



# BRENHAM MASON

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF GRAHAM LODGE NO. 20 A.F. & A.M.



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JACK BRANNEN

[WWW.GRAHAMLODGE20.COM](http://WWW.GRAHAMLODGE20.COM)

## BRENHAM ISD EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR 2020-2021

9.2.2021

On Thursday the 2nd, Graham Lodge was proud to host the 2020-21 BISD Teachers & Paraprofessionals of the year from all campuses.

Special thanks to Dr. Tylor Chaplin, Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Alison Bentke  
District Teacher of the Year

Mrs. Teresa Peddy  
District Paraprofessional of the Year



# LODGE NEWS

## BISD EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR 2020-21:

**EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER**  
TRICIA TROSTLE  
LINDA WILSON

**ALTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
JORDAN KAPCHINSKI  
CLEMENCE SOKOL

**BRENHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
SHANNON ALTMAN  
LENORA BLIZNAK

**KRAUSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
CHELSEA RILEY  
SANDRA ALVAREZ

**BRENHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
DENIESE COLLORA  
TERESA PEDDY\*

**BRENHAM JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**  
ALISON BENTKE\*  
CLAUDIA BARTKOWIAK

**BRENHAM HIGH SCHOOL**  
CINDY MARKOS  
KATHI KLUSSMANN

**PRIDE ACADEMY**  
KATHY VOSHALIKE  
KATRINA GAILS

## FRATERNAL PLACES: WE'RE ON YOU TUBE!

A few months ago we were honored to be featured on 'Fraternal Places', the YouTube Channel sponsored by Bro. Brad Reel. I actually started watching his videos when I was an EA and it is awesome to go online and see the inside of lodges that my ancestors attended years ago. We are all a little floored when we look at the sheer number of lodges that Brad has documented. Bro. Reel also recently filmed our Brothers down the road in Chappell Hill (Hubert). You should check that one out as well.

I highly recommend taking a look at his channel and catch up on some virtual visits. While you're at it, go ahead and like & subscribe as it will assist his great work of documenting every lodge in Texas.

[https://youtu.be/r863Mku9\\_DY](https://youtu.be/r863Mku9_DY)

- E. Jezisek



# THE MASTER'S CORNER



**MICHAEL THORPE, WM.**



August is coming to a close, and September is upon us. Graham has once again been busy laboring in the quarries. Our Monday night practices have helped us learn the esoteric degree work. I have a lot more work to do, but I enjoy the time we spend together. Our EA'S continue to work on their degrees and have been turning in the required examinations. It is refreshing to Hear the work, and it renews my spirit. Last stated meeting we balloted on a candidate and waiting to confirm a date for the degree, this stated meeting I hope to Ballot on another petition, and schedule a degree for him.

Brethren, our community evolvment is showing us that when we labor together, we are sought.

Remember to ALWAYS walk the talk.

This week we had visitors at Thorpe Farms, and one stated they thought Masons were a cult and a little sketchy. I asked them what they thought about the Shriners? The answer was they do great work.

When I informed them, a Shriner had to be Mason first, they were surprised. Once Masonry was explained, they thought differently.

We MUST display ourselves always as an upright and sound Mason. We must follow our teachings and display them as we go through our daily duties.

Make yourself a living example of Masonry.

September plans, include Presentation of service awards. We have several members who are due/past due recognition of years of service in Masonry.

This Called meeting will be September the 20th at 6 Pm

PLEASE come out and celebrate these dedicated brothers. We have a 60 year and 50 year awards to present as well as a 25 year.

DDGM Shawn Woelk will be making his official visit this month and I hope to see you at this stated meeting September 2nd at 6 PM for a catered meal, and visiting. We will also be hosting Brenham ISD teachers of the year for the 2020/2021 school year.

Brethren it gives me great PRIDE in being Master of OUR LODGE, and see us busy at labor. I look forward to the labors ahead, and HOPE you may join us.

WALK THE TALK AND BE OUR BEST EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE AS MASONS ARE.

