

Agapé

From the Grand Master

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

As you can tell, there have been some changes here at *Agapé*. After five years of dedicated service as Contributing Editor and Production Editors, Soror Baphemetis Continuity, and Frater Hunahpu and Soror Ixel Balamke, have stepped down due to expanding responsibilities elsewhere. Brother John Crow has assumed the duties of editor. Layout will be performed by Sister Amanda C. Fisher, with assistance from Frater Ash.

Many thanks to Soror Baphemetis Continuity, Soror Ixel Balamke, and Frater Hunahpu, for a job exceptionally well done!

With this issue, *Agapé* is expanding its format from 4 pages to 8 pages, and is being distributed to all O.T.O. members within the United States rather than to local bodies only. Beginning next year, it will be returning to its original quarterly schedule. There will be plenty of room for new submissions. We will be expecting regular reports from all U.S. local bodies and governing bodies.

Spring Meetings Report

A number of important developments took place at the Spring meetings of the Areopagus and Supreme Grand Council this year. Here are some highlights:

1. The Areopagus has approved bylaws for the U.S. Electoral College and U.S. Grand Tribunal, and template bylaws for U.S. Lodges.

2. The Areopagus has abolished Associate Membership as a class of O.T.O. membership, and has replaced it with a non-membership program called "Corresponding Association." The new program will work essentially the same way as Associate Membership did, except that it won't be called "membership." In lieu of dues, Corresponding Associates will sustain their association with O.T.O. by paying an "annual contribution," which can be waived in cases of financial hardship.

3. Emma Hardinge Britten was inducted into the Order of the Eagle, on the strength of Bro. Allen Greenfield's essay. I've posted Bro. Greenfield's essay on my website here: www.hermetic.com/sabazius/britten.htm. For those of you unfamiliar with the Order of the Lion and Order of the Eagle (USGL's program

of historical honors), please refer to *Agapé* V.1 No.3. Back issues of *Agapé* are available on-line here: www.oto-usa.org/docs.html. A list of inductees to date and a collection of essays about them may be found here: www.hermetic.com/sabazius/lion_eagle.html.

Other News

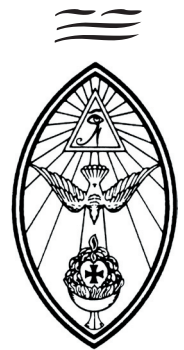
The U.S. Grand Lodge website has been completely redesigned, and has been transferred to a new domain name. See www.oto-usa.org.

The Executive has appointed Sister Anita Kraft, Bishop T Anna Rose, to the position of E.G.C. Secretary for U.S. Grand Lodge. As such, she will be serving as an assistant to the Grand Secretary General and to the International E.G.C. Secretary. Sister Anita has been a member of the Order for ten years, and has a distinguished history of service as a priestess and bishop of E.G.C. She is a member of Onnophris Oasis in Indianapolis, Indiana, a Sovereign Grand Inspector General, a past master and chartered initiator.

As U.S. E.G.C. Secretary, Sister Anita will be developing and maintaining a database of recorded E.G.C. ordinations, baptisms and confirmations in the U.S., and will be responsible for providing data, information, documents and guidance regarding E.G.C. operations, policies and procedures to the E.G.C. clergy and laity, as appropriate. All reports of ordinations, baptisms and confirmations within the U.S. should henceforth be sent by email to: egc@oto-usa.org or by mail to: E.G.C. Secretary, P.O. Box 182, Carmel, IN 46082-0182.

Love is the law, love under will.
Sabazius

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IVXI E.N.



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From the Electoral College

Dear Sisters and Brothers,
Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The Electoral College held its meeting for Spring 2003 E.V. in Austin, Texas, hosted by the members of Scarlet Woman Lodge. On behalf of the Electoral College, I would like to thank the members of Scarlet Woman Lodge for their warm hospitality and wonderful provision of accommodations and transportation. We extend special thanks to the local membership for making this event very enjoyable for both the E.C. and many other out of town visitors.

The following actions concerning local bodies were taken by the College at this meeting:

Change of Master

Confirmed: Soror Magdalena (Sr. Cindy Weinstein) as Master of LVX Oasis (Los Angeles, CA).

