plaque notes their 1858 charter date along with the date of the rededication.

The ceremony began with an explanation of the purpose of masonry. Most Worshipful Grand Master Don Stapleton from the Grand Lodge of Oregon spoke about the history of the organization being tied closely to the history of mankind.

“Freemasons were builders not just of material things, but also of character and morality,” Stapleton said. “The purpose of masonry is self-improvement – not in the material sense – but in the intellectual, moral and philosophical improvement of the individual.”

Stapleton described freemasonry as a foundational element of society, paving the way for freedom of speech, and resisting suppression of free thought and enslavement of the mind. He also mentioned science and nature as important aspects of masonic history.

The grand master emphasized the value of being virtuous and the pursuit of knowledge as core principles of the organization. Temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice are the cardinal virtues of freemasonry.

Stapleton introduced the plaque and called for the assistance of the officers and brethren of the lodge in conducting the dedication. After a prayer from the Grand Chaplain, the Deputy Grand Master, Senior and Junior Grand Wardens took up their elements of office.

The elements of office are the square, the level and the plum. Each has both moral and technical applications. One at a time, the officers examined the plaque while explaining the underlying meaning of their respective tools.

The square teaches masons to measure their actions by a standard of virtues. The level teaches masons equality. The plum teaches rectitude of life and conduct. All are used to prove the accuracy of a mason's work. The officers found the plaque to be satisfactory under examination.

The elements of Masonic consecration – corn, wine and oil – were presented as the ceremony proceeded. Corn is emblematic of nourishment, wine of refreshment, and oil of joy and gladness.

Rainier Mayor and Masonic Lodge member Jerry Cole spoke during the ceremony. He said, "Congratulations on 150 years. It's a huge milestone for Rainier and masonry. I'm proud to be part of the 150-year history and anniversary of the lodge, and foremost I'm proud to be a mason and a member of Rainier Lodge No. 24."

Cole noted a number of historical items to give a frame of reference to the age of the lodge. The era of the original charter included an American flag with only 32 stars, the first edition of Alice in Wonderland, the founding of the New York Stock Exchange, and the Civil War.

"We wouldn't be at this 150-year mark without all the dedicated Rainier Lodge No. 24 members that preceded us," Cole said. "Take a moment to remember our brothers that are with God now, and also take a moment to pat yourself on the back for keeping Rainier Lodge No. 24 alive because it doesn't happen by itself."

Grand Orator Thomas D. Pierce spoke after Cole. Pierce said, "150 years in the life of any institution is significant, but for a Masonic Lodge it is remarkable." He said the Rainer Masonic Lodge had a century and a half of history successfully making good men into better men.

Pierce described the history of the lodge and its establishment while Oregon was still a territory. "When the lodge was young, Oregon was young, and wet with the morning dew of possibility," Pierce said. "Rainier was an vibrant part of the territory when Oregon achieved statehood in 1859, and as Oregon matured, so did Rainier."

He said the waters of the Columbia had nourished both the town and the lodge. Rainier was a place where masons mixed their mortar with water to prepare for building. The masons are therefore inextricably bonded to the area, according to Pierce.

He spoke about the isolation and remoteness of the area and how that had inspired independence and a spirit of community reliance. “It was remarked by a resident of the era that by 1895, the Rainier Masonic Lodge was the finest in Oregon, finished elegant style and at great cost,” Pierce said.

Pierce said the character of the members, who worked diligently in prosperous and challenging times, had defined the strength of the Rainier lodge.

“The past 150 years have been marked by diligent and humble work, during which the Rainier lodge has embraced those timeless Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief and truth,” he said.

The Grand Orator concluded with a quote from Leonardo Da Vinci. “In rivers, the water that you touch is last of what is passed and first of that which comes; so with present time.”



The lodge was packed full to celebrate the 150th anniversary. Photo by Tomey Greer.



Grand Master Don Stapleton, Deputy Grand Master Arthur Borland, Senior Grand Warden Myles McMillan and Junior Grand Warden James Morgan. Photo by Tomey Greer.

https://www.thechiefnews.com/news/rainier-masonic-lodge-rededicated-for-150th-anniversary/article_660e35c8-37dd-11e5-a4b6-438e26217588.html