

The Most Worshipful Grand Master, Jeffrey Black Hodgdon

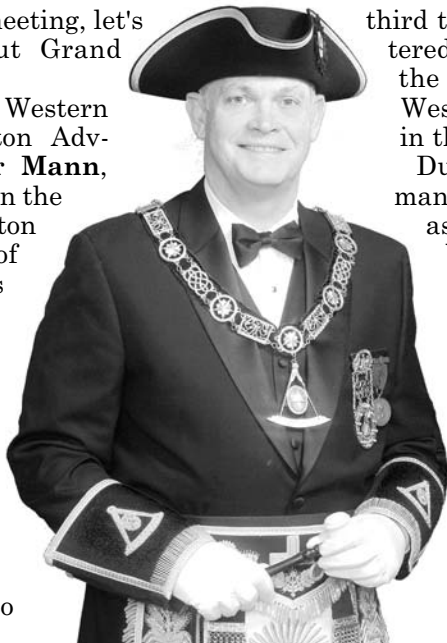
Masonry's Make-It-Happen Man

By HERMES BOYATIS

ON September 5, your editor was at last able to interview our Grand Master. He leapt from goals to memories to events without pause. How well we remember how renowned Editor **Joe McKertich** and **Jeff Hodgdon** energized each other! Before we continue with the essence and electricity of our meeting, let's review what we know about Grand Master Hodgdon.

"He is the top Mason in the Western Hemisphere," as the Arlington Advocate's staff writer, **Jennifer Mann**, reported in November 2005. "On the corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts sits indistinguishable 11 stories of offices, ceremonial hall and gathering rooms." Mann went on to describe "the richly colored oriental rugs, plush furniture and gilded ceilings, and along the walls, a history lesson in the leadership of the Massachusetts Masonic family."

We know, that in addition to



his three years of unmatched Mastership, Jeff is a third-generation Lexingtonian, where freedom and patriotism began. As Mann pointed out, he "follows on the heels of **Paul Revere** and General **Joseph Warren**. She added, "In the history of Masonry, the Grand Lodge in Massachusetts was the third to be established following those chartered in England and Ireland, Hodgdon is the highest ranking Mason in the Western Hemisphere and third ranking in the world.

During our interview, he described his mandate to keep two historic monuments, as well as the rituals, intact. **George Washington** had used ancient rituals in dedicating the monument in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Using the ancient rituals, Jeff had recently performed the re-dedication of the Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown. The day before our interview he had re-dedicated the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown.

His Masonic ancestors in Lexington at Simon W. Robinson Lodge go back to his grandfather,

Walter G. Black, followed by father **Milton F. Hodgdon**. Jeff was raised to the Degree of Master Mason in Simon W. Robinson Lodge by his father in 1979. He subsequently served as its first third-generation Worshipful Master, following in the footsteps of his grandfather and father. In 2005, as Grand Master, he raised his youngest son Todd Milton Hodgdon and subsequent to that in 2004 he raised his oldest son Jeff Hodgdon in the same Lodge with the assistance of the then Grand Master, M. W. Brother Hicks, and all the Past Grand Masters.

Jeff's oldest brother, **Walter G. Hodgdon**, who has lived in Maine for 22 years, was not a member of the Craft until he realized the importance of his sibling and Masonry. Jeff had the distinct honor of raising him in 1989, while he was serving as Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge under M. W. **Albert T. Ames**, Grand Master at the time.

Jeff laughingly remembers Walter's raising in Maine. "What a time it was, unbelievable! I traveled by bus in full regalia with fifty members of my mother lodge, Simon W. Robinson, to do the raising of Walter by permission of the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Maine who had to be greeted by

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Chief Rabban Steve Eriksen and Lady Lynne Present...

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Grateful Givers

By HERMES BOYATIS

RECENTLY announced by NAPSA was a first-of-its-kind program developed by **Zakir H. Bengali, Ph.D.** Formerly a program officer for the National Institute for Health, he is now responsible for oversight of Shriners Hospitals' \$37 million clinical and basic research program.

He collaborates with Harvard, McGill, University of Texas Medical Branch, and the University of California. All 22 Shriners Hospitals for Children are involved. The research relates to so many innovative areas such as cultured skin, mutation discovery and survival of burn victims. "Improving lives is the most exciting job we have!"

Also reported by NAPSA are the gifts of funds from Shriners Hospital patients to other patients. The Hospitals welcome their help. In 2006, they admitted 38,984 patients and cared for 128, 578.

Thus Tampa Hospital patient **Leigh Marie Dittman**, diagnosed with osteogenesis imperfecta before she was born, celebrated her fourth birthday party with almost 40 guests. Her colorful box invited donations and raised more than \$3000!

Another birthday celebrant was **Justine Reigel**, victim of bilateral developmental dislocated hips. She celebrated her "Sweet Sixteen" birthday. After years of hip surgeries, physical therapy, and conditioning, she is now an active, sports-playing teenager. At her party, her classmates raised nearly \$300.

There are other exciting examples of our Shriners Grateful Givers!



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