Transfer of Mastership of Laughing Serpent Camp (Bayonne, NJ), from Fr. V.I.A. (Bro. John Patrick Hanley) to Fr. Clavis (Bro. Daniel James Hanley).

The College wishes to express its appreciation to the past and present Masters of each of these bodies. We wish you all the best in your new offices and endeavors.

A Note From the President

I would like to invite any initiate with suggestions as to how we can do our job better, or who has a specific concern that they feel should be brought

to the College's attention, to write to either the President of the College (ec_president@oto-usa.org) or the Secretary (electoral_college@oto-usa.org) at any time.

It is my goal as President of the Electoral College to strive to take effective measures bringing about better communication between the E.C. and the membership of local bodies. Any input provided to this end is warmly welcomed and I believe that communication as such is of benefit to the entire Order in our mutual goals and aspiration toward enlightenment in all forms.

Love is the law, love under will.

Douglas James Blake
President, Electoral College
O.T.O. U.S.A.

Peter Davidson: Occultist

By T Allen Greenfield

The Mysteries are as old as the world itself, and anyone who is well informed in the esoteric mythologies of various peoples, can trace them back to the very earliest ages, for underlying every ancient popular religion was the same primeval Hermetic Wisdom, one and identical, known and practiced by the Initiates of all countries.

—Peter Davidson, August, 1901 E.V.

Authentically occult societies still exist, possessing the integral tradition; I call for witness one of the wisest of Western adepts, my Practical Master, Peter Davidson.

—Dr. Gerard Encausse "Papus," 1891 E.V.

Dr. Peter Davidson (1837-1915) was a native of Forres, Scotland, a stone's throw from what was destined to become the much-discussed magical community of Findhorn in the 20th Century. He was in his life many things; a homeopathic physician and herbalist, a classical accomplished musician and author of a very successful book on the history of the violin, and subsequently a publisher. But his most outstanding contribution was to the world of occultism and occultist studies.

Indeed, there is some prima facie evidence that the sexual gnosis so central to the teachings of the O.T.O. may have been transmitted through Dr. Davidson, perhaps through his close and lengthy association with Dr. Encausse. In specific, Davidson had long and profound association with Hargrave Jennings¹ and with Max Theon², both seminal thinkers in the magical arena, and was a major influence upon Dr. Encausse, who, in

turn, is closely associated with Dr. Reuss and the early years of O.T.O. history.

Exactly when and how Davidson became interested in occultism remains a minor mystery, but it appears to have begun relatively early in his life. Indeed, articles from various journals by Davidson survive among family members which date from the 1870s and already at that time evinces a rather sophisticated knowledge of things metaphysical. In an 1877 piece entitled *Astro-Theosophical Fragments*, Davidson opines that "In olden times it was the ambition of the well-minded to be able to communicate with the Planetary and Tutelary Angels, and for this very purpose rituals were constructed..."³ In *The Signs of the Zodiac*, written the following year⁴ we find him liberally peppering an essay on astrology with references to Gnosticism, Kaballah, and the kind of "esoteric anthropology" one might associate with Gerald Massey (and later, Aleister Crowley). He tells his

readers that "the letters of all languages are very significant symbols which have the original Ten signs of the Zodiac for their origin...The letters S S and Z Z have always been interchangeable, and if we find the S S on Talismans, and other signs denoting evil or serpentine influences, upon others we find the double S S on the Sacramental or Communion Cups of the Church, indicating the presence of the Holy Ghost, or Pure Wisdom." Throughout his writing and teaching career, Peter Davidson would make it his business to take more or less standard conventional Christian religious terminology, and interpret it in a Gnostic and esoteric fashion.

