

THE STORY OF THE TEMPLE
October 11, 1959 to October 11, 2009

50th Anniversary

If the Temple could talk it would tell quite an amazing story of its association with B.O.T.A. for the last 50 years. Our beloved teacher, Dr. Ann Davies, tells us in her recorded talk dedicating this Temple that Dr. Paul Foster Case, our Founder, yearned for a place to hold meetings for the growing B.O.T.A. congregation. It was not until five years after his death that the present building was purchased by Ann Davies and Harriet Case. I have been told that it was Harriet's money that made the purchase possible. Harriet Case came from a wealthy eastern family who owned department stores. The building was formerly office space for Allstate Insurance Company. There were windows along the side walls which were filled in after we purchased it. You can still see their faint outline on the walls. Other changes were made to the building to create space for a Temple in which to hold meetings and for an office in which to carry on the business of the Order. The wall separating these two areas was probably west of the side door on the south. The space for the Temple was west of this wall and the office was on the east side facing the street. I do not know for sure but guess that the area we call the annex on the south side of the building was added when the other renovations were being done. A space would have been needed for storage. Part of that space was used to store copies of the lessons in wooden cubbyholes. On lesson mailing day, which was Wednesday, volunteers pulled the lessons and put them into envelopes right there in the annex.

My personal knowledge of the building began in 1977 when my husband and I moved to the Los Angeles area from San Diego. At that time the Temple was furnished with metal folding chairs. The blue cushions on them had been made by ladies in the congregation. There was a door behind the draperies on the stage where Ann would enter the Temple and then exit into the office behind the stage. One Saturday a month was cleaning day and volunteers would come to clean the Temple and the office. As a new volunteer on cleaning day I was assigned to clean the toilets. I thought this was some sort of a test! But I soon discovered that cleaning jobs were rotated so that eventually we had the opportunity to clean everything. After cleaning we shared a potluck lunch. It was a good way to get to know people. There were other Saturdays when the Temple would be used for mailing parties. Volunteers would stuff envelopes usually with Easter or Christmas cards and sort them by zip code for bulk mailing. We shared food and conversation as we worked. These work parties were known as "Karma alleviation" days.

There is a room at the top of the stairs that in the early days of our occupancy housed a large collating machine and also served as a storage area. In 1977 our Frater Will Chesterman created a library in this space. The machinery was removed and the area was cleaned out. The walls of the room were painted and new carpeting was installed. Frater

Will purchased a large table and eight chairs so that the room could be used for meetings. Cabinets were built under the windows on the west wall and book shelves with glass doors were built on the east wall. Over the years we accumulated a large number of books on occult subjects and by various authors. You may be disappointed to learn that these books are quite ordinary and may be found in used book stores or other sources for books. One of our members organized the books in the manner of public libraries and created a card file for reference. The library has been used for meetings ever since its creation and has proved to be a valuable and useful space. Years ago we did allow members to check books out of the library but it soon became a problem when books were not returned so we discontinued the practice.

When Ann was active and working at the Temple she would periodically have parties. She encouraged people to dress up with some theme or other to guide them in their selection of a costume. Ann always had a purpose for whatever she did and the parties were no exception. For some years after Ann's transition to the Inner Planes we had parties in the Temple. In the last few years we realized that we could not use our Temple for parties since it is our Sanctuary. We do not have a social hall or other place for gatherings such as parties and we do not wish to bring lower astral energies into our Sanctuary. Ann's high level of consciousness could control a party situation and neutralize the lower level energies but we are not able to do that. We do, however, have loving gatherings for Thanksgiving dinner and for socializing after Sunday Services and the Christmas and Easter Rituals.

It must have been in the early 1980's that someone conceived the idea that our Temple should look like the temples on the Inner Planes. The walls of our Temple were painted in bands of blue from a darker blue at the floor level to a pale blue at the ceiling. Large banners were made to hang on the South, West, and North walls with elemental symbols on them. This person also envisioned a large Rose of Creation made of stained glass to be placed in the middle of the ceiling and to be lighted from behind. In preparation for this the middle section of two of the large wooden beams attached to the South and North walls was cut away leaving those two beams useless for bracing the walls. The Rose of Creation was made but all attempts to bring it to the Temple failed. Finally, the project was abandoned and the large hole in the ceiling was covered over. Somewhere between 1977 and 1979 the building next door was purchased for the purpose of providing more space for the office. The purchase was made by the proceeds from the sale of Ann's little house and the house formerly owned by Paul and Harriet Case. At that time the Temple and the office buildings were painted white and the Board decided to sand blast the paint off the buildings and restore them to the original red brick. For this we received an award for restoring this historical property from the local historical society or the Chamber of Commerce. I am not sure which one it was. We have paid a price for this work, however, in that the sand blasting made the brick porous and we had problems with water coming into the Temple. It was necessary to solicit financial help from our members in order to meet the considerable financial expense of having the brick exterior of both buildings sealed.