Fraternally

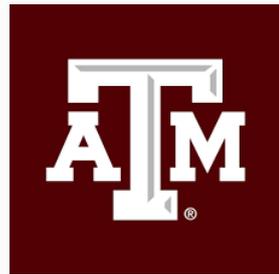
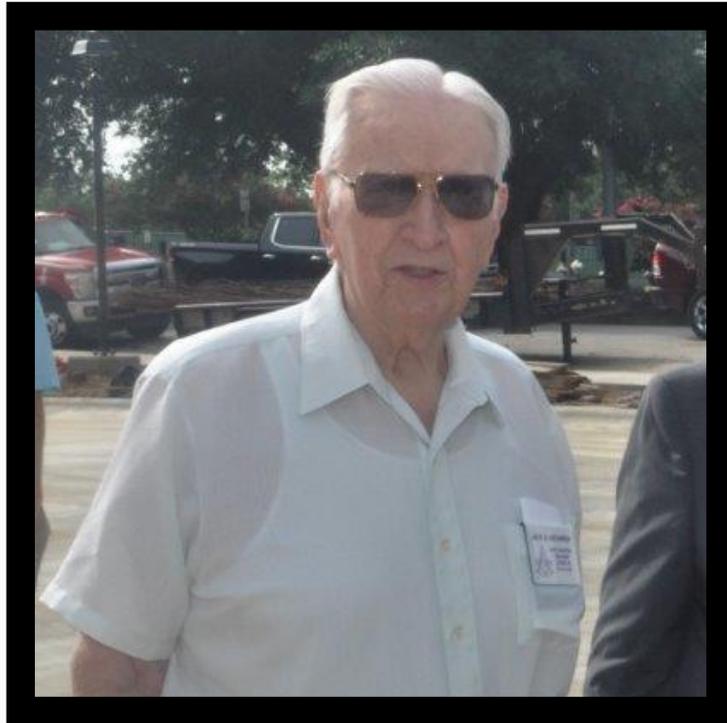
WM Michael Thorpe

# INTERVIEW WITH A BROTHER: **JACK** **BRANNEN**

W/ EDDY JEZISEK

Howdy Brothers! Can you believe it? We have made it to the month of September and it seems like the year is flying by. Everyone I have spoken to is thankful that we are able to meet more frequently. Hopefully this continues as time goes on and we are able to manage this pandemic more effectively. Fortunately despite all of this, I was able to sit down with Brother Brannen and his wife Pat at their home this week and try to collect a measure of wisdom

Brother Brannen is 91 Years old but you would never guess if he didn't tell you. He is sharp as a tack, (although as a testament to his humility, he would disagree) and Bro. Brannen is as always interested in the welfare of the brothers and willing to offer help and advice.



## **Early Life**

A little bit about his story, Jack Brannen was born and raised in the 1930's in a small East-Texas community named Pennington, a little outside of Crockett. By his description, it was a cozy little town with two country stores, a blacksmith shop, a post-office and a little auto shop. It was in this town that Jack first learned to work, picking cotton a very young age and collecting it in a sack that his mother had constructed herself. Even though still a youngster, he collected around 100lbs of cotton a day and got paid around 40 cents. As an interesting side note, he learned that sometime around the turn of the century there was a lodge in Pennington of which his grandfather served as Master but was closed before he came of age to be aware of it.

Upon leaving High School, Bro. Brannen attended Texas A&M when membership in the Corps of Cadets was mandatory and the school was male only. On the very day of graduation, he was commissioned a 2nd Lt. and assigned to an Artillery Unit. Not long thereafter he and his unit were sent to the Far-East to the Korean War. Jack was in Korea when the truce was signed. "Korea was every bit as hot as Texas in the summer but extraordinarily cold in the winter" he said. Also mentioned was that he has never been as cold in his life as during the Korean winter. After getting out of the service, He worked for the Agriculture Extension Service, training in Corsicana and being assigned to Coleman County, Texas making only \$400/month.



**Above. Jack Brannen with former Gov. Rick Perry**



“I couldn’t raise a family with that kind of money so I began my career with the Purina company.” This was to be the company he stayed with for over 30 years. By 1963, the Brannen’s were in Brenham gladly attending their church home, Brenham’s First Baptist, a membership that is still going strong today.

Regarding joining the Masonic Fraternity, Bro. Brannen was entered, passed, and raised right here in Brenham at Graham 20. The interesting thing being that he went through the EA and FC at the old downtown third-floor lodge and was made a Master Mason in the ‘new’ building on 290, the first to be raised there.

In my personal opinion this was a golden age of Masonry in Brenham.



When he mentioned some of the brothers he admired and worked with, they are of an oft credited group. Brothers such as B.C. Crawford, Bob Ham, Fred Hodde and many other fine upstanding men who became known as pillars of the community. Charlie Wiede was another strong Mason who was influential to Jack and many others over the years. He was secretary at Graham Lodge from 1947-1977.

Dr. Fred Hodde donated the land on which the current lodge building sits.



Jack said the original price of the building was \$10,000 and was paid entirely by brothers who worked together to pay it off. These are some of the folks that taught Jack the esoteric work. His teachers performed such a fine job and he put forth enough hard work that he performed all of his work alone.