This was never more true than in his observations nearly twenty years later in *Hidden Mysteries Unveiled*. He wrote that "The Male Principle was always symbolised in the Sacred Science of the Temple by the letter I...Upon a crowd of Egyptian monuments we see a crowned woman...symbolized by the oval, or letter O...The union of the two Principles was the Cross, the symbol of the Christian redemption, the X or IO, the union of the I and O, which embraced all other figures...In Egypt, at the moment of final and supreme Initiation, the Candidate was extended upon a Tau—T, the Ansated Cross..."⁵

But, this had been a busy twenty years indeed for Peter Davidson. At some point in the 1870s he had been recruited into the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, so closely associated earlier with such

comparatively mysterious figures as the Polish Max Theon and the Egyptian Coptic teacher of Madame Blavatsky, Paulos Metamon. He may have been recruited by Max Theon who, in his turn, may have been tapped by none other than the great lion of 19th Century occultism, Dr. P.B. Randolph. Certainly, the decision to find a neophyte of the HB-of-L in Great Britain was made, according to Davidson, in 1870, the same year that Randolph took his similarly organized Brotherhood of Eulis into public in America. The subsequent history of the HB-of-L under Theon and Davidson drew heavily upon the secret sexual gnosis taught by Randolph. However this may be, as Godwin, Chanel & Deveney have it⁶ "...the primary result of the Order was to introduce occultists to the practical methods of P.B. Randolph." This phase of development begins by the late 1870s, and overlaps with the founding of the O.T.O.

With Theon as Grand Master of the Exterior Circle, and Davidson as Grand Master of the Scottish Branch, after a false start or two, Peter Davidson began his veritable public career as an occultist in February of 1885 with publication of the first issue of *The Occult Magazine*. Billing itself as "a monthly journal of psychical and philosophical research" with an ever-present quote from Shelley on the masthead, "A Chronicle of Strange, and Secret, and Forgotten Things," the journal contained bits and pieces on P.B. Randolph, Max Theon, John Yarker, Emma Britten, the legend of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, mysterious secret chiefs, the Kaballah, Rosicrucianism, and metaphysical miscellany.

The following year the magazine, still under Davidson's editorship, began to promote a proposed utopian community, which eventually settled upon the now "lost" community of Loudsville, White County, Georgia, U.S.A. as its designated location. Davidson relocated his family to this rustic area, but continued to publish *The Occult Magazine* through his publisher in Glasgow until the end of 1886. Thereafter, Davidson acquired a gasoline-pulled printing press and began publishing under the name *The Morning Star*, always with the same quotation from Shelley from *The Occult Magazine*, and always with a publisher's representative in Britain.

The colony itself centered on Davidson and his (considerable) family, and Davidson became something of a

local celebrity. Such few historians as have given the matter attention seem to consider the colony a failure, but the author of the present essay found an ongoing impact in the area, even a hundred years later. Family members provided much information on Davidson's life, and members of the Davidson family continued to practice some of the HB-of-L's alternative healing techniques as late as the 1930s. One descendent we met with was operating an organic grocery and alternative health operation in Atlanta as late as the beginning of the 21st Century. Other relatives told us of tree grafting experiments performed successfully by Peter Davidson which were still producing exotic fruit in the 1990s. The journal of the *Clan Davidson Society* produced an article on Peter Davidson in 1993, and the White County Board of Commissioners readily provided us with a biography of their celebrated pioneer father, referring to him as "a writer, translator and philosopher."

The HB-of-L publication directly gave rise to the local newspaper, *The Cleveland Courier*, in 1897, which continued in print under Davidson family members until recent years. Davidson's emphasis in the magazine and various monographs such as the *Mountain Musings* series continued to be initiation and metaphysics. For many years Davidson continued his close association with Dr. Encausse and his Martinist Order, and the relationship with Theon became that of his American Representative, with *The Morning Star* increasingly devoted to Theon's "Cosmic Philosophy." Theon had relocated to Algeria (then an integral Department of France), and sketches of the Theon and Davidson utopian homesteads half a world apart show remarkable similarities. The association continued until a family tragedy put an end to Theon's active work, and even beyond, almost to the time of Peter Davidson's death, in 1915.

It has been rumored that Davidson's family made a bonfire of his papers after his death, but the present writer not only has found no evidence of this, but, to the contrary, found his descendants to have many letters, articles, copies of journals and related items. The last editor of *The Cleveland Courier*, still being published on the same hand-set press that produced *Mountain Musings*, *The Morning Star* and other metaphysical works, apparently has kept much material from that time under protective lock and key. Even the present

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owners of the former Davidson home show an almost reverential regard for the former legendary resident.