By the late 1980's the Temple took on an aspect of neglect. No regular schedule of maintenance was in place. In 1989 when I became President of the Board my first task was to get the earthquake retrofitting done. We had not met the deadline for this work which was set by the City of Los Angeles so it needed to be accomplished immediately. In order to brace the side walls of the building a partial wall had to be built some feet to the east of the existing east wall. This made it necessary to move the existing east wall back to align with the new wall. Thus we gained more space in the Temple and had less space in the room in the east which was now what we call the Minister's office. The ceiling in the Temple had to be removed so that bracing could be done in the attic. When the ceiling was taken down we discovered the two cross beams that had been cut. Removal of the ceiling was a very messy job as years and years of dirt had accumulated in the attic. In cleaning the attic we discovered much to our horror that several live electrical wires were just laying around up there. It was a relief to have this wiring removed and/or sealed off. After the earthquake retro-fitting was completed we replaced the ceiling, installed new light fixtures, painted the Temple a solid white color, purchased new blue carpeting, and the chairs that we still use today. We still needed to replace the gold draperies hanging in the East which represent the Light of the East. A Frater who attended Sunday Service at that time and who we haven't seen since, offered his help. He was involved in the theater and knew of a person who made theatrical draperies. This Frater brought fabric samples to us to choose from and oversaw the construction of our new gold draperies.

After the earthquake retro-fitting and renovation of the Temple was completed and we moved into the early 1990's we realized it was time to restore our Hierarchy. We had been without a Prolocutor General for almost 20 years. After our beloved Teacher, Rev. Ann Davies made her transition to the Inner Planes and according to the instructions she had left behind, her husband, Jacob Fuss, became Prolocutor General. Unfortunately, our Frater Jacob was unable to function in that position and by mutual consent he left B.O.T.A. and moved to northern California. At that time and for the next 20 years or so no one could agree on who should become Prolocutor General so we struggled along without this important position being filled. Then in the early 1990's the Board of Stewards appointed our Frater Will Chesterman from New Zealand Prolocutor General. From that time to the present we have enjoyed the full linkage with the Inner School which provides us with the guidance and direction that is so necessary to our having the ability to carry the Work forward in purity and love. When our beloved Frater Will passed on in 2003 he appointed me to be his successor as Prolocutor General. I will, in turn appoint the person to follow me in this office. Our beloved Soror Ann left written instructions that all Prolocutor Generals who follow her will NOT be teachers. All the teaching was given by herself and our beloved founder and Frater Paul Case.

Our next project was installing the wrought iron fencing around the Temple and Office parking lots and re-paving the parking lots. There is ongoing maintenance on a building as old as this one. Recently we had quite a bit of repair work done including replacing some wooden areas around windows that had become infested with termites. The Temple has been re-painted throughout. We are blessed to have a Frater who donated his time and expertise to change the lighting on the Tarot Keys and install a lighting system

that allows for dimming of the lights. He spent many very hot hours in the attic to remove old light fixtures and install the new ones. We are also blessed to have a Soror who has artistic ability and training paint a new set of Tarot Keys for the Temple. Another Soror volunteered her time and resources to get the new Keys framed and ready to hang on the walls.

The Temple is lovingly cared for these days and holds many memories of Pronaos Rituals, Study Group meetings, Sunday Services, Vibratory Attunements, and Thursday nights as well as marriages, baptisms, and requiems. It has served us well over the past 50 years. How much longer it will continue to do so we do not know but, like Dr. Case, Harriet, and Ann, we also have a dream. Our dream is of a larger building with ample parking space, with a full kitchen, and with a social hall as well as a ritual room. We have no idea how our vision will materialize but we do know that as we are told in our Seven Steps lessons it will, when the time is right, become manifest here on the physical plane.

For the present we are deeply grateful for our Temple and for the sacred energies that it holds. We bless this dear old building and will always love and cherish the way it has held us in its tender embrace for these past 50 years.

Shalom!