That is an impressive feat. I asked him if any furniture was brought over from the downtown lodge and from what he remembers, only some of the lodge room items such as the pillars, the officer's chairs, and maybe the altar stands. The outer seating (which has since been replaced) may have come from a theatre in town.

**What drew him to become a Mason?**

Although Jack had an older brother and brother-in-law who were Masons, he said they were not a contributing factor to his petitioning. "My brother lived too far away and we just didn't travel back then like we do now. We might have only seen him once or twice a year and the subject never came up until I made the decision to petition." It was primarily his friends at church who motivated him to come to lodge and see what the craft was all about.

Bro. Brannen has sat all of the chairs except the Tiler. He has served as DDGM of District 44 and was a member of Chapter, Council, and Commandery along with Arabia Shrine. Jack also raised Dr. Charles Cottingham, of whom he is still in touch.

When asked if there were any events that stood out over the years and he answered, "the work itself it very rewarding if you actually sit down and listen to what you are saying." What does Masonry mean to him? It is the way of good men, and as you know, make them better men. "I have always enjoyed the history of Freemasonry, more especially that of Masonry in Texas. There are some great books out there about the early Texan settlers and the Masonic beginnings of the leaders.

What exactly would he like to see out of us in the coming years? To see the lodge itself grow in membership alongside increased engagement from the active membership." We could be better known locally by doing things and being more visible in the community.

Great advice. Thank you for all of your years of labor Brother.



# KEEPING WITHIN THE CABLE TOW

A SOCRATIC DISCUSSION

W/ GEORGE WELLS & EDDY JEZISEK

**Question 1: Would you prefer to be in a place that is well established or one that needs a little work?**

**Wells:** I would prefer to be in a place that is well established. With that said, if a place is functioning properly, everyone should be and would be doing their part to further the organization as much as is possible (within their cable tow).

**Jezisek:** I have always found it easier to fit into a place that is willing to let me help out. I've seen some organizations that are so well staffed that it is a struggle to find a place to fit in. As I get older, I find it more rewarding to be a part of the team as opposed to individual accolades.

In my opinion, collaboration within the fraternity is where the rewards lay. That is real Masonic servant leadership. Graham's month of July was a perfect example.

Lodge means more when you feel that you have a vested stake in its success. When you pitch in, its like seeing a building remodeled and knowing that you helped make that happen.



**Question 2: Is Burnout a real concern? If so, what steps should we take to avoid it?**

**Jezisek:** Yes, Allan has a broken back and 'we' can't dissuade him from from picking up heavy things. But seriously, Yes, I believe that burnout is a concern if you bite off more than you can handle which I found is pretty easy to do in Masonry. If you do not regulate yourself and learn your limits then it is possible to get in a bind. Saying no is alright if the task interferes with immediate family needs or your vocations. I say this without judgement, simply attending stated meetings is uplifting to everyone and very beneficial.

**Wells:** Yes, burnout is a very real concern. If a handful of people are always doing all the work, burnout is going to happen. When that happens, they quit and the organization dies from profound apathy. The only way this can be avoided is for everyone to pitch in and do whatever they can do to help.

# **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**9/2 (Thurs.) - BISD Educators (Meal) & Stated Meeting @ Graham 6:00 PM**

**9/6 (Mon.) - Practice @ Graham 6:00 PM (Cancelled)**

**9/12 (Sun.) - Lodge Closet Organization and Cleanup 1:00 PM**

**9/13 (Mon.) - Practice @ Graham 6:00 PM**

**9/20 (Mon.) - Practice @ Graham 6:00 PM**

**9/25 (Sat.) - Entered Apprentice Degrees (2) + Fellowcraft Degree\* Breakfast at 8:00 AM. Gavel Drops at 9.**

**9/27 (Mon.) - Practice @ Graham 6:00 PM**

**10/7 October Stated Meeting. Dinner at 6:00 PM Meeting for Masons at 7:00**

2021-2022 Officers



**Master:** Michael Thorpe



**Sr. Warden:** George Allan Wells



**Jr. Warden:** Ken Lane



**Treasurer:** Dan Blalock



**Secretary:** Kirby Simmons



**Chaplain:** Aaron Curlee



**Sr. Deacon:** Jerry Jackson



**Jr. Deacon:** Eddy Jezisek Jr.

**Marshal:** Dr. Robert S. Stark



**Tyler:** Keith Killgore

**Master of Ceremony:** Kenneth Hetzel

**Senior Steward:** Bill Grubbs

**Junior Steward:** Brad Tegeler



908 US-290 W.  
BRENHAM, TX 77834

[www.grahamlodge20.com](http://www.grahamlodge20.com)