What may matter most is the link in the continuity of ideas from P.B. Randolph, through Peter Davidson and Papus, which somehow found its way into the core praxis and metaphysics of the O.T.O. from its earliest days down to the present time. While other organizations have some claim to various aspects of the HB-of-L legacy, the O.T.O., and the O.T.O. alone, can claim its inner core teachings as central to its present work. Seen in this light, Peter Davidson may be seen as one of the outstanding links in the chain of occult tradition so very suited to the present Aeon.

Further Reading

Contemporary Books: *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* by J. Godwin, C. Chanel & J. Deveney (Weiser, 1995). *The Story of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light* by T Allen Greenfield (Looking Glass, 1997). **Published Works of P.B. Randolph:** *Eulis*, 1873 —The best general introduction to his central teachings. *Seership*, Edition of 1930 —Early editions of this book became basic teachings of the HB-of-L under Dr. Peter Davidson. **Papers:** *The Mysteries of Eulis* by P.B. Randolph —a secret teaching of the HB-of-L and Brotherhood of Eulis. *The Ansairitic Mystery: A New Revelation Concerning Sex* by P.B. Randolph —a secret teaching of the HB-of-L and Brotherhood of Eulis. **Magazines & Monographs:** *Cosmic Publications Handbooks*, No. VII. by Max Theon, (Peter Davidson, Monograph, issue of *The Morning Star* 1909). *The Morning Star* by Peter Davidson Editor, Volume X. No. 4, August, 1901. *Mountain Musings*, No III by Peter Davidson (Monograph, 1897). *The Occult Magazine*, Peter Davidson, Editor, 1885-86

The author wishes to mention the many, private and frequently unpublished papers, diagrams, etc. generously furnished to us by various living members of the Davidson family in Atlanta and Cleveland, GA. We wish also to gratefully note the assistance of Brother James Baker in our field research in and around the "lost colony" of Loudsville, GA.

Footnotes

¹ A letter from Jennings to Davidson dated 11 January 1884 is extant in possession of James Peter Davidson, a great grandson. In it Jennings refers to their long cordial association, invites Davidson to visit him when in London, and goes on to discuss his then-current work on phalicism, initiation, Rosicrucianism and Gnosticism.

² Davidson, from about 1870, had a life-long association with the mysterious Polish-born sage of the "wholly Tantric" doctrine known as "The Cosmic Philosophy," and was eventually to be the exclusive publisher in the United States of the latter work.

³ 17 July, 1877

⁴ 29 July, 1878

⁵ *Hidden Mysteries Unveiled*, 1895

⁶ *The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor* (Weiser, 1995) p. 61

A New Edition of Liber Legis

U.S. Grand Lodge O.T.O. is proud to announce the publication of *Liber AL vel Legis*, *The Book of the Law*, in a new hard cover presentation format. The new edition is exclusively for O.T.O. members and has been designed with the O.T.O. initiations in mind.

The new edition measures 4 1/4" wide, 5 9/16" long. It has a red faux leather cover with gold foil stamps on the front and spine, a front presentation page, and space in the back for noting one's advancement in the M.M.M. and E.G.C. In addition, it contains the best scans of the *Liber AL* manuscript available. Each copy is only \$5.00 plus shipping.

For information about how to order copies please contact your local body master or the U.S. Grand Secretary General. Those outside of U.S. Grand Lodge O.T.O., please contact the International O.T.O. Treasurer General or International O.T.O. Secretary General for ordering information.

In Memoriam

Anthony Martinez

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.



“Tony” Martinez, also known as Frater Agapito, celebrated his Greater Feast on March 6, 2003 E.v. He was an enthusiastic member of Scarlet Woman Lodge and well-loved in the greater pagan community. His passing brings great sorrow to his friends and loved ones.

He will be remembered for his generous smile and a laugh that was contagious to all. He lived life to the fullest. Tony considered himself a jack-of-all trades but in his heart was an artist, designing beautiful jewelry that brought smiles to many.

He is survived by his wife, Sister Katari Martinez, and his golden puppies, Sasha and Hagrid. A memorial web site has been set-up to honor Tony: www.geocities.com/forkatari/

May your star shine ever brightly Agapito, for you shall be greatly missed.

Love is the law, love under will.

