

ORATION FOR REDEDICATION CEREMONY  
GREEN VALLEY LODGE NO. 71  
MARCH 31, 2012

Delivered by WB Gene Hutloff  
Grand Orator, 2011-2012

Most Worshipful Grand Master, Right Worshipful and Worshipful Officers of the Grand Lodge of Arizona, Officers and Brothers of Green Valley Masonic Lodge No. 71, Family, Friends, and Guests: Greetings.

According to some historical information kindly sent to us by way of that most excellent Mason, Worshipful Brother Richard A. Hendrickson, we are today seated in a Lodge which has the distinction of having been born in a box! The story goes like this. Having come under Dispensation in 1972, thirty-nine former members of the Acacia Club of Green Valley (subsequently the Blue Lodge Study Club), puzzled and pondered a way to accommodate their new-found practice space in the narthex of the Community Church to the ritual needs of the Brethren. According to the narrative on the Lodge's Web Page, the room was devoid of platforms, lectern, altar, and other furniture essential to the requirements of a Lodge. Nor was there any storage for such items. As time went on, one of the Brethren designed and built the platforms, steps, podium, rod stands, lesser lights, jewel rack, kneeling cushions, and all other necessary furniture. These items of furniture were so ingeniously constructed that they could be disassembled, nested, folded, and compacted into a large, weather-proof storage case -- hence forward to be known as The Box. Another Brother built a collapsible altar, itself made to fit within The Box. Between meetings, The Box was stored in the outside patio, whence it was rolled in for ritual practice. It is as if The Box served in its way as that "one stone that makes the perfect whole," bearing within its perfectly fitted inward parts, this future Lodge wherein we are here today met. From this creative, collaborative effort emerged the brand of Green Valley Lodge No. 71 -- The Born-in-a-Box Lodge.

Upon reflection, one is reminded of another Box, the contents of which were most sacred to the Chosen People who bore it through the desert wilderness on that long journey to the Promised Land. That Box was the Ark of the Covenant, the covenantal contents of which included the Tablets of the Covenant, better known as the Ten Commandments -- the moral law binding together that ancient community of faith, as well as our own world-wide band of Brothers, whithersoever dispersed under the whole canopy of Heaven.

Now, for a Lodge to be Under Dispensation is to be under some pressure, even in ordinary circumstances; there are officers to be trained and ritual proficiencies to be attained, yet with most of the Brothers in an ordinary Arizona U.D. Lodge there is a passing familiarity with the Arizona Work. The pressure of being Under Dispensation in Green Valley, however, was beyond the ordinary -- most of the Green Valley Brethren were from other jurisdictions. An analogy might be here drawn between the contents of the Box carried by the Israelites in the desert and the individual Brothers who journeyed

from distant jurisdictions to Green Valley, bearing in their hearts the sublime moral principles embodied in the rituals, lectures, and charges they had learned in their home Lodges -- rituals wherein the words might be different, but the melody was the same. And so it was, that Ritual Practice became a priority for Green Valley Lodge during that period of Dispensation, and remains so to this day. And so it also was, that to meet that priority the Box was built, and out of that Box the Lodge was born -- or better said, reborn in the hearts of those sojourning Brethren, for it is the way of the Craftsman that the heart should conceive before the eye may behold the beauties of Masonry.

Furthermore, in imagining a Box, one is tempted to envision its geometric archetype -- the Cube in Space, not far afield from the Perfect Ashlar, in traditionally furnished Lodges hanging from a tripod set up in the symbolic West, suspended, as it were, between Heaven and Earth. It is susceptible to several interpretations. It can represent the true Master Mason -- with proportions just and true, polished to such a moral perfection and development of his powers that he is fit to accomplish his individual goals as well as to wisely render needed service to mankind. He is, as such, suspended between Heaven and Earth. It can also represent a Lodge, a meaning not to be missed by those today witnessing the Box-like shape in today's Rededication Ceremony which received the three-fold blessing of Corn, Wine and Oil. It can also represent Freemasonry, extending in its reach to all directions, universal in the scope of its application, and boundless in its charity toward all Mankind. It resolves (or folds up), ultimately, into that maternal Box with which we began our discussion, a Box which may be thought of as, severally, a man, a Lodge, the Stone that makes the perfect whole, but most of all -- Green Valley Lodge No. 71, newly rededicated and consecrated for a bright Masonic future.

Brother Charles F. Forshaw might well have had Green Valley 71 in mind when he penned these lines.

#### THE BUILDERS

If in the rearing of an edifice

We form one stone that makes the perfect whole;

To us 'twould be the beau ideal of bliss

And prove glad unction to the work-worn soul.

A Temple with proportions just and true

Can but erected be by Masons skilled,

Instructed by an Architect who knew

Exactly how to tell them what to build.

And he taught us -- however small the stone --

To plumb and level by th' unerring Square --

To make it pattern, so that all might own

'Twas strong and beautiful beyond compare, --

With Chisel and with Gavel we have wrought

To gain "Well Done," -- The Tongue of Good Report.

CHARLES F. FORSHAW