Katari Martinez

Scarlet Woman Lodge, Austin, TX

Jennifer L. Moses

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

It is with great sorrow that I announce the passing of a friend and Sister in

our Order, Sister Jennifer L. Moses I°. September 27, 2002, Sr. Jeni was found dead in her home in North Seattle. Her husband of 10 years (not a member of the Order) has been charged with second-degree murder in her death. At the request of her family, E.G.C. clergy performed the Greater Feast for Death ritual which was attended by family, friends and Sisters and Brothers of our Order from across the country. Soror Jeni is survived by her two young sons. Our Sister's memory is honored and cherished by many and she will be greatly missed.

Trust funds are being set up for Sr. Jeni's two sons. Anyone wishing to contribute may contact serenlamin@yahoo.com.

Love is the law, love under will.

In the Bonds of the Order,

Dvgls Jms Blk

Pres., Electoral College, O.T.O. U.S.A.

Michael Pfeiffer

Frater I.C.Y., 1964-2003. Futurist, Technologist, Science Fiction Author.



You left us too soon, Brother. We celebrate your passage and know that you have achieved the triumph of your True Will. You shall be missed.

—Bro. Tom Tetzlaff

U.S. Grand Lodge Internet Updates

It has been an active year for O.T.O. internet operations, and it seems likely that things will only get more interesting in the year to come. Here are a few of the highlights.

In April 2003 E.V. version 2.0 of the U.S. Grand Lodge website (oto-usa.org) was launched. This was the first complete overhaul of the site since its creation in 1995, involving changes in content, design, and underlying technology. We have done our best to make the site useful for current and prospective members, researchers, and those in the general public wishing to understand our Order. Suggestions and problem reports are always welcome at webmaster@oto-usa.org.

Please note that the previous primary domain for the site, otohq.org, is no longer officially supported. For now, it remains a synonym for oto-usa.org, but it will be shut down after a transition period. Therefore, if you have web pages that link to the U.S.G.L. site, please update them to link to the new address as soon as possible.

Among the most important resources on the site are the lists of contacts, particularly those for local bodies. The process for maintaining these lists has been vastly simplified, and also more closely linked with the similar lists maintained for internal purposes by various governing bodies of O.T.O. This has two useful effects. First, it means that changes to contact information will appear on the site in a more timely fashion than previously. Second, it is now possible for local body officers to inform all relevant officers about changes to local body contact information by emailing a single address: bodyinfo@oto-usa.org.

This applies to all local bodies, inside and outside the United States. U.S. local bodies will also report all such information on the Electoral College's Annual Report Form, which will in turn be used to update the online contact information.

A policy document covering standards for U.S. local body websites can be found at: oto-usa.org/site_policy.html. All local body webmasters should read

this document and make sure that their sites comply with these simple rules.

Finally, most of you are probably aware that O.T.O. currently depends quite heavily on Yahoo groups for our communication and coordination functions. These have proven extremely useful over the past several years, but we are beginning to outgrow them in many important ways. Therefore, an effort has begun to find replacements for Yahoo groups for both internal U.S. Grand Lodge and general Order use. I hope to have the former in operation by the Autumn Equinox, and the latter by Spring 2004 E.V.

Craig Berry

Internet Secretary, U.S. Grand Lodge

Local Body Reports

William Blake Oasis Washington, DC

William Blake Oasis, O.T.O. of the Washington, DC metropolitan area has been getting organized! We inventoried equipment, established a building fund, are researching forming an LLC, and have been renting public space since January 2003. We are moving along towards fulfilling Lodge requirements with regular Masses, classes and initiations. Most notably, 50 participants from around the region attended our special Enochian Workshop, High Tea and book signing with Lon Milo DuQuette in February 2003.

In addition, a local member is presenting at NOTOCON and we are considering a proposal for NOTOCON 2005 as our next special event. We look forward to celebrating 11 years of being a chartered O.T.O. body in June 2003.

Psyche-Eros Chapter of Rose-Croix Portland, OR

Psyche-Eros Chapter, Portland, Oregon, is run by Frater Diapason, Most Wise Sovereign, and Soror Pneuma Agape, High Priestess, and has met monthly since its inception in early 2000 E.V. Because the fourteen members of the Chapter are spread across the length of the

state of Oregon (as well as one member in northern California), these monthly meetings are held alternately in the Valleys of Portland, Eugene, and Ashland. Meetings usually last from two to three hours, depending on the amount and nature of the business at hand. Apart from the usual and necessary mundane business, as well as enjoyable philosophical discussion, the work that the Chapter has undertaken includes the following:

We have promoted and sponsored the performance of the *Rites of Eleusis*, providing directors with financial and logistical help. In addition, the members of the Committee make themselves available to the community to "compose any disputes by tact and friendliness" by offering advice, mediation, or perhaps just a willing ear, in a spirit of compassion and fraternal love.

We have recently established a Committee of Four. Largely under the direction of Soror Amritarosa, the Committee produces Salon Samekh, a monthly arts workshop. Activities at the salon include such artistic pursuits as figure drawing, jam sessions, poetry writing, and workshops by local artists. These workshops have proven valuable in helping members of the community actively discover and explore the magical nature of Art, the artistic nature of Magic.

The Chapter lends its support to the celebration of traditional and Thelemic holidays. In particular, we customarily sponsor the celebration of one of the days of the Writing of The Book of the Law, holding a feast and reading. We have also hosted a Thanksgiving feast for the past few years, enjoying fellowship over good food and drink. In addition, we sponsor an occasional lecture series, in which distinguished speakers are brought to Oregon to deliver talks on areas in which they are expert. Most recently, Br. Keith Scheurholz gave a polished lecture on the Goetia, followed by a talk the next day on Strategic Planning for Non-Profit Organizations.

Thus do the members of Psyche-Eros Chapter of Rose-Croix seek to manifest beauty and harmony through service to the Order. For active Chapters have much to contribute to the development of the O.T.O., and we believe that this will increasingly be so in the future.

Leadership Seminars

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The Electoral College is pleased to offer Kaaba Colloquium Thelemic Leadership Seminars. These are weekend-long presentational workshops for developing Thelemic leadership and skills within an O.T.O. context and are designed specifically to assist local body officers and those wishing to take on a more active leadership role within our Order. These dynamic workshop presentations are facilitated by past and present body masters, including Br. Kent Finne (Tahuti Lodge), Sr. Content Knowles (Scarlet Woman Lodge), Br. Merrill Ward (LXV), Br. Hank Hadeed (Sekhet-Maat), and Br. Dionysos Rogers (Scarlet Woman).

This fine assembly of Thelemic leaders covers a wide array of topics such as conflict resolution, building a local body from scratch, fundraising, outreach, financial management, and development and utilization of effective personnel skills in running your local body. Also offered are in-depth panel discussions with practical question and answer sessions. The presenters discuss the myriad challenges they personally faced as local body masters, and what they wish they had known going into the job, as well as sharing insights about what has worked best for them in the process. The workshop is heavily grounded in the actual experiences of these bodymasters working effectively on the frontlines.

These seminars is tiled at First degree, and are aimed at local body officers and aspiring officers.

There will be an abbreviated one-day offering of the Kaaba Colloquium Thelemic Leadership Seminar at NOTOCON 2003 on Friday, August 8 (registration in advance is required).

If your local or regional area is interested in hosting a Kaaba Colloquium Leadership Seminar, please contact me at ec-emcbryde@oto-usa.org. It is our plan to offer the Kaaba Colloquium regionally each Spring and Fall in various areas of the country. Look for Kaaba in Fall 2003 in Los Angeles!

Love is the law, love under will.
Elizabeth McBryde
Electoral College, O.T.O. U.S.A.

Of Wands and Words:

Developing Essential and Efficient Lines of Communication with Those Who May Approach Our Sacred Order

by Frater Hrumachis

"In the beginning doth the Magus speak Truth, and send forth Illusions and Falsehood to enslave the soul. Yet therein in the Mystery of Redemption." —Liber B vel Magi

"May Tahuti, the Master of all Magick, Lord of Communication, who wields his power by way of the Wand and the Word be duly invoked!"

Carate Fratres et Sorores,

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.
Greetings and Peace to you all.

The nature of "first impressions" is an incredibly weighty one. The Magician is a master of impressions and perhaps none is as important as the impression made upon the aspirant first approaching the precincts of our most Holy Order. These contacts typically take place directly at the local level and these worthy seekers are, more often than not, curious and earnest in their approach. Some may be well-studied and knowledgeable of our Order and customs while others may be ill-informed or have misconceptions or misunderstandings about our Order, the Prophet, or Thelema as a whole. They may not wholly understand what it is exactly they are seeking or they may

be misguided in their intentions. Others might be confused in their direction and are seeking guidance and assistance in their process of coming to an understanding of the knowledge of themselves and how our Order might assist them in the Way of their Going. With the advent of technology and an increased visibility and access to O.T.O. nationally and internationally, it's easier than ever for interested parties to make direct contact with the Order. Initial contacts with such individuals therefore take on immense importance to us, both as members and representatives of our Order. How we effectively and efficiently handle these preliminary contacts is absolutely vital at both the local and national level.

As Public Information Officer, I have actively worked to develop informational tools to support local bodies

by providing material, such as the *Public Information Package*, to assist them with answering several of the preliminary questions that many individuals approaching our Order often have. This, together with the new and improved U.S. Grand Lodge website crafted under the skilled and watchful eye of our Internet Secretary brother Craig Berry, provides some incredibly useful tools that can be successfully utilized at the local level to assist in this process. However, how individuals are dealt with personally at the local level will ultimately have the most dramatic impact on the person approaching the Order for the first time. This kind of personalized individual interaction and communication requires the utmost attention, thought and personal care on our parts.

During my tenure as Secretary, and later Master of L.V.X. Lodge, one of my priorities was local body growth and attracting new members to the Order by providing "open doors" for new inquiries and by directly handling correspondence in relation to those inquiries. I recognized early on that this was where the future membership of the Order was going to come from; that indeed, these individuals were the very future of the Order. These efforts yielded some of the fastest local membership growth

ever recorded in Order history and we saw a meteoric rise in the activity level in the greater L.A. area. In addition, it influenced and assisted local growth in a variety of other areas across the country from interested people who contacted me, usually via email, from the L.V.X. website, or through Brother Vere Chappell's *Thelema Homepage* where I also handled all of the direct inquiries. I corresponded with people from around the country and the world who were interested and passionate about Magick, Crowley and Thelema, and in making contact with our Order. Many of these initial contacts later went on to become active and productive members, some of whom even founded local bodies in their own geographic regions. I have no doubt there are some of you reading this essay today who I was privileged to have met and forged lasting fraternal bonds with in this manner. Providing these open doors and effective avenues of contact and communication for potential new members thus becomes imperative, both in the growth of our local bodies and for the Order as a whole. How we efficiently utilize our language and focused attention in this regard is absolutely crucial. Thus our ability as Magicians and representatives of our Order depends on our ability to effectively wield the Wand of our collective Will as an Order, and to craft our Words with attention, artistry, and intention; ever mindful of the needs of these approaching aspirants.

When I originally approached our Order in the early part of 1990 E.V., I made my initial inquiries through postal mail to the International Headquarters New York P.O. Box address. Not surprisingly, response time in those days was quite a bit slower than it is today, in most cases. Months later, having received no word, I was directed rather cautiously by our honored (and incognito) brother, the late Herman Slater, to a nearly hidden copy of the *Magical Link* on a bulletin board at the Magical Child bookstore in New York City, through which I was finally able to make direct phone contact with our beloved Soror Helena. Our esteemed Sister was incredibly kind and patient, considering what I remember as my overly enthusiastic sputtering and ram-

blings. Her graciousness and hospitality were absolutely disarming. At the end of our conversation she personally invited me, a total stranger (and quite possibly a total lunatic) to her home to attend my first Gnostic Mass. Needless to say, I was quite overcome with joy and wonder at this new mystery which now lay open to me. Indeed, I was in no way disappointed. Upon arriving I was treated with overwhelming hospitality, as an honored and welcome guest in their home. Members of the local community took an active interest in getting to know me and my interests in Thelema and the Order. They eagerly answered my questions and made me feel welcomed and at ease. Then the Mass began; not only was I hooked...I was home.

The point of my little digression into nostalgia is to illuminate several issues. First is the necessity for local body officers and members of our Order to recognize the importance of responding promptly and efficiently to phone, letter, and email inquiries. Otherwise, we run the risk of potentially losing individuals who might prove to be valuable members of our Order. Secondly, we must recognize the virtue of hospitality and graciousness towards our new and potential guests. Finally, that it is though our effective ability to represent, clearly communicate, and articulate our understanding of the Order and its essential Thelemic principles to these individuals (without proselytizing) that we can have a direct influence on whether they chose to join with us in our Holy Work and become active and productive members of our Order.

With the advent of electronic communication, the necessity of postal communication has fallen off dramatically to a mere trickle over the last several years. This, in and of itself, is a major advantage to us, and yet, at the same time, requires us to be even more attentive and timely in our responsiveness to new inquiries. In addition, we still need to be prepared to answer the occasional postal correspondence when they do happen to appear in our P.O. boxes.

Having some pre-prepared material, such as the *Public Information Package* and general "form-letter" correspon-

dence, can be useful in this regard. It is also crucial for bodymasters and their secretaries to respond to any given correspondence promptly and with special attention paid to addressing the specific questions and concerns of the inquiring party in a personalized and professional manner. Further, we might need to adjust our intentions for any given individual correspondence. I have found that if I keep my focus on attempting to establish direct phone or face-to-face contact at the local level or provide the individual with contact information in their vicinity for doing so, it generally gets me and the inquiring party much further along in the process. However, again, this will depend on who we're dealing with and what their particular intentions and needs are in their inquiry. Here are a few additional recommendations in this process you may wish to consider.

Be sure to respond promptly to all inquiries with an appropriately tailored response providing related material on professionally printed local body or official O.T.O. letterhead. This does wonders for presenting your local body and the Order in a serious and professional light. Remember to have your letterhead approved by U.S. Grand Lodge before using it. Check with the G.S.G. if you have questions.

It is helpful to create a standard response letter that can then be augmented and tailored to meet the needs of specific inquiries. Feel free to utilize the FAQ available from the P.I.O. or on the U.S. Grand Lodge homepage to formulate answers to general questions. There are also several Order-approved informational documents, such as the *Public Information Package*, that can be included with your post or as an email attachment.

Should you, as a local body representative, receive inquiries that you cannot answer for any reason, take counsel with your local bodymaster or mentor or feel free to forward the post to an appropriate U.S. Grand Lodge officer. My office is always open and available to receive these types of inquiries or to answer any questions that might assist you directly in handling local correspondence. This is an aspect of my job that I take a great deal of satisfaction in doing, and I enjoy

responding to these inquiries and assisting individuals in making direct contact with the Order at the local level.

Generally when responding to posts and emails from individuals inquiring at the local level, if appropriate and the person expresses interest, you may wish to suggest phone contact and provide the number if your local body has a public contact number. I cannot speak highly enough of the value of having a designated local body phone line with an answering machine or phone company based message service for handling inquiries. Provide pertinent and current local body information and request contact information from the inquiring party and, once again (dare I fail to mention it enough) be sure to return their calls promptly. Try to respond to all inquiries within 48 hours, as this shows that you are interested, attentive and responsive. People are generally very receptive and appreciative to that kind of attention

and responsiveness. Common sense and courtesy are the general rule in these kinds of direct communications. Be forthcoming, casual, open and authentic. Take the time to really get to know them and their needs and interests. Hospitality and discretion are, once again, vitally important in this process.

Should you determine, between you both, that attendance at a Mass or other local event is in order, provide them with an open invitation as well as appropriate and accurate information. The goal in this initial process is to establish personal contact in a face-to-face meeting between the approaching individual and the officers and membership of the local body. It may take some time, attention and diligent effort to get to this point. When this meeting should finally occur, make them feel warm and welcome as you would a respected guest in your own home. Treat them with due respect and be casual and forthcoming. There is no

need to be anything other than yourself; an open and authentic initiate, a committed and conscientious member and respected representative of our Order.

Thus may we all continue to foster and develop a Thelemic environment that is not only inviting, but is joyously contagious. So may we create a context or container; a Sacred Vessel within which we can pour forth the blood of our labor, coalescing our collective Will, and from which we may transmute for ourselves and the world, the Stone of the Wise and the Elixir of Life, co-create a Lamp of Light to illumine the Way and open our Hearts in the bonds of fraternal Love, as we continue to forge this path of Liberty for all, through the Law of Thelema.

Love is the law, love under will.